

## 2 SAMUEL OVERVIEW - LESSON 15

### I. CHAPTERS 21-24

#### A. The history of David is concluded with Chapter 20

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1. Ch's 21-24 form a six-part appendix to 2 Samuel
  - a. Concerned with David's discipline & lists of those fighting with David
  - b. Scholars are not able to definitively pin down when the events described occurred

#### B. Appendix Part 1: The famine

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1. (2 Sam 21.1a) Israel experiences three years of famine
  - a. David suspects that this is the Lord's purpose, and seeks His guidance
2. (21.1b-2) The Lord responded that it was because of the Gibeonites
  - a. Remember the story of the Gibeonites in Josh 9
    - 1). (Josh 9.1-5) They pose as not neighbors to the Israelites, but come from a far land to be servants
    - 2). (Josh 9.14-15) Joshua and the Israelites made peace with them by swearing a covenant before the Lord
  - b. But Saul attempted to eliminate them
    - 1). Perhaps to confiscate their land
    - 2). Perhaps to reward the Benjamites for supporting him
  - c. Regardless, Saul was breaking a national covenant before God
    - 1). And the people were as guilty for supporting him in it (Num 35.31-34)
    - 2). The famine was that punishment

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3. David seeks to correct the sin against the Gibeonites (21.3-4)
  - a. David asks the Gibeonites what atonement they would require
    - 1). David wants the curse of the famine on "...the inheritance of the Lord" > the land which God gave the Israelites to be lifted
  - b. The Gibeonites answer
    - 1). No amount of money would compensate their losses
      - a.) Saw this is Numb 35.31
    - 2). They also say they have no right to execute an Israelite
    - 3). David asks again what might be just compensation
4. The Gibeonites accept his repeated request (21.5-6)
  - a. They asked for seven of Saul's descendants to be turned over
    - 1). The request was in line with the prevailing "blood for blood" principle, and the solidarity of a family
    - 2). Further, by asking for Saul's sons, they brought the punishment as close to the perpetrator as they could hope for
    - 3). And they would hang them in Saul's home of Gibeah
    - 4). They couldn't take action against Israelites on their own, but if they were turned over for execution, then they could

b. They would "hang" them before the Lord

- 1). Heb yaw·kah can mean exposing by hanging, or impaling
- 2). In either case, such punishment was applied only after the person had been executed

c. David agreed to hand the seven Saulites over to the Gibeonites

5. David complies with the request (21.7-9)

a. He chooses the seven

- 1). Two sons of Saul and his concubine, Rizpah
- 2). Saul's eldest daughter Merab's five sons, i.e. Saul's grandsons
- 3). He spares Miphibosheth out of the oath he swore to Jonathan to preserve his line

b. The seven are executed and turned over to the Gibeonites, or executed by the Gibeonites

c. Were innocent men made to pay for a crime they didn't do ?

- 1). If so, David violated God's Law
- 2). But if these seven had taken part in Saul's attempt to exterminate the Gibeonites, then justice was done

6. Rizpah's vigil (21.10-14)

a. Rizpah, mother of two of the men, spread sackcloth where the executed seven men were hanging, and kept animals and birds from ravaging them

1). This was done until the famine ended and the rains fell

b. David heard of this, and decided to give respect to the men

1). He secured the bones of Jonathan and Saul from the men of Jabesh-gilead. who had rescued them from Beth-shan

a.) This underscores that David had no animosity toward the house of Saul

2). He had their bones buried in the tomb of Saul's father, Kish

3). He also had the bones of the seven men buried with them

c. vs 14: God was moved by further prayer of the people for the land's sake

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## C. Appendix Part 2: A list of David's Heroes

### 1. Overview

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- a. This part relates to battles early in David's reign, and the notable warriors who fought with him
  - 1). Scholars believe it sets the background for the song of deliverance which follows
- b. The pattern of battles with the Philistines
  - 1). They employed a giant to be their champion
    - a.) Remaining members of the Rephaim, a giant race which once were numerous in the region (Deut 2.10-11)

For chuckles, this is From

*The new Schaff-Herzog encyclopedia of religious knowledge: embracing Biblical, historical, doctrinal, and practical theology and Biblical, theological, and ecclesiastical biography from the earliest times to the present day (Vol. 1, p. iii).*

- 2). When the Israelites killed the giant, then the Philistines lost the courage from the giant, and the battle was over until the next giant was put forth
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### 2. David saved in battle (21.15-17)

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- a. The giant was Ishbi-benob
  - 1). He had a spear weighing 8 lbs
- b. David became weary in the fight, and was in mortal danger
- c. Abishai assisted him and killed the giant
- d. This caused the Israelite soldiers to insist that David not take part in battle anymore
  - 1). "the lamp of Israel" > the king

### 3. Philistines battled twice at Gob (21.18-19)

- a. Gob > located about 20 miles SE of Tel Aviv
- b. 1st battle: Sibbecai slays another giant, Saph
  - 1). (1 Chr 11.25,29) He was a member of the Thirty
    - a.) A military order for bravery in battle
  - 2). (1 Chr 27.11) Later made commander of the 8th division of David's army
- c. 2nd battle: Elhanan killed the giant, Lahmi, Goliath's brother
  - 1). (1 Chr 20.5)

### 4. The fourth Philistine giant falls (21.20-22)

- a. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot
  - b. He defied Israel to fight him
  - c. David's nephew, Jonathan killed him
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## D. Appendix Part 3: The Song of Deliverance

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### Overview of 2 Sam 22 - a song of David to the Lord

#### a. Written by David to acknowledge God's safekeeping & victories

- 1). Essentially the text of Psalm 18, with a number of variations
- 2). David was careful to give God thanks and credit for the deliverances and victories of the past, and to express uttermost confidence in God's mercy and goodness for the future

#### b. Scholars not in agreement on when this was written

##### 1). Some think this was written after Absalom's rebellion

- a.) (2 Sam 22.1) Saul is mentioned in vs 1, not likely to be dwelled on toward the end of David's reign
- b.) Some of the expressions David uses are unlikely if it was written after his fall with Bathsheba
  - e.g. he speaks of the cleanness of his hands

- 2). More likely to have been written after Saul's death and David's victories

#### c. Written in four parts

- 1). Introduction: vss 2-4
- 2). Narrative of God's interventions on his behalf: vss 5-19
- 3). Foundation for his protection and success: vss 20-30
- 4). Specific acts of God's intervention: vss 31-51
  - a.) God's goodness and character are highlighted
  - b.) Confidence that God's character will allow this to continue for him and his kingdom
  - c.) Theme rises from his earthly kingdom to the Messianic Kingdom, with assurances that God's protection extends to every believer

## 2. Praise of God (2 Sam 22.2-4)

- a. Given the content and focus of the four parts mentioned, this is the foundation of the entire song

- b. Notice the various illustrations David uses to show his dependence on God

- 1). "rock" > stability, able to be counted on
- 2). "fortress", "stronghold" > a place of safety defending against onslaughts
- 3). "deliverer" > one who not only defends, but defends to the point of rescue and redemption
- 4). "shield" > a deflector of attacking blows
- 5). "horn of my salvation" >
  - a.) In the OT, a horn is a symbol of might, like the strength of bulls
  - b.) Coupled with salvation, God has the might to deliver

- 6). "refuge" > a place to escape to

- c. As expressed by James E. Smith in his *Old Testament Survey Series: The Books of History* ....

The picture is one of "unchangeable faithfulness, permanence, and impregnable safety"

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d. The overall tenor of this opening

1). David recognized God as the Author of all his deliverances

- a.) No recognition to himself
- b.) No recognition to his leaders
- c.) All human actions are out of view
- d.) A lesson in itself to us in our present stresses

2). David described God's provisions repeatedly with adjective "my"

- a.) He didn't limit God's actions to a general description of God's provision for believers
- b.) He regarded these as his personal benefits to be rejoiced in
  - Luther said that the whole of the 23rd Psalm hinges on the word "my" in the first verse
    - .. "The Lord is a Shepherd" is much different from "The Lord is my Shepherd"
  - The word "my" makes these provisions for David personal actions on his behalf

e. Note (22.4)

- 1). The verbs "I call" and "I am saved" are imperfect > continuing actions
- 2). David's last comment in all this praise > he called on the Lord, "...Who is worthy to be praised..."

- a.) Luther's comments on this give a great focus on the importance of this phrase ...

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"This doctrine is in tribulation the most ennobling and truly golden.

One cannot imagine what assistance such praise of God is in pressing danger. For as soon as you begin to praise God the sense of the evil will also begin to abate, the comfort of your heart will grow; and then God will be called on with confidence. There are some who cry to the Lord and are not heard. Why is this? Because they do not praise the Lord when they cry to Him, but go to Him with reluctance; they have not represented to themselves how sweet the Lord is, but have looked only to their own bitterness. But no one gets deliverance from evil by looking simply upon his evil and becoming alarmed at it; he can get deliverance only by rising above his evil, hanging it on God, and having respect to His goodness. Oh, hard counsel, doubtless, and a rare thing truly, in the midst of trouble to conceive of God as sweet, and worthy to be praised; and when He has removed Himself from us and is incomprehensible, even then to regard Him more intensely than we regard our misfortune that keeps us from Him! Only let one try it, and make the endeavour to praise God, though in little heart for it; he will soon experience an enlightenment."

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### 3. God's deliverance of David

#### a. David's need for God's aid (2 Sam 22.5-7)

##### 1). Note David's vivid description of how deep he was in danger

- a.) "waves of death"
- b.) "torrents of destruction"
- c.) "cords" and "snares"
- d.) What's the image > David feels like he's trapped in a deadly net

##### 2). Why the net imagery

- a.) When you're caught in a net, there seems to be no way out
- b.) You are surrounded by likely destruction
- c.) You call out for help to escape

##### 3). Was David exaggerating ?

- a.) Saul had hurled javelins at him in the royal court
- b.) Saul's best troops scoured the wilderness looking for him
- c.) Syrian armies were attacking him
- d.) Nations were beginning to conspire together against him

##### 4). David called out to God

- a.) He knew God was his reliable help for escaping the dangers he faced
- b.) God heard his cries
- c.) Note again the personal relationship with God David relied on vs 7b: "my cry for help came into His ears."

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#### b. God's response to David's cries for help (22.8-15)

##### 1). Note God's immediate and startling response

> used His awesome power to aid David

- a.) vs 8, 10: God's anger at David's enemies produces strong earthly effects
  - A reminder that God controls all of the earth
- b.) vs 9: The degree of God's anger is expressed in terms of heat, fire, and smoke
- c.) vs 11: God's coming to David's rescue was swift
- d.) vs 12-14: His appearance was awesome
  - God is also Lord of the heavens
- e.) vs 15: He scattered David's enemies before Him

##### 2). Is this an illusion or actual actions ?

- a.) At minimum, it describes God's anger, power in acting to come to David's rescue
- b.) Evil forces in the spirit world were behind David's troubles, and, at least, God struck out against them to free David
- c.) Believers should take courage in how swiftly God acts to come to their defense
  - But not necessarily in the way we expect or requested
    - .. Valuable for believers to reflect back on the number of trials they have come through and seen God's hand
  - Remember that David cried out in what appears to be unwavering faith

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- c. God rescues David from his enemies (22.16-20)
- 1). vss 16-18: God acted directly to remove David from the dangers in which he was ensnared
  - 2). vs 19: Note again the direct protection of David by God
  - 3). vs 20: God's rescue was complete
    - a.) He brought him into a "broad place" > broad safety in contrast to the dangers collapsing on David
    - b.) God did this because David pleased Him
- d. Bottom line
- 1). God has the power to deliver > He is truly sovereign over everything and everybody
    - a.) vs 17: "... from on high, He took me ..." "...drew out.."
    - b.) vs 18: "...delivered..."
    - c.) vs 20: "...brought forth..." "...rescued..."
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These notes were originally written as I composed this study for our Faculty & Staff Bible Study at the local university. It is important to note that they follow the narrative in *Old Testament Survey Series: The Books of History* by James E. Smith (1995, College Press Publishing Company) very closely. It is the best summary I found, so it is the foundation for the study. In many cases, I used Dr. Smith's words directly, sometimes paraphrased them for clarity, sometimes enlarged on them with other resources. Since I didn't expect to publish the notes, I did not cite them at the time. It is now difficult to distinguish quotes from Dr. Smith, material from other resources, or what thoughts the Spirit gave me. Suffice to say that, if it is insightful to your spiritual growth, give all the glory to the Spirit, some credit to Dr. Smith, and none to me. I'm just the Spirit-led editor and teacher.

*Bob Kostrubanic, November 5, 2021*