

Facing the Past

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[0:00] 2 Samuel chapter 21.

This is the word of the Lord.! He put the Gibeonites to death.

So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not of the people of Israel, but of the remnant of the Ananites. Although the people of Israel had sworn to spare them, Saul had sought to strike them down in his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah.

And David said to the Gibeonites, what shall I do for you? And how shall I make atonement that you may bless the heritage of the Lord? The Gibeonites said to him, it is not a matter of silver or gold between us and Saul or his house, neither is it for us to put any man to death in Israel.

And he said, what do you say that I do for you? Then he said to the king, the man who consumed us and planned to destroy us so that we should have no place in all the territory of Israel.

[1:24] Let seven of his sons be given to us so that we may hang them before the Lord at Gibeah of Saul, the chosen one of the Lord. And the king said, I will give them.

But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's son Jonathan, because of the oath of the Lord that was between them, between David and Jonathan, the son of Saul.

The king took the two sons of Ritpah, the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth, and the five sons of Merab, the daughter of Saul, whom she bore to Adriel, the son of Barzillai, the Mephylothite.

And he gave them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them on the mountain before the Lord, and the seven of them perished together.

They were put to death in the first days of harvest at the beginning of barley harvest. Then Ritpah, the daughter of Aiah, took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock from the beginning of harvest until rain fell upon them from the heavens.

[2:36] And she did not allow the birds of the air to come upon them by day or the beasts of the field by night. When David was told what Ritpah, the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done, David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of his son Jonathan from the men of Jebesh Gilead, who had stolen them from the public square of Bethshon, where the Philistines had hanged them on the day the Philistines killed Saul at Gilboa.

And he brought up from there the bones of Saul and the bones of his son Jonathan. And they gathered the bones of those who were hanged, and they buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the land of Benjamin to Enzelah in the tomb of Kish, his father.

And they did all that the king commanded. And after that, God responded to the plea for the land.

There was war again between the Philistines and Israel.

And David went down together with his servants, and they fought against the Philistines. And David grew weary, and Ish-bib-nab, one of the descendants of the giants who spear-weighed 300 shekels of bronze and who was armed with a new sword, thought to kill David.

But Abishai, the son of Zariah, came to him and attacked the Philistines and killed him. And then David's men swore to him, you shall no longer go out with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel.

[4:18] And this there was again, after this there was again war with the Philistines at Gob. Then Sibakai, the Hushethite, struck down Saph, who was one of the descendants of the giants.

And there was again war with the Philistines at Gob. And Elhanan, the son of Jara-Oregim, the Bethlehemite, struck down Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. And there was again war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, 24 in number.

And he also was descended from the giants. And when he taunted Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimei, David's brother, struck him down.

These four were descended from the giants in Gath. And they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants. And that is the word of the Lord.

[5 : 30] Now this last part of 2 Samuel is something that's kind of an epilogue almost. Really just the end of the life of King David and what's going on here.

Of course he's still alive in 1 Kings. And a lot of people believe that from the end of 2 Samuel 20 all the way to 1 Kings chapter 1, that's kind of where the story goes.

Goes. It kind of ends in 2 Samuel 20, you know, the chronological story. And then goes and picks back up in 1 Kings chapter 1.

And these accounts in chapters 21 through 24 are all kind of maybe to wrap up the book of 2 Samuel.

Or really 1 and 2 Samuel. So these accounts are not necessarily in chronological order. They're not necessarily, you know, they don't seem to have a great deal of order.

[6 : 31] But there is a bit of an order in terms of what they mean. What we're going to see here is this particular message talking about avenging the Gibeonites.

has something in common with what's going to be in chapter 24. That there is a reparation that has to be paid for a debt, a sin debt. This time it is the sin debt of King Saul, David's predecessor.

In chapter 24 it's going to be David's sin. That he's going to have to pay a penalty to appease that sin debt. And so there's that as well.

And then there's also accounts of men that had fought with David. And so we read part of that at the end of chapter 21. We'll see some more of that in chapter 23.

Even more as well as they list the entire men of these mighty men. 37 mighty men that will be listed there.

[7 : 31] And so we and then chapters 22 is something completely different on that as well. So we have interesting tidbits that we'll be giving here.

And also these are kind of tall weeds to begin with. I mean how do you talk about what's happening right here? It's hard to take.

It's unlike anything we face today. And maybe it is like some things we face today as well. But I want to break it down into two different parts.

The part going from verses 1 to 14. And then the second part picks up in verse 15. So this sermon is called Facing the Past.

And the first part they're facing the cost of a broken covenant. The cost of a broken covenant. And something we need to recognize is that anytime an oath is given. And there's all kinds of oaths throughout the Old Testament.

[8 : 31] In many ways you can almost call the entire Old Testament an oath. Especially the law. An oath between God and his people. And they are binding.

It's a simple reality of that. These oaths are quite binding. And they don't really move. And whenever they are broken.

Especially when you have an oath to your Lord. Have an oath to God. And we talked about this morning of God's holiness. The Lord's holiness. Because of that.

You don't want to take his name in vain. That's breaking the third commandment. Taking the Lord's name in vain is more than cursing. It's simply saying his name means nothing.

It's as if it means nothing to you. That's what's going on. And when you break an oath. That's simply what is going on there. You are treating the Lord's name as if it means nothing to you.

[9 : 26] And so when we go back to other passages of scripture in the past. We see what's going on here. We see that in Genesis chapter 9. There's the floods have happened.

The ark has floated. The waters have receded. The ark has landed. Noah is able to get out with his family. There's a rainbow. And then there's something else talked about after that.

His descendants. Talks about Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Something terrible happens. And Noah does something. He curses Canaan. And it's something that has lasting value in great ways.

And because of that. Well, not necessarily because of that. But he may be onto something. The fact that Canaan. Or the Canaanites were chosen.

Or at least were set apart by God for judgment. And that's what's going on here. And there's all kinds of places throughout the Old Testament. And especially the law.

[10:30] That talks about the Canaanites. You may see those lists. The Hittites. And the Hivites. And the Amorites. And the other Ites. That are all Canaanites. They all descend from Canaan.

They are, as Israel is to go into their promised land. They will find these people. And they are to basically destroy them. And that's what they're supposed to do in this situation.

So that's what happens in the book of Joshua. After the 40 years in the wilderness. Joshua is able to go in. The first place he faces is Jericho right there on the border. And we know the story of what happens there.

And then Ai. And some of us may know that story as well. What goes on there. And then so great battles in Joshua. Great victory in Ai.

And then this happens in chapter 9 of Joshua. These Gibeonites. They kind of appear. And they tell Joshua and the Israelites. That they are impressed with what their God is doing through them.

[11:33] That they have come from a far ambiguous country. Out there in the middle of nowhere. La la land. Wherever. Doesn't matter. And they came. And they're going to give him praise.

And they're going to give the Lord praise for the great things that the Israelites are doing. And they want to serve them. And they want to honor them. And in verse 15 of chapter 9 in Joshua.

The Israelites have an oath. They basically take an animal. Cut it in half. And simply they make an oath.

As God is my witness. We will honor each other. That we will have this oath. That basically the Israelites will not go after the Gibeonites.

And kill them. And of course the Gibeonites will serve the Israelites. Is really what that's about. You know. We're cutting this animal. Signifying. You know.

[12:29] If we break this oath. We deserve to be cut like this animal has been cut. And so. That's where it goes back to this point. Now we have no idea about. Well.

We do have an idea. Because it says here in chapter 21. But there's no other place recorded about Saul. Killing the Gibeonites. And so. We just have to take this.

For our word. At this point. And so it's interesting. As well. You would think they might want to remember that. Especially remembering the oath from Joshua chapter 9.

But apparently that had been forgotten about. And whatever was going on. As Saul in his gusto was cleansing Israel. Or whatever he happened to be doing. He went after the Gibeonites.

And. And he broke an oath. And that. And that. And that oath had dire consequences. It wasn't just for King Saul himself. But it was dire consequences for the entire nation of Israel.

[13:27] As well. We see those consequences in the form of this famine. Many years later as well. You might say. I mean. King Saul. Is dead.

King Saul had been dead for 30 years. Easily. And so. Years after. Years after his sons had also died.

Obviously many of them. At least three of them died. With him. In the same battle. And so. All this happening. Yet there is a famine. In the land.

And. And after. That time period. David goes to the Lord. Seeks out the Lord. And the Lord tells him exactly what. Has happened. And so.

It's. It's an interesting. Idea. What do you do with this. Kind of situation. So. We have to recognize. That oaths are binding.

[14:21] And we need to see that for our own selves as well. It really the. You know. Jesus gives us. Instruction on that. We don't need to be. Making oaths.

Like the Pharisees made oaths. Just. By. By heaven. Or. Or. By earth. Or. Even by Jerusalem. Or by my own head. Or by my mother.

Or wherever. You know. They don't need me making oaths. Along. Along these lines. The reality is. Our yes. Needs to be yes. And our no. Be needs to be no. We need to be people.

Of our word. So. Oaths are definitely. A binding thing. But we see. In verses. One and two. At the beginning of this chapter.

That there is something. That is merciful. In this situation. The famine. You know. We may think. Is not very merciful. But we need to understand. That clarifying.

[15:14] Clarification. Is merciful. In this situation. So we need to see. What's going on. After the famine. As the famine. Is going on. The third year.

It begins. It's not letting up. The crops are not growing. As they ought to grow. The rain's not coming. As it ought to come. David seeks the Lord. And the Lord tells him. What happened.

That's really. An amazing idea. An amazing thought. That the Lord actually. Tells him. What's going on. You know. We may not think.

That. That too much about it. May take it for granted. There is a. Around. Around this particular time period. As well. Maybe a few hundred years later. There was.

This. Poem. Or. Or writing. That was. Given. Written. By someone. From the near east. And. The translator. Translates this. Prayer to.

[16:09] Every God. And I don't have. The word for word. But. It's an interesting. Piece. That was written here. And this. This worshiper. Is just simply.

Praying. To all the. Gods and goddesses. The ones he knows. And the ones he doesn't know.

About at all. Because some god. Or goddess. Has inflicted.

Illness and. Suffering upon him. He does not know. Which gods or goddesses. Had been offended.

He does not know. What his offense has been. He laments.

That no one knows. Whether he's committing sin. Or doing good. As he lives out his life. That's an interesting. Idea there.

At the end there. That nobody knows. Whether they're sinning. Or whether they're. Doing well.

Nobody knows. But yet. Because of the old testament.

[17:03] Because of the law. That the lord has given. The Israelites. Know. And we know. And that's an amazing. That's an amazing thought. That there is clarification.

In this idea. And it is merciful. It's great mercy. And it leads to the mercy. Of Christ. And leads to the mercy. Of the cross.

And redemption. And eternal life. In him. Because there is. We know. What is sin. And what is not.

And we know. Because we see. What the law says.

And what the bible says. Is sin. That we can measure. Ourselves. According to that standard. And recognize. That we're sinners. It's obvious.

And so that's an amazing idea. Another thing. We need to see. From this text. Is. Is that atonement. Is not pretty. It is not a pretty thing.

[17:57] At all. We. Tend to gloss over. A lot of things. When it comes to. The cross of Christ. You know. That's the main. Atonement. We talk about. You know. We like to have.

That shiny cross. We like to sing songs. That. That. That. You know. Glorify the cross. And. Clean it up. Almost. In ways. There's one. That's on the radio.

I think we've sung it here as well. I like the song. It's one of the better songs. Playing on the radio right now. But it's. At the cross. Where your love. Ran red.

And my sin. Washed white. And it's a great song. It's a good song of worship. But it kind of cleans up. The language. Doesn't it? It doesn't really. Really bring out.

What that's about. And. And. It just. It just says. Your love ran red. Like that's going to explain.

Everything. About the atonement. Right there. It.

[18:51] It. It. It. It. Fall.

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grudge they may have but but nonetheless it's just simply it's just simply saying you know that this has to happen we've been told what's going on we've been told us why we have this this famine and we need to make atonement we need to make reparations for this you know so here's David you can imagine pulling out the wallet you know if you put it in 21st century nomenclature you know trying to say what can I do to you know what can I give to you what can I do in order to make this go away and for there to be rain again you got to also understand the Gibeonites were in Israel it wasn't raining on them either and so you know they say something kind of ambiguous don't really know what it means the Gibeonites said it's not a matter of silver or gold it's not even a matter of Saul and his house neither is it for us to put any man to death in Israel I mean it's not really up to us at all and then so the king says okay get to the point what do you what do you need us to do and then that's what this work comes out verse 6 let seven of Saul's sons be given to us so that we may hang them before the Lord at Gibeah of Saul the chosen one of the Lord and the king and the king actually agrees to that says I will give them I mean it it makes no sense I mean you would think okay maybe there can find a third party maybe do some negotiation maybe they can have their version of the Nobel Peace Prize given to them by the negotiation of of of and then you know maybe that could you know help to make reparation of that you know why are you going to kill someone what what would be the reason for that it doesn't make any sense at all well this is an

interesting thought seven of his sons it is an idea of completion it's it's also going back to the family of Saul going back to the person who actually committed the crime of of breaking the oath as well there's a verse in scripture that that some people have used to say that you know why this is wrong Deuteronomy 24 16 fathers shall not be put to death for their children nor children put to death for their fathers each is to die for his own sin that's something that even our law understands we do not you know go after the children of of parents or go after others of at least uh at least down um for for the sins of of the uh of their parents necessarily we don't you know when a parent commits a crime we don't arrest the child for that you know the the child has to commit their own crimes in order to be arrested so so we we even have that um in in place as well we got to recognize this this is not just about Saul this is about Israel this is affecting everyone it's not an individual criminal case as this verse is is uh is given in context it's it's everyone and so there's going to have to be something extraordinary that happens and and this is definitely an extraordinary thing and there's still a lot of questions that can be asked and and i read commentaries about this trying to figure out and guess what a lot of the commentators just didn't know what to do with this some even said i mean one in particular actually said this didn't happen that david lied about it and um and and he was just really trying to figure out a way to to get rid of saul's family i mean it's an interesting idea but that's not true it just that that doesn't help anything at all and uh and that's just not the way way it is that's that's his doctrine and or that's that's his way of of saying it but that's not true we have to think of it as i mean it says it we believe it we have to believe what it says that that's actually happened and so it's ugly

that's all we can say about it and i i think there's a reason why it's hard to even just explain what this is about because atonement is an ugly thing we need to recognize that every time atonement is made every time there is a blood sacrifice for uh for the covering of a sin it is an ugly thing it is meant to be ugly leviiticus chapter one the israelites were well used to that every time they took a young bull to the tabernacle or later the temple uh they would slit its throat they would skin it they would cut it into pieces they would wash the insides of it they would wash the legs out and then the priest would burn it on the altar that's every time and if you can imagine having had happening time and time and time again that very day as every single family comes with their young to make sacrifice all the sounds all the smells it it was nasty it was repulsive and you know we don't think about that today because we don't have to do it it's been done for us though and it was just as nasty and repulsive as well and the lord did that nasty and repulsive thing on our behalf so our sins could be forgiven in hebrews chapter 9 verses 11 through 12 it says but when christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come then through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands that is not of this creation he entered once for all into the holy places not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood thus securing an eternal redemption once for all securing an eternal redemption and so i am thankful when reading this that we don't have to do this anymore and i'm thankful that christ has um you know his his death has saves us from sin i mean it forgives us some sin and it and it it it changes us and and redeems us and as we are sanctified and as we will be forever uh glorified with him in heaven looking forward to that day i mean this is it's a powerful thing that happened but we have to remember and i think verses like this help us to remember the gore of that moment and also something we need to also understand is that loyalty is a powerful thing as well we see that twice uh at least in two different people uh we see that first with david uh as as uh you know he was searching out for those sons there was one particular son that he didn't go to because of a covenant a covenant that he made with jonathan and we also remember that from chapter 9 of 2nd samuel uh the the where the covenant of kindness with with mephibosheth and so he didn't go after mephibosheth he didn't uh choose mephibosheth to be um set apart for this judgment uh he went after seven other of saul's sons as well so there was a strong devotion to that covenant uh you know in order to repair make reparations for a covenant broken we don't need to be breaking covenants other covenants and then there was another love there was another devotion that was going on here and it was ritzpah um in verse 10 and following this is the lady who happened to be a concubine of saul and uh and she had children uh through saul and and and she you know she did something very very lovely in her mourning in her grieving she took sackcloth in verse 10 spread it for herself on the rock and she stayed beginning the harvest until rain fell upon them from the heavens she did not allow the birds to come upon them by day the beasts to come upon them by night so she fought away all these things and and you know they were hanging there the entire time until it rained i mean this was not something that they just you know they took him down once once

uh you know dave you know once nightfall came no they they kept him there in that that entire time and uh you know they they were decaying as as a body would normally decay and and she was doing this and and a nasty horrible thing at the same time but so such love as well in that grief and david responded in kind um his response when he found out what this was going on verse 12 went and took the bones of saul bones of jonathan uh from the men of jabesh gilead if you remember that uh from the end of first samuel saul and his three sons uh died in battle with the philistines and um and of course uh apparently they brought him to a location that they were going to shame the bodies and they were going to you know have their way with them and um and whatever it might be to to really shame israel israel that was going on embarrass israel and the men of jabesh gilead uh went in undercover and uh and and and really uh risked their lives to to take their bodies and to give them a proper burial in jabesh gilead um and david took their bones and took their uh remains and brought them to uh the house of saul saul's father and and buried them in that location and you know gave them a little bit of uh of of closure i guess so to speak so so there there was a a loyalty there and there was a love and i think that was also part of david's devotion to to jonathan his his best friend his covenant friend so this isn't um quite the chapter and a lot a chapter it would be easy to fly over um you wouldn't you know you wouldn't want to think about this chapter you know valentine's day is coming up i'm going to preach on second samuel 21 not really i have actually heard about the ritzpah uh verse on uh on mother's day now and i i've i have heard that before um but that's that was interesting um and then the next part facing the giants and uh and there are a bunch of giants here four to be uh four to be exact and uh starting in verse 15 it talks about david it talks about and how he's getting older he's not the young david that slew goliath uh he is getting older and he is growing weary on the battlefield and one of the giants in verse 16 this uh crazy name ish benob one of the descendants of the giants these giants are what we call the rephaim um these rephaim giants um uh it was a it was a a race or a a category of people i guess uh that were big and we we noticed those from numbers chapter 13 and 14 if you notice remember the 12 spies who were picked each from the the 12 tribes of israel and they were to go into the land and spy out the land and they came back with their report and they all said giants those guys were huge 10 of them said i don't think so two of them said let's get them everyone went with the 10 as you know about that and so there was some fear with those giants and remember first samuel 17 you know that big tough goliath who was nine feet nine inches tall uh thereabouts and and so yeah they never seen anything like that or whether

[31 : 35] they had or not you know they were still facing him and he was asking for a champion to come out and face him and and guess what they were fearful and they were just standing there for many days in fear and so there are two different occasions the israelites saw those giants and both occasions fearful saul was head and shoulders above the rest he was fearful even david's older brother who was such a strapping guy that samuel said oh he's the next king of course he is makes sense he was in fear and so there are so many things people fearful at this situation of course david stood up and and uh and by god's power uh goliath was slain and we have four other occasions here it just uh it we don't know exactly when they happened um in in in the life of king david uh one of them was probably closer to the end uh there the first one but there there's there's that first one so ishoboshet uh or ishbi benab whatever harry pronounced that he had this spear weighing 300 shekels of bronze he was about to throw it at david abishai the son of uh zariah who's david's sister uh joab's brother uh he came and he and he was able to conquer the philistine uh at that point and also protect david at that in that situation uh one thing we need to see here is not just abishai but also uh the fact that they were protecting david and and they really had a um they really really wanted to preserve this king as well and not just the king but also his line because it is through david's line that savior will come it's through david's line it's promised that all the other kings of israel would come as well and so we don't want to quench as it says in verse 17 the lamp of israel that davidic line and that davidic line we know goes down to christ um so this isn't this is a good uh a good situation there they preserving god's king but but also this passage of scripture honors god's servants abishai being one of them but there are three others as well it says in verse 18 um you know the they were at war again with the philistines uh sibakai the hushethite struck down saf who was one of the descendants of the giants so once again another giant came down and and another guy and one of david's mighty men was able to slay to slay him as well another war with philistines and gob uh and elhanan the son of jar origem the bethlehemite struck down goliath the gittite hey wait a minute that's goliath the gittite that that's that's the guy david slew well there's three different ways to look at this and um there could be another goliath because i mean there's two

mephiboshes already in this passage that could happen that's one um another one it could be maybe a scribal error like the brother of githa goliath that kind of thing another one this is interesting is that elhanon is david david slew or elhanon is called david uh it says that elhanon is the bethlehemite david is the bethlehemite kind of makes sense so i don't know how that how that's supposed to go there but nonetheless um another giant that was slain and then there was another giant uh listed in verse 21 uh well actually starting in verse 20 um that guy with 24 fingers and toes yuck all right six fingers on each hand six toes on each foot uh definitely a monstrous thing i mean they might as well just say one eye right there and and he's taunting israel we've seen that before too with goliath but what happens

they stand around in fear they're wondering who in the world's gonna save him no no this guy jonathan the son of shimeh david's brother strikes strikes him down and so in chapter 17 of first samuel you see the giant coming out and you see the israelites in fear this time you see all these giants coming out what do the israelites do strike him down just like they would do anything else in battle that's a simple thought so so how far they've come in this way how far have they come and uh and i think that that really uh really goes well with david's um david's army and the fact that he was a great general the fact that he kind of showed them the way to do that um you know got to remember david was one he was not armed to the teeth he had five smooth stones with that slingshot only needed one of them you know that's just that that was just the simple idea and of course when you looked at the the boy david conquering this big giant you don't think oh wow he was a pretty powerful guy no you think wow he serves a mighty god and and this is something that that they that they've came to understand under david the king is that they serve a mighty god uh the next chapter we will see that um i think as a response to uh these um these accounts of what a mighty how how they serve a mighty god and and uh and uh and this is really a psalm it's not just psalm um chapter 22 of second samuel the psalm is also psalm 18 of the bible as well we'll talk about that next week and then finally something at the to to look at this as well they were able to silence god's enemies so they honored god's servants but they also silenced god's enemies in this way uh these giants were just representative of the enemies of god and the people and these people wanted to wipe out uh god's people and and and god was able to use the might and the uh and and and strength of israel and their men of war to be able to to silence god's enemies to destroy god's enemies and also i i think it points to uh the reality that um christ is the one that we rely on to silence god's enemies and these these men are just simply need to when we see these men we see david and and his mighty men that are doing these great feats we need to recognize and see it pointing to jesus christ for he's the one that's fighting our battles he's the one that's silencing and and and taking out our enemies according to his power you