

2 Samuel 21:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.

Analysis

And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.

This verse contributes to the narrative of Famine and Giants, emphasizing justice, covenant obligations. The three-year famine traced to Saul's treaty violation demonstrates God's demand for covenant faithfulness and justice. The execution of Saul's descendants and Rizpah's faithful vigil over their bodies presents complex ethical questions. The Philistine giant battles demonstrate ongoing threats. Theological themes include multi-generational covenant obligations, the high cost of treaty violations, God's demand for justice, and His provision of strength for continued battles.

Historical Context

The historical setting of 2 Samuel 21 occurs during David's reign (circa 1010-970 BCE) over Israel's united monarchy. Archaeological discoveries, including the Tel Dan inscription mentioning the 'House of David,' corroborate biblical historicity.

Ancient Near Eastern customs regarding justice, covenant obligations provide crucial background. The geopolitical situation involved regional powers—Philistines, Ammonites, Arameans, Moabites, Edomites—as David consolidated and expanded Israel's territory. Cultural practices concerning kingship, warfare, covenant relationships, family dynamics, and religious observance differed significantly from modern Western contexts, requiring careful attention to avoid anachronistic interpretation while extracting timeless theological principles applicable across cultures and eras.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does this passage deepen your understanding of justice, covenant obligations?
2. What does this verse reveal about God's character, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?
3. In what specific ways can you apply this truth to your current circumstances and relationships this week?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|------|
| וַתֵּקַח | וְרִצְפָּה | בִּת | אֵיה | אֶת | הַשָּׂק | וַתִּטְּ הוּ | לָהּ |
| took | And Rizpah | the daughter | of Aiah | H853 | sackcloth | and spread | H0 |
| H3947 | H7532 | H1323 | H345 | | H8242 | H5186 | |
| אֶל | הַצֹּר | מִתְחִלָּת | קִצְר | עַד | נָתַן | | |
| H413 | it for her upon the rock | from the beginning | of harvest | H5704 | dropped | | |
| | H6697 | H8462 | H7105 | | H5413 | | |
| יָם | עַלֶּיהָ | מִן | הַשָּׁמַיִם | וְלֹא | נִתְּנָה | עַוֹף | |
| until water | H5921 | H4480 | of the air | H3808 | and suffered | neither the birds | |
| H4325 | | | H8064 | | H5414 | H5775 | |
| יָם | לָנוּחַ | עַלֶּיהֶם | יוֹמָם | וְאֶת | חַיֵּי הַ | הַשָּׂדֶה | |
| of the air | to rest | H5921 | on them by day | H853 | nor the beasts | of the field | |
| H8064 | H5117 | | H3119 | | H2416 | H7704 | |
| לַיְלָה: | | | | | | | |
| by night | | | | | | | |
| H3915 | | | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 21:23 (Parallel theme): His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

Zechariah 10:1 (Parallel theme): Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.

Joel 2:23 (Parallel theme): Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

1 Kings 21:27 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.

2 Samuel 3:7 (Parallel theme): And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ish-bosheth said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

Jeremiah 14:22 (Parallel theme): Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these things.

Deuteronomy 21:13 (Parallel theme): And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.

Deuteronomy 11:14 (Parallel theme): That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.

Joel 1:18 (Parallel theme): How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.

Ezekiel 39:4 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.