

The Rizpah Spirit!
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But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Aiah's daughter Rizpah, whom she had borne to Saul, together with the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab, whom she had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite. ⁹ He handed them over to the Gibeonites, who killed them and exposed their bodies on a hill before the Lord. All seven of them fell together; they were put to death during the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning.

¹⁰ Rizpah daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. From the beginning of the harvest till the rain poured down from the heavens on the bodies, she did not let the birds touch them by day or the wild animals by night. —2 Samuel 21:8-10 NIV

During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said, "It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death." —2 Samuel 21:1 NIV

The Gibeonites answered him, "We have no right to demand silver or gold from Saul or his family, nor do we have the right to put anyone in Israel to death."

"What do you want me to do for you?" David asked.

⁵ They answered the king, "As for the man who destroyed us and plotted against us so that we have been decimated and have no place anywhere in Israel, ⁶ let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be killed and their bodies exposed before the Lord at Gibeah of Saul—the Lord's chosen one."

So the king said, "I will give them to you." —2 Samuel 21:4-6 NIV

**What was her reason for doing that?
Or, what was her goal, her desire, her aim?**

When David was told what Aiah's daughter Rizpah, Saul's concubine, had done, ¹² he went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the citizens of Jabesh Gilead. (They had stolen their bodies from the public square at Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hung them after they struck Saul down on Gilboa.) —2 Samuel 21:11-12 NIV

**If Rizpah would go to such extremes for her dead sons,
shouldn't we do the same for our living sons and daughters?**

***Mothers, are you willing to sacrifice more than you do
that your children will come to know Christ?***

Three Things That Give Meaning:

- 1. The Sackcloth.**
- 2. The Rock.**
- 3. The Birds and Beasts.**

1. SYMBOLISM OF THE SACKCLOTH.

**Throughout Scripture, we understand that sackcloth represents two things:
Repentance and Intercession.**

**The Hebrew word for “*repent*” means to relent; to change one’s mind; be grieved;
to express sympathy.**

**The Hebrew word for “*intercession*” means to strike; touch; intercede for; plead
with; cause to entreat; to pray.**

*The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest
to the least, put on sackcloth.*

*⁶ When Jonah’s warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took
off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. ⁷ This is the
proclamation he issued in Nineveh:*

“By the decree of the king and his nobles:

*Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or
drink. ⁸ But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently
on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. ⁹ Who knows? God may yet
relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”*

*¹⁰ When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented
and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.*

—Jonah 3:5-10 NIV

*If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My
face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their
sin and heal their land. —2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV*

***Church, if there’s ever been a time in history when we needed
to pray and intercede – it’s now!***

Sackcloth is a symbol of intercession.

So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. —Daniel 9:3

***The eternal destiny of our children is at stake.
The very core of our Christian values and heritage is at stake.
National prosperity and national security are at stake.
Our friends and loved ones are hanging in the balance.***

***We need to PUSH:
Pray Until Something Happens!***

*“Shout it aloud, do not hold back.
Raise your voice like a trumpet.
Declare to my people their rebellion
and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.
⁹ Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.
“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
¹⁰ and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.
¹¹ The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.
¹⁴ ...then you will find your joy in the Lord,
and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land
and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.”
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. —Isaiah 58:1, 9-11, 14 NIV*

2. SYMBOLISM OF THE ROCK.

Rizpah daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. From the beginning of the harvest till the rain poured down from the heavens on the bodies, she did not let the birds touch them by day or the wild animals by night. —2 Samuel 21:10 NIV

I believe the “rock” in this verse is a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ.

A better translation of this verse is that she “spread her sackcloth against the rock” — so as to form a shelter from the elements.

*He is the Rock, his works are perfect,
and all his ways are just.
A faithful God who does no wrong,
upright and just is he.
—Deuteronomy 32:4*

For the eyes of the Lord run to and from throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. —2 Chronicles 16:9

*The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him...and delivers them. —
Psalm 34:7*

He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. —Psalm 91:4

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people from this time forth and forever. —Psalm 125:2

For I, says the Lord, will be a wall of fire all around her and I will be the glory in her midst. —Zechariah 2:5

But not a hair of your head shall be lost... —Luke 21:18

*The Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven.
⁸ The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you. —Deuteronomy 28:7-8
NIV*

3. SYMBOLISM OF THE BIRDS AND BEASTS.

The BIRDS OF THE AIR represent Satan’s efforts to destroy us – he who is the prince and power of the air.

Lastly, the BEASTS OF THE FIELD represent the controlling substances of drugs and alcohol.

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

²⁹ Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. —Genesis 1:28-29 NIV

Question: What does Rizpah’s story teach us? What effect should it have on us?

- 1. You can spread your intercession upon the Rock and beat away the birds and beasts through your prayer.**
- 2. You can plead Jesus’ blood over their lives and pray a covering of protection over them.**
- 3. You can teach them the Word of God and instill knowledge and wisdom while they are young.**

...after that, God answered prayer in behalf of the land. —2 Samuel 21:14

Prayer still changes things!