

2 Samuel 24

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Related Topics: David; Joab; Numbering the People; Trials or Temptations; Ornan; Mount Moriah; Temple Mount; the Place where God Placed His Name; Abraham; Solomon

Chapter 24



Remember – we said that the final four chapters of 2 Samuel are most likely an epilogue and do not follow the chronological line of the narrative? It is very probable that this chapter – though not chronologically at the end of David’s life – was chronologically connected to the events of Chapter 21.

1Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, “Go, number Israel and Judah.” 2 Samuel 24:1

BIG QUESTION: How do we reconcile God inciting David this verse with James 1:13?

13Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

ANSWER: God TESTS our faith that we might stand— having our faith refined.

James 1:2-4 Count it all joy, my brothers when you meet trials of various kinds, 3for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

1 Peter 1:6-8 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

By contrast – Satan TEMPTS men that he may find out their weaknesses and destroy them.

We must remember that Satan can not tempt us without God’s Permission.

EXAMPLE: Job – Satan was accusing Job before God and God PERMITTED Satan to touch Job’s life. God prescribed the limits of the temptations and attacks. With those truths in mind – Lets start with the opening words.

1 Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel,

The NATION required discipline. It needed a Divine spanking so that it would stop and think of how it was offending God.

SIDE NOTE: Our society has become so un-Biblical in it’s thinking about loving discipline and correction. Spanking is thought to be barbaric and brutal. Time-Outs or “That’s it - no cell phone for the rest of the day” is the norm for discipline.

Because of that – it is beyond even most Christians to view national adversity or calamity as God’s loving discipline.

As we read the history of Israel there were no “time-outs” - no cell phone privileges revoked! We are not told the specific action that displeased God – but our study of this nation has proven that it was capable of some really rotten behavior.

They were FAR from steadfast in the allegiance to God. The Holy Spirit has only chosen to let us know that at THIS moment in their history they had gone further astray than usual – and discipline was necessary!

TO THAT END – *“the Lord incited David against them, saying, Go, number Israel and Judah.”*

BIG IDEA HERE: God PERMITTED a sinful attitude in the heart of David to come into action.

As we look at the nature of David’s command we can see that there was festering in David’s heart, a thirst for war and pride in his victories; a growing ambition.

1 Chronicles 21:1 Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.

“Satan” = (saw-tawn) – an opponent; especially (with the article prefixed) Satan, the arch enemy of good: adversary, Satan, withstand.

We see the same word used in other passages:

**1 Kings 11:14 And the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite.*

1 Kings 11:23 God raised up as an adversary to him, Rezon the son of Eliada, who fled from his master Hadadezer king Zobah.

So the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 21 could mean that this “adversary” was a supposed friend of David

who played upon David's wrong state of heart suggesting that David should go ahead and number the people, all the while knowing that God would be angered against David.

Ultimately, behind such deceitful and destructive action is THE adversary, Satan who is the father of lies and who only and always seeks to steal, kill, and destroy. Having said that, most Bible translations read 1 Chronicles 21:1 as Satan.

CRUCIAL QUESTION: WHAT made numbering his soldiers such a great offence in the sight of God?

We know that in Numbers 26:1-2 God commanded Moses to number from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers' houses, all in Israel who are able to go to war." In light of that, David's action here is a great example of how God is supremely concerned with the HEART because a WRONG heart can use an otherwise LAWFUL action for sinful purposes. The PROOF that David's command came from a wrong attitude that was deeply settled in his heart is proven by what follows:

3But Joab said to the king, "May the Lord your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see it, but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?" 4But the king's word prevailed against Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel.

We have said all along that Joab is a very complex character. He was a man of war, a fierce and skilled soldier, a man to be feared. When his own interests were at stake Joab proved to be a man moved by passion without any regard for man or God. But when it came to his king and matters of state he was not a reckless man. Joab knew pride and passion when he saw it because he saw it when he looked in the mirror. Joab saw David's command for what it was, a prideful thing that was going to lead to a painful outcome.

QUOTE: The Pulpit Commentary: 2 Samuel. 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (596). "He saw whither the king was drifting, and....the increase of the royal power, resulting from successful war."

This moment in David's life is a HUGE WARNING to EVERYONE here tonight even to those who love Jesus most!

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
Psalms 51:6

HERE'S the warning:

The man who wrote those words was in fact divinely inspired to write them is none other than David. Yet when we find him in 2 Samuel 24 he is so self-deluded that he can rationalize doing a lawful thing to accomplish a sinful end and then not even listen to Joab's legitimate objection!

5They crossed the Jordan and began from Aroer, and from the city that is in the middle of the valley, toward Gad and on to Jazer. 6Then they came to Gilead, and to Kadesh in the land of the

Hittites; and they came to Dan, and from Dan they went around to Sidon, 7and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and Canaanites; and they went out to the Negeb of Judah at Beersheba. 8So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. 9And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: in Israel there were 800,000 valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were 500,000.

HERE'S proof that David's action was driven by SINFUL attitude:

10But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people.

PLEASE note the little word, "BUT."

This word always marks a CONTRAST. David THOUGHT that the result of numbering his troops would give him a great sense of security – significance – and status in the eyes of other kings and nations. What it RESULTED in was a sense of humiliation and failure before God!

HERE'S THE PICTURE – When we yield to the lust of the flesh we think that the outcome will be joy and satisfaction BUT – the opposite is true. Our hearts trouble us.

David's heart "STRUCK" him.

Struck = to strike, to give wounds.

When we are wounded we ask ourselves, "WHY did I do that?"

Jesus spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men:

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin...John 16:8

CONVICT = Convince, convict, tell a fault.

THIS WORK of the Holy Spirit, CONVICTING us of sin, CAUSING our hearts to WOUND us, is a very PRECIOUS thing.

We must be so careful to:

- 1. RESPOND to that conviction*
- 2. Not blow it off when our hearts WOUND us*

Paul the apostle spoke of the possibility of continuing in sin to the point where you can no longer be convicted of sin.

*having their conscience seared with a hot iron; [1 Tim 4:2 KJV]
(<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20tim%204:2&version=KJV>)*

SEARED = kauteriazio, kow - tay - ree - ad' - zo

To brand (“cauterize”), i.e. (by impl.) to render insensitive

Here is a man who INCREMENTALLY has gotten to the place where he no longer hears the voice of the Holy Spirit convicting of sin. The first time that you do something that you know is wrong it is preceded by a tremendous struggle. You want to do it but you know you shouldn't. You fight it and fight it, but you give into it.

It is amazing how you have no sooner done it that you feel MISERABLE. You say, “WHY did I do that?” You may lose sleep over it. You are distracted from your daily routine and responsibilities.

LIKE DAVID, the pleasure that you wanted to get from it is nowhere to be found. It was pleasurable in the moment of the act, but now it's killing you! BUT, the next time you are faced with the same temptation you don't fight it with the same intensity. The reason is that your defenses have been torn away. Having done it once, it is easier to do it the second time. You DON'T feel so bad. In fact, you begin to develop a rationale for your action. In time, you don't feel anything at all. You can do it without any remorse at all.

The fact that God's Spirit speaks to you is a BLESSING, but there is a warning. It is possible for you to continue in a sin to the extent that God's Spirit will NOT speak to you about that sin.

EXAMPLE: *Hosea 4:17 Ephraim is joined to idols: leave him alone.*

DON'T talk to them any more.... Just let them alone. THAT is the worst place that you can be!

EXAMPLE: *Jeremiah 14:11 The Lord said to me: “Do not pray for the welfare of this people.*

“Jeremiah, they've gone too far, don't pray for their good because if you do, I will not hear you.”

It is possible to go too far in a sin, so far that God will no longer speak to you about it. So far that God will just let you go. DON'T LEAVE here without turning from your sin and trusting your life to Jesus!

And David said to the Lord, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly.”

David did what everyone SHOULD do when their hearts begin to smite them.... He CONFESSED his sin. The CONVICTION of sin is always intended to lead to CONFESSION of sin.

Proverbs 28:13 Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

There was another time when David DID try to COVER his sin (2 Samuel 11). He went so far as to commit murder to cover it. He refused to confess it for nearly a YEAR. It was a horrible time under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. NOT THIS TIME. This time he has no proud desire to remain on good terms with himself.

10But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the Lord, “I

have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly.” 11And when David arose in the morning, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, David’s seer, saying...

PLEASE NOTE: The Lord responds so quickly to brokenness and humility – confession and repentance.

CRUCIAL INSIGHT: The TAKING AWAY of sin can ONLY be done by God.

Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far does he removed our transgressions from us.

All we can do is RECEIVE the forgiveness of our sins. There is NOTHING that we can do in the forgiveness of sin – there is nothing that we can DO that could permit us to feel responsible for our righteousness. LISTEN – There are no DEALS to be made with God, “IF you forgive me Lord, I’ll do this or that...”

Here’s the deal:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

WE confess and HE forgives.

God has already done the work necessary for our forgiveness. ALL that we can do is respond to the CONVICTION of sin and CONFESS.

CRUCIAL: The forgiveness that God offers to us is COMPLETE.

Romans 5:1 Therefore since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

JUSTIFIED = Just-As-If-I’d never sinned

Acts 3:19 Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out,

BLOTTED OUT = exaleipho, ex-al-i’-fo; to smear out, i.e. obliterate

Man knows NOTHING of that kind of forgiveness.

12“Go and say to David, ‘Thus says the Lord, Three things I offer you. Choose one of them, that I may do it to you.’”

NOW COMES THE CHASTISEMENT

13So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, “Shall three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days’ pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me.”

EACH of these was suited to correct David’s pride in human resources! In each of them there was NOTHING that David could do to save himself or his people.

14Then David said to Gad, “I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man.”

QUESTION: WHY should the sheep suffer for the sin of the shepherd?

REMEMBER the beginning of the chapter. The sheep were not any LESS guilty than the shepherd. BOTH were guilty and BOTH would be chastened!

15So the Lord sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning until the appointed time. And there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba 70,000 men.

70,000! REMEMBER – God is PERFECTLY JUST! We look at this and think – How UNFAIR – 70,000? It is because we have such a dim view of BOTH the sinfulness of sin and the righteousness of God. HIS justice is PERFECT justice!

Revelation 16:7 “Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!”

Revelation 19:2 for his judgments are true and just...

The pride of the king, confiding in the number of his population, is judged. The nation that had provoked the Lord to anger is itself judged.

DON’T MISS THIS – what we see here is not the SEVERITY of God but the MERCY of God. There should have been THREE full days of this!

Yet at the end of the first day we see God stay His hand!

16And when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord relented from the calamity and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, “It is enough; now stay your hand.” And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. 17Then David spoke to the Lord when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, “Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father’s house. (strike MY family and my household)”

For ALL of his faults – David truly was a man after God’s own heart! Here he is willing to take upon himself MORE than his own share of the blame.

It surely wasn’t like that in the Garden of Eden. Remember how Adam threw Eve under the bus rather than shoulder the blame for the original sin of mankind! WHAT a foreshadowing of the great Son of David – Jesus! He was SINLESS in birth and SINLESS in life. He was indeed the lamb without spot or blemish! Rather than see us perish – Jesus was not only WILLING to stand in the place of sinners – He DID stand in our place.

AWESOME – The end of this chapter POINTS to and is BUILDING towards the very act in which Jesus – the righteous One – dies for the unrighteous. God commands David to an action that PREDICTS the death of Jesus on the Cross that delivers us from the wrath that is to come.

18And Gad came that day to David and said to him, “Go up, raise an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”

Araunah (ore-naw’,)

He is called Ornan in *1Chron. 21:18* *18Now the angel of the LORD had commanded Gad to say to David that David should go up and raise an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.*

He was a Jebusite. REMEMBER – The Jebusites were the Canaanite inhabitants of Jerusalem. They are first mentioned way back in Genesis 10. The Israelites could NEVER dislodge them from that place. They were so securely entrenched in Jerusalem that they mocked the Israelites –

2 Samuel 5:6 We can defend this place with the blind and the lame!

That was the case UNTIL God’s anointed king sat on the throne of Israel. It was David who finally conquered the Jebusites and secured Jerusalem for Israel.

GO UP – THRESHING FLOOR. Threshing floors were on the heights. They were flat hard places where the grain would be threshed by way of ox-drawn sleds. The grain would then be tossed into the air and the winds that would be unblocked on those high spots would blow away the chaff and allow the heavier grain to fall to the ground.

ABOVE the City of David is the highest part of Mount Moriah. THAT is where Ornan lived. Some commentators believe this man to have been the former king of the Jebusites. Ornan’s threshing floor was located on the elevation of Moriah.

MINDBLOWING – Back in Genesis 22 God commanded Abraham to take Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice to God.

Like Jesus – Isaac was Abraham’s ONLY son whom he LOVED

Like Jesus – Isaac was a young man who willingly went to be sacrificed by his father

Like Jesus – Isaac carried the very wood upon which he would be sacrificed.

On the way to Mt. Moriah Isaac said, Dad – I see the wood for the sacrifice and the fire for the sacrifice – but where’s the lamb for the sacrifice?

Abraham said – The Lord will provide HIMSELF as the sacrifice – in THIS very place it will one day be seen.

The difference between Isaac and Jesus is that just before Isaac’s dad was about to sacrifice his son the Lord stopped him and substituted a ram for Isaac. NOW – HERE in 2 Samuel 24 God COMMANDED David to offer the sacrifice that would turn away the judgment of God on the very spot where Abraham brought Isaac.

AFTER DAVID’S DEATH – David’s son, Solomon, would build the Temple of the true and living God on that very spot on Mount Moriah.

2 Chronicles 3:1 Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to David his father, at the place that David had appointed, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

We keep coming to THIS place! WHY? Because the exaltation of God – the redeeming of this fallen world – the reign of God on earth – are all wrapped up in THIS PLACE.

Deuteronomy 12:5-7; 9-14 But you shall seek the place that the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. There you shall go, 6and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock. 7And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your households, in all that you undertake, in which the Lord your God has blessed you..... 9for you have not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance that the Lord your God is giving you. 10But when you go over the Jordan and live in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies around, so that you live in safety, 11then to the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name dwell there, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, and all your finest vow offerings that you vow to the Lord.

12And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male servants and your female servants, and the Levite that is within your towns, since he has no portion or inheritance with you. 13Take care that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place that you see, 14but at the place that the Lord will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you.

THIS is THE ONE PLACE on the face of this earth that God has PLACED His Name. It is THE place promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – BECAUSE it is in THIS place that the true and living God would be worshipped.

It is THE place where the true and living God would manifest His glory in a visible tangible way within the

veil in the Holy of holies. It is in THIS place – on Mount Moriah – where God Incarnate would be PROVIDE HIMSELF as the Lamb of God who would be slain for the sins of the world.

One day – in the not distant future – this same Incarnate God will RETURN to THIS PLACE and from it RULE the world in righteousness for 1,000 years!

19So David went up at Gad's word, as the Lord commanded. 20And when Araunah looked down, he saw the king and his servants coming on toward him. And Araunah went out and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground. 21And Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the Lord, that the plague may be averted from the people." 22Then Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him. Here are the oxen for the burnt offering and the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood. 23All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "The Lord your God accept you." 24But the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing."

QUOTE: Adam Clarke – He who has a religion that costs him nothing, has a religion that is worth nothing: nor will any man esteem the ordinances of God, if those ordinances cost him nothing.

Ornan made a generous offer to David – one born out of genuine respect. Had David accepted the gift it would have been Ornan's sacrifice, not David's nor would it have turned away the judgment of God BECAUSE it was David that sinned, not Araunah.

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. 25And David built there an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel.