

2nd Samuel Chapter 24

V: 1 The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel Vs: David / them, though we're not told what the specific offense was: God's people are held to a higher standard, others may get away with things that the child of God will not get away with.

Luke 12:47-48 ⁴⁷“And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. ⁴⁸But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

- “he” moved David against them... (NKJV – “He”, Hebrew no capital letters)
- God is for Israel, to be against them would seem to be against His character.

Psalm 56:9 “When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.”

Romans 8:31 “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

- In this passage the personal pro-noun “*he*” is referring to the one who consistent with his character is always against Israel, and that is Satan.

1 Chronicles 21:1 “And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.”

- God did allow this to take place, it was filtered through His loving hands.

V: 2-4 David instructs Joab to go through the nation from Dan in the North, to Beersheba in the South, and to number the people – meaning the army, those that can bear the sword – all the men between 20-50.

- To his credit Joab resists the king trying to persuade him not to do this thing.
- God had in the past called for a census of the people, but this was not of God. Numbering the people this way was a sin: the sin of pride – oh look how great our army is... it would also be a step towards depending on their army as opposed to depending on their God.

Psalm 20:7 “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.”

- The strength of Israel was not their army, the strength of Israel is their God!
- Often times David, and the nation had faced other nations that were greater and stronger than Israel, yet as they trusted and relied upon God, He gave them the victory.
- A nation's strength is in its devotion to God.

Proverbs 14:34 “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”

1 Chronicles 21:7 “And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel.”

V: 5-9 Joab and his men take a circuitous route through the nation counting the men of military age from one end of the country to the other.

- When Joab and the generals of the army came back they gave David the number of men.
- There is a difference between the numbers given in 2nd Samuel and 1 Chronicles. The difference is in how they are described.
- In Chronicles David is told that there are “a thousand thousand, and a hundred thousand” or 1,100,000 that drew the sword, and that in Judah there were 470,000 men that drew the sword.
- That was without counting Benjamin or the Levites, just because Joab despised his mission.
- In 2nd Samuel the numbers are 800,000 & 500,000 “valiant” men that drew the sword.
- The difference is in how they are described: that the age of military service was from 20-50, but not all of those were valiant, fighters as opposed to farmers with no desire or ability to fight.

V: 10-14 David was stricken in his heart; David was convicted by the Holy Spirit.

- David said: “I have sinned greatly in what I have done.”
- David confesses and acknowledges his sin, no attempt to soften or cover it up, he takes full responsibility for it.
- This is part of why David was a man after God's own heart; he was willing to admit he was wrong, to make confession, and to ask for forgiveness.

1 John 1:8-9 “⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- Scripture records at least 6 different times when David says “I have sinned...” When David confessed to adultery and murder he said “I have sinned...” yet here he says that he’s sinned “greatly” – most people would consider adultery & murder to be “greater” sins than that of numbering the people, but it might not be so.
- The sin of adultery and murder were sins of the flesh, yielding to lust, for which there were definite and severe consequences.
- The sin of numbering the people was a sin of the spirit.

2 Corinthians 7:1 “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

- This census was willful rebellion, it smacked of pride, the mother of all sin.

Proverbs 6:16-17 “¹⁶These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: ¹⁷A proud look...”

- Even Joab was against this – which would have been a clue.
- David asks God, he begs God to take away his iniquity, knowing that God is the only One who can take it away, we are incapable of doing that ourselves.

Romans 6:23 “The wages of sin is death...”

- The prophet Gad then approaches David with 3 options:
 1. 7 years of famine.
 2. 3 months of being wasted by their enemies.
 3. 3 days of pestilence upon the land.

Hebrews 12:5-8 “⁵... My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: ⁶For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. ⁷If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? ⁸But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”

- Our God is a forgiving God, but there are repercussions to our sin, we reap what we sow, the chastening.

Galatians 6:7-8 “⁷Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. ⁸For he that soweth to his flesh shall of

the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

- God gave David the privilege or the dilemma to choosing the consequences, 3 choices. David’s sin was that of the will, a deliberate choice on David’s part; so God required him to make a choice, to choose from some very difficult options, to again exercise his will.
- Gad leaves, allowing David to consider his options. When he returns, David must be praying earnestly, repenting of his sin, and seeking the Lord – when Gad returns there was an adjustment from their first discussion because God lowered the time of famine option from 7 years to 3 years. (**1 Chron. 21:12**)
- These 3 options stem from the punishments described in **Deuteronomy Ch. 28** which starts of describing the blessings for obedience, then the cursings for disobedience which fell into three basic categories: famine, military defeat, and pestilence.
- David doesn’t know what to do so he throws himself and the nation upon God’s mercy – which is always the smart thing to do.

Psalms 103:8 “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.”

Psalms 36:5 “Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”

V: 15-16 The Lord sends pestilence, referred to as the sword of the Lord in 1 Chronicles, and slays 70,000 men of the men that were just numbered.

1 Chronicles 21:16-17 “¹⁶And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. ¹⁷And David said unto God, is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done evil in deed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord My God, be on me, and on my father’s house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.”

- In this parallel passage we get the nuance of David and the elders in sackcloth, falling on their faces and David crying out that he’s at fault.
- David’s heart is breaking for the sheep of Israel, God’s flock – this is part of why God chose David to begin with because he had the heart of shepherd.
- 2 Samuel 24 give us the conclusion first that God had repented or turned away from what He was about to do whereas the Chronicles account gives us the

events, or the order that lead to the conclusion – that God held back His judgment upon Jerusalem.

“... *the Lord repented*...” does God repent? Does God change His mind, or make mistakes? NO.

James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

Hebrews 6:17-18 “¹⁷Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: ¹⁸That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”

1. God doesn't change.
2. God doesn't lie.

Numbers 23:19 “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?”

- The problem is in describing the actions of an infinite God by means of a finite ability to understand and describe what we see happening. (Anthropomorphism).
- David and the elders saw the Angel of the Lord with His sword raised, ready to destroy, then He didn't. From David's perspective the Angel turned away from what He was about to do – but this was God's intent all along: He was bringing David and the elders to the place of crying out to God on behalf of the nation – and they did.

V: 17 David is crying out to God taking full credit for his sin, crying out on behalf of the people, he's interceding for them and willing to die in their place.

John 15:13 “Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

- David truly loved the sheep; another reason why he was still a man after God's own heart.
- Another shepherd of Israel was brought to the same place: Moses hadn't sinned, but the people had in making the golden calf. Yet Moses cried out to the Lord on behalf of the people.

Exodus 32:32 “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.”

- Both of these men point to the Shepherd of our soul, Jesus:

John 10:11 “I am the good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.”

V: 18-19 David cried out to God on behalf of the nation, and God responded by sending the prophet Gad.

- God provided a way for reconciliation!
- And David was obedient to what God had said, go make an altar unto the Lord and offer sacrifices to God at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

Picture / map – Moriah compared to the Old City of David:

V: 20-23 Araunah looks and sees the king and his servants coming, he humbles himself before the king – apparently not knowing the peril he is in.

- When David states his business, Araunah offers to give it to David along with the animals and tools for the sacrifice.

V: 24 David refuses the gift, insisting on paying for it because he won't offer a sacrifice to God of something that costs him nothing.

- This speaks to “sacrificial” giving, it has to cost us something – it won't always be convenient or affordable.

Paul balances this out:

2 Corinthians 9:7 “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

- David buys the “threshing floor” (goren) which would have been a relatively small area, and the oxen for 50 shekels of silver.

1 Chronicles 21:25 “So David gave to Ornan (Araunah) for the place (maqom) six hundred shekels of gold by weight.”

- David bought the rest of the estate, for a much larger sum of money, a larger property.
- This was no ordinary piece of property, it was the place where Abraham had put Isaac upon the altar (Genesis 22) and where Solomon would later build the Temple.

V: 25 David builds the altar and sacrifices unto the Lord with burnt offerings, offerings of consecration, and peace offerings of fellowship / communion. The Lord was entreated / satisfied for the land and the plague was stopped.

Hebrews 9:22 “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

- If you were asked to name David’s two greatest sins you would probably reply.

1. Adultery with Bathsheba.
2. Numbering the people.

- And you would probably be right. But out of these two great sins, God built a temple.

1. Bathsheba gave birth to Solomon, whom God chose to succeed David on the throne.
2. On the property that God chose for David to offer sacrifice and satisfy his righteous demand, which stopped the plague upon Israel – Solomon built the Temple which was dedicated to the glory of God.

Romans 5:20 “Moreover the law entered, that offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:”

Last picture of David: Not ending on a “high” note, not seemingly at the top of his game.

- We see David broken, and humble before God: “I have sinned, I have done foolishly...”

Psalms 34:18 “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.”

Psalms 51:17 “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

- David goes out the same way he came in, humbly.