

2 Samuel 21:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)

Analysis

And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)

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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by 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

וְהַגִּבְעֹנִים יָמְּ אֵלֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר וְהַגִּבְעֹנִים יָמְּ אֵלֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר
called And the king the Gibeonites and said H413 the Gibeonites
H7121 H4428 H1393 H559 H1393

מִי־תֹרֶם אֲמָר כִּי הִנֵּה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבָנָיו לֵאמֹר
H3808 and the children of Israel H1992 H3588 H518 but of the remnant
H1121 H3478 H3499

וַיִּבְקֹשׁ לָהֶם נִשְׁבַּע וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְבָנָיו הָאֱמֹרִי
of the Amorites and the children of Israel had sworn H1992 sought
H567 H1121 H3478 H7650 H1245

יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבָנָיו וּבְקִנְיָתוֹ לְהַכֹּתָם וְשָׂאוּ
unto them and Saul to slay them in his zeal and the children of Israel
H7586 H5221 H7065 H1121 H3478

וַיהוּדָה:
and Judah
H3063