

THE TENACITY OF A MOTHER'S FAITH

Mother's Day Special: "Since it is the week of Mother's Day, I decided to teach a special lesson on the tenacity of one mother's faith. While there are a lot of mothers to choose from in the Bible, I chose **Rizpah**, the concubine wife of King Saul (2 Sam.3:7; 21:11). Her name in Hebrew means **live coal** or we might say **live wire.**"

She was a Hivite and probably a Gibeonite (Unger, pg.929). Gibeon was a Hivite city. Hivite was one of the seven remnant nations of the land of Canaan (Joshua 9). The Gibeonite's made a treaty of deceit with Joshua that is important to this lesson (Josh.9:1-2, 7, 15-16, 22-27; 11:18-19) [**"except the Hivites living in Gibeon"**].

Gibeon was part of the territory given to the tribe of Benjamin. This was the tribe of King Saul (1 Chron.8:29-33; 9:35-39; Josh.18:21-28). Gibeon became a Levite town (Josh.21:1, 17-19). It was at Gibeon that Solomon while offering a sacrifice was asked by the Lord, "What do you wish me to give you?" (1 Kings 3:3-5, 12).

**This brief history brings us to our passage and four-point lesson entitled,
THE TENACITY OF A MOTHER'S FAITH.**

1. Our lesson text told us that the priest-nation of Israel was under the second of five cycles of divine discipline:

"And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Ex.19:6)

The five cycles of Divine Discipline to the priest-nation of Israel is recorded in Lev.26:16-34

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| • First Cycle | (Lev.26:16-17) | Health |
| • Second Cycle | (Lev.26:18-20) | Economics plus the 7 times more |
| • Third Cycle | (Lev.26:21-22) | Plagues and death |
| • Forth Cycle | (Lev.26:23-26) | Pestilence, sword, and starvation |
| • Fifth Cycle | (Lev.26:27-34) | Cannibalism, invasion, and desolation |

The second cycle is identified by David as famine – "And I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make the sky like iron and earth like bronze. And your strength shall be spent uselessly, for your land shall not yield its produce and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit." (Lev.26:19-20).

"Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David sought the presence of the Lord, and the Lord said, '**It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he put the Gibeonites to death.**'" (2 Sam.21:1)

2. What King Saul did to the Gibeonites is not recorded in the Bible but briefly mentioned in 2 Samuel 21:1-5.

Some believe that it may have occurred during 1 Sam.14:47-48 – "Now when Saul had taken over the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, the sons of Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment."

"And the men of Israel said to the Hivites, 'Perhaps you are living within our land; how then shall we make a covenant with you?' (Josh.9:7)

Whatever Saul's motivation, he violated the word of God involving treatment of the alien allowed to live in Israel as well as attacking a Levite town (Ex.22:21; Deut.1;16-17; 24:17-18; Josh.9:22-27; 11:19).

“So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them (now the Gibeonites were not of the sons of Israel but of the remnant of the Amorites, and the sons of Israel made a covenant with them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the sons of Israel and Judah). (2 Sam.21:2)

This resulted in another violation of the word of God regarding pollution of the Promised Land (Num.35:33-34) “For blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, **except by the blood of him who shed it.**” (35:33)

3. Both King David and Rizpah inherited a problem that neither of them was responsible except how to deal with it as it affected their lives.

- David had to deal with the problem of the second cycle of divine discipline from Saul’s failure.
- Rizpah has to deal with the problem of David’s solution to his problem.

Apparently David chose to apply Num.35:33-34 because of the second cycle – “Except by the blood of him who shed it.” David asked the Gibeonites how he could make atonement. (2 Sam.21:3) They answered “give us the seven sons from the house of Saul” (2 Sam.21:6).

Their answer brought both Rizpah and Saul’s daughter Merab into David’s problem (2 Sam.21:6-9). David was able to spare Jonathan’s son by requiring the 2 sons of Rizpah and 5 sons of Merab (2 Sam.21:7-8). Michal was childless (2 Sam.6:23).

The Gibeonites hanged them at the beginning of the barley harvest or Passover/ Unleavened Bread (2 Sam.21:9).

4. Rizpah fought scavenger birds by day and scavenger beasts by night “From the beginning of the harvest until it rained on them from the sky.” (2 Sam.21:10)

What was this mother hoping to happen by fighting for seven dead sons? What Category of the Word of God (CBD) was she holding God and David accountable to?

Possibly (Deut.21:22-23) “And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance.” **The same for Jesus Christ (John 19:31, 47)**

How long did this mother fight before David and God acknowledged her / their Word (CBD)? She fought either for 8 days (Passover and Unleavened Bread / Barley harvest) or for 50 days (Passover to Pentecost / Wheat harvest) (Ruth 2:23; Num.28:26; Ex.34:22).

It rarely rains during these two harvest seasons. “Is it not the wheat harvest today? I will call to the Lord, that he may send thunder and rain. Then you will know and see that your wickedness is great which you have done in the sight of the Lord by asking for yourselves a king. So Samuel called to the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel.” (1 Sam.12:17-18)

The rain said that the drought and Divine Discipline was over for David, but it wasn’t over for Rizpah – “When it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.” (1 Sam.21:11)

In truth, it wasn’t over for David if he didn’t address Rizpah (live coal) problem – “So that you do not defile your land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance.” (Deut.21:23b)

This moved David to give Saul and Jonathan and the seven sons of the house of Saul a proper burial (1 Sam.21:12-14) – “And after that God was moved by entreaty for the land.” (1 Sam.21:14b).