

Breaking Covenant Can Bring Divine Judgment
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Broken covenants can result in judgments, even covenants that never should have been entered into. Prayers for relief from these judgments can be hindered until justice is performed. 2 Samuel 21:1-14

The Gibeonites, who Saul had killed in his zeal, were a part of the ancient Hivites, whom Moses and Israel had been commanded to utterly destroy. The princes of Israel, during Joshua's day, had been deceived into making a covenant with the Gibeonites, believing the Gibeonites were a people other than those they were commanded to destroy. Though they soon afterwards realized that they had been deceived, yet the covenant stood firm. For they did not make the covenant under any specified pre-conditions, but openly. Therefore, they could not break the covenant once made, though it was to their disadvantage, and ultimately had been made contrary to God's express will and purposes. Joshua 9 (especially verse 21)

This is a good example of a people group "swearing to their own hurt, and not relenting." (Psalm 15:4) Interesting also to note, how many years passed between the time that Saul broke the covenant that Israel had made with the Gibeonites, and the resultant famine that came as a judgment of God.

[Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary](#)

2 Samuel 21:1-9 "Every affliction arises from sin, and should lead us to repent and humble ourselves before God; but some troubles especially show that they are sent to bring sin to remembrance. God's judgments often look a great way back, which requires us to do so, when we are under his rebukes. It is not for us to object against the people's smarting for the sin of their king; perhaps they helped him. Nor against this generation suffering for the sin of the last. God often visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, and he gives no account of any matters. Time does not wear out the guilt of sin; nor can we build hopes of escape upon the delay of judgments. If we cannot understand all the reasons of Providence in this matter, still we have no right to demand that God should acquaint us with those reasons. It must be right, because it is the will of God, and in the end it will be proved to be so. Money is no satisfaction for blood. It should seem, Saul's posterity trod in his steps, for it is called a bloody house. It was the spirit of the family, therefore they are justly reckoned with for his sin, as well as for their own. The Gibeonites did not require this out of malice against Saul or his family. It was not to gratify any revenge, but for the public good. They were put to death at the beginning of harvest; they were thus sacrificed to turn away the wrath of Almighty God, who had withheld the harvest-mercies for some years past, and to obtain his favour in the present harvest. In vain do we expect mercy from God, unless we do justice upon our sins. Executions must not be thought cruel, which are for the public welfare."

- http://biblecommenter.com/2_samuel/21-1.htm