



2 Samuel 24

Tape #7101
II Samuel 24
By Chuck Smith

Shall we turn now in our Bibles, to II Samuel, chapter twenty four. Now the story that is given to us here in II Samuel, chapter twenty four, is also repeated in I Chronicles, chapter one, twenty one. However there are some variations in the story, that we will seek to point out to you. Seeming discrepancies, but I feel that they're easily explained. Here in chapter twenty four, it says...

And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah (24:1).

God's anger was stirred up against the nation of Israel itself. They were His people, as His people, they had a great responsibility. God requires more of His people, than He does of others. If I am a child of God, that bears with it certain responsibilities of being a representative of God. God deals more severely with me, and with my failings, than someone who doesn't profess to know Him at all. They may do evil things, and get by with it totally. It's always, it seems, a question in the minds of the Christians, of, "How is it that everybody on the job can cheat? But if I cheat, I get caught every time!" That's because you're a child of God, He won't let you get by with it. They're not His children, He'll let them get by with all kinds of evil things! But He requires more of you as

His child. Israel, being the people of God, God's representatives before the world, were held to higher standards. But they were not always living up to those standards. They had a penchant towards worshipping false gods. Just what it is that provoked the anger of God, against Israel at this point, is not declared. But this is the underlining fact of the story that we're going to look at now. God is seeking a case against Israel, and thus He allows David to be provoked into numbering the people.

So, notice carefully, the words. "The anger of the Lord was against Israel, and he...". Now the "he" there, we assume would be the Lord. But as we find out in I Chronicles, chapter one, it was Satan that moved David's heart, to the numbering of the people. So God opened the door, and allowed Satan to move in and tempt David. David was not up to the temptation. He succumbed to the temptation, and he ordered his generals to number the people.

Now this numbering was in order to determine how many fighting troops David had. God had blessed David, God had subdued David's enemies, and every nation that attempted to attack David, God gave them victory. But the numbering of the troops was often a part of the planning, to begin to invade other nations. It could be that David thought, "Well, I might just make some forages against these other nations, and go in and wipe them out, and sack them!"

You know, this was the way David was supporting himself, when he and his men had fled to the Philistine city of Gath, and was granted by the king, a little suburb of Ziklag, to live in. David and his men would go out, and they would wipe out some of these villages, and they would take everything. Then they'd come back, and the king would say, "Well, where have you been today?", he said, "Well we made a forage against one of the villages of Judah, and we wiped them out". The king didn't know any better, and he thought, "David's really making himself an enemy to those people now, attacking them". But in reality, he was going south, and attacking.

But it was that place of David's backslidden situation, and spiritual decline that we talked about as we were passing through. It could be that David had something like this in mind. Surely there was pride involved to just say, "Well I have at my disposal, this many men who are ready to fight", and looking for your military strength, as your basis of security.

That is always a mistake. A nation's security does not rest in their military prowess. A nation's strength rests in the power of their God. Righteousness exalts a nation. Often times Israel was facing nations that were stronger, more numerable, more powerful. Yet, as they trusted and relied on God, God delivered them from the hands of their enemies. A nation's strength is in its devotion to God. So David was moved to order

this numbering of Israel and Judah.

For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, [Dan being the uttermost portion of the nation, right up at the base, or area at the base of mount Hermon, or Beersheba. Down on the desert side, just before you get into the Negev. So Israel is often referred to as from Dan to Beersheba. You might say, "From New York to Los Angeles". Just cover the whole land.] And so Joab said to him, Now the Lord thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, ["May God give you a hundred times more than what you've got!"] and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it: but why does my lord the king want to do this thing (24:2-3)?

"Lord", uh, "David why do you want to do this? May God give you a hundred times more than you have, but why do this? Why are you anxious to do this?"

Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. [None of them were interested in this numbering process. But David's word prevailed.] And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel. They went over Jordan, numbered the tribes of Gath, and Manasseh, and then they went on north and they came to Gilead, on over to Dan, even to the area of Zidon, and on down to Tyre, and then south, even to Beersheba (24:4-7).

If you take that on a map, they made just a circle of the whole country. They just went across on the other side of Jordan, all the way around, down to Beersheba.

When they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. [So it took these guys a little while to make the count.] And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and of the men of Judah, five hundred thousand men (24:8).

Now according to the census reports in I Chronicles, of the men of Israel, there were one million, one hundred thousand. Quite a discrepancy between the eight hundred thousand, here. One million, one hundred thousand, that is reported as the number. Notice here, it says, "The valiant men that drew the sword". It could be that Chronicles numbers other men that were not ready for battle, but just gave sort of the total number of men, of battle age. Some of them not able or capable to go to battle. Of the men of Judah, here five hundred thousand, and in the Chronicle record, four hundred and seventy thousand, but five hundred thousand is a good rounded off number. A lot of times you say, "Well, there was about five hundred people there", when there may have been four hundred and sixty five, but you know, it's a rounded number.

And David's heart smote him after he had numbered the people. [No sooner do they bring the number of the people to David, then he's convicted. Feels miserable! It's interesting that so often, those things that Satan tempts us to do, things that we think that will bring us such deep satisfaction, or such joy, or such delight. No sooner do you do those things, then conviction hits you, and rather than being exhilarated, and excited, you're absolutely miserable. Interesting isn't it? David is so anxious to get the number. "I want to know how many men I have that can go out and fight with me!", and as soon as they announce the number, then he's miserable. His heart smites him, he begins to be convicted.] And so David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: ["Lord, in this which I've done, I've sinned greatly!" And then down at the bottom of the verse,] I've done very foolishly (24:10).

David realizes the enormity of the sin. Now, there was no sin in taking a census of the people. We remember in the book of Exodus, they made a census of the people that came out of Egypt, and then when they came into the land there was another census made, and the number of people that survived the forty years, and came in. Each tribe, you remember, was numbered. So the sin of David was the motive behind the numbering. This was not just a census, taking the number of the people. This was determining the number of troops, "In case we want to wage war against somebody". Or, "Our ability to defend ourselves against an invading enemy". Trusting in the arm of flesh, rather than trusting in the arm of the Lord.

David confessed his sin. First of all, there was the conviction of sin, followed immediately by the confession of sin. In David's case, not in every case. A lot of times when we're convicted of sin, we seek to cover it. The bible said, "He who seeks to cover his sin shall not prosper". We try to cover our sins many times by lying, cover up. But the bible says, "You can be sure your sins will find you out". It seems like the government is always involved in cover-ups. Then the Senate subcommittee comes along, to try to find the

truth! The question is of course, is who's going to investigate the Senate?

But, people try to cover by excuses. "Oh I really didn't mean to do that", or "It really wasn't my fault", and we like to place the blame on someone else. "We surely couldn't be responsible ourselves! How can I when I'm perfect, be guilty of something like that! If it were not for these extenuating circumstances, that's what the problem was. It wasn't me! These other extenuating circumstances that caused it to happen. I just happened to be the innocent victim, I just happened to be standing there". Or, sometimes people seek to cover, by the denial of the sinfulness of the experience. "Oh it's not really too bad", or "Everybody does it".

But the Bible said, "If you seek to cover your sin, you won't prosper". But if you will confess your sin, you will be forgiven. "But whoso confesseth his sins, shall be forgiven." If we say, "We have no sin", trying to deny the guilt, "then we deceive ourselves, the truth isn't in us", John tells us in his first epistle. "But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just." So, David did the right thing. Being convicted of the sin, he did the right thing, he confessed it. "I'm guilty, O God, I've sinned greatly, I've done very foolishly. Lord I'm guilty!" Then he begged for forgiveness. "I beseech", and the word beseech is a strong word, "I beg you God! Take away the iniquity of your servant". So he is begging for God's forgiveness.

For when David was up in the morning, the word of the Lord came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and say to David, Thus saith the Lord, I'll offer you three choices; choose one of them, that I may do it to you. So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine [And I Chronicles says, three.] come unto thee in the land? or will you flee for three months from your enemies, while they pursue thee? or there be three days of pestilence in your land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me (24:11-13).

So, David's confession and prayer, came before the prophet of God came to him, and told him, "Look, God gives you three choices of punishment". Now, you have to realize that this is a part of the old testament. Jesus had not yet established that atonement, through His blood on the cross.

When we sin now, the punishment of our sin has already been meted out to Jesus Christ. So God doesn't give you a choice of punishments. As a child of God, the Lord will chastise you, but the purpose of chastising, is to bring you to repentance. To bring you to the confession of your sins, and once sin confessed, there is that forgiveness, that blotting out, and God does not then require of you that punishment for your sins.

Paul the apostle, in writing to the Romans, said, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus". What a remarkable statement! You who have received Jesus Christ, as your Lord and Savior, there's absolutely no condemnation! In the second chapter of Romans he said, "Oh how happy is the man to whom God does not impute sin!" That man who's believing and trusting in Jesus Christ. Though he may be weak and frail, and even stumbling, as he is trusting in our Lord, loving our Lord Jesus Christ, God doesn't impute iniquity to him. Paul goes on in the latter portion of Romans, chapter eight, and says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

For years, as a child, I thought God was against me. Just making a list of every wrong thing I had done, ready to come down on my head at any moment. I was constantly expecting the wrath, and the judgement of God to fall upon me. I could hardly wait till Sunday night to get saved all over again. And, I'd always pray, "Lord, please come Sunday night after church. After I've had a chance to go forward and get saved". Because I knew, if He waited till too late Monday morning, it would be curtains for me! I'd be left, while the church would go! So all week long, living in misery, and condemnation, waiting for Sunday night to come, where I could get it all washed and cleansed, and start over anew. I thought God was against me.

What a glorious revelation to my heart, when I read Romans, chapter eight, "If God is for me...", and suddenly the Spirit brought it home, and I realized God is for me! Then the question is, "Who can be against me?", I don't care! As Martin Luther said, "The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not at him. One little word will fell him". That name of Jesus! We can come against the forces and the foals??? of darkness. "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

The next question Paul asked was, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Who's gonna make a list against you? Who's gonna make a list of your failures, of your shortcomings? Well, Satan is compiling a list. The bible calls him, "The accuser of the brethren". We see him in that role, in the book of

Job, as he appears before God, and God says, "Hey where you been?", he said, "Oh, going around the earth." "Have you considered my servant Job, hey, he's a good man, upright! He loves good he hates evil." "Oh yeah, but man you've blessed that guy so much, he's a mercenary. Anybody would serve you, you bless em like that! Guy would be a fool not, let me take away those things you've given him, and that man will curse you to your face." Accusing Job of being a mercenary.

In the book of Revelation, when Satan is finally cast out of heaven, it says, "Woe, Woe, Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, for the dragon, the accuser of the brethren, is cast out". And he knows that he has a short time. "Who accuses them", he said, "before God day, and night, continually". Satan accuses you before God, and then he accuses you to yourself. He is quick to catch any flaw, and to point it out. The purpose of his accusation is to keep you from God. Usually it comes like this, "Who do you think you are, asking God to help you out of this mess, when this mess is all your fault to begin with! If you had not been so stupid and disobedient, and done your own thing, then you'd have been alright. Now that things are in such a mess, you want to ask God to help you. Great! Who do you think you are to ask God to help you now?"

You see the whole purpose of it, is to keep you from coming to God! Because he knows that God is so merciful, and God is so gracious, the moment you come, it's gonna be all over! He's gonna wash it away, and it's gonna be gone. So he tries to keep you from coming, by these accusations! "You're so weak. God isn't interested in you. You failed Him so many times! I don't blame Him for throwing you out! Not listening to you!", and he just accuses you, and is constantly charging you.

But you know, Paul answers his question, not by declaring who is laying things to your charge, he's just telling you who isn't laying anything to your charge. You know who's not laying anything to your charge? God. Ha, ha! "Who is he that shall lay any charge against God's elect?" He said, "It is God who has justified you!" God's not keeping a list against you! God's not making charges against you! God has declared you totally innocent of all charges! Satan brings up your name, in your case, and he says, "Case #151, Chuck Smith. Man did he blow it this week! Did you see..", and he starts laying out the charges, and God says, "Innocent of all charges!". Satan wiped out again!!! God's justified me! Declared me innocent of all charges! Why? Because of my love, and my faith, and my trust in Jesus Christ, who has paid the price for my forgiveness.

Paul asked another question, "Who is he that condemneth?". Satan condemns, your friends may condemn you, you may condemn yourself. But I know one that does not condemn you. "Who is he that condemneth?", Paul says, "Well I'll tell you who doesn't. It is Christ, who has died, yea rather is risen again, and is even at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for you". Not condemning you, He's interceding for you. Just the opposite of condemning! He's up there praying for you, interceding for you. Glorious! God is for me! He's not laying anything to my charge. Jesus is interceding for me.

Then Paul finally says, "Who shall separate us from this love of Christ?". Then he names anything and everything he can think of in the universe, and something that he, maybe not even has been created yet. "I'm persuaded that neither height, nor depth, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other created being, is able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, my Lord."

Now you have to go back to the very first question that Paul asked in this series of questions, and it was, "What shall we say to these things?" What can you say? Wow!!! Glorious to be in Christ! Glorious to be a child of God, glorious to have my sins forgiven! The penalty of my sins, already borne by Jesus Christ.

So our position is completely different, from that of David, who lived prior to the blotting out, through the blood of Jesus Christ. Thus there was the penalty to be enacted against Israel, against, God had the case in the beginning. The penalty that was enacted, was a choice, as far as David was concerned. "You can have the seven years", or "three years", which ever is the correct number, "of famine in the land. Or, you can have three months in which your enemies prevail against you in the field of battle. Or you can have three days of pestilence, with the hand of God stretched out against the nation." The prophet Gad said to him, "What shall I go tell the person who sent me?"

And David said unto Gad, I'm in a great strait: [“Man! It's tough!”] but let us now fall into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: I don't want to fall into the hand of man, I'd rather fall into the hands of

God, then into the hands of man. [“Man! The hands of man can really rip you to pieces! Man is unmerciful, unmerciful, they’ll destroy you. Better to fall into the hands of God, so I know that God is merciful, let me fall in the hands of God”.] So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men (24:14-15).

So there was a plague that struck Israel. The time appointed, is thought to be three o’clock, in the afternoon. Seventy thousand of these men that he had numbered for battle. The Lord began to decimate his troops. Wiped out about twenty percent of his, uh, five percent of his troops, that he had just numbered.

And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now your hand. And the angel of the Lord was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite (24:16).

Or as is, his name in Chronicles, “Ornan, the Jebusite”. Now, “It repented the Lord”. This again, is a phrase that we have difficulty with. Because we are told that, “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor the Son of Man that He should repent. Has He not spoken, and shall He not make it good?”. He said, through the prophet Malachi, “Behold I am the Lord, I change not.”, and repentance means, change.

Man however, in describing the actions of the infinite God, is bound to finite language. We do not have a vocabulary or words that can adequately describe the actions of God, with language, the words that we have. Now here is the angel of God, ready to stretch out his hand, and David, we read, saw this angel of the Lord, with a sword drawn, coming to Jerusalem. Suddenly the angel stopped, his hand was stayed. Now as the angel was coming with the seeming intent of destroying Jerusalem, and suddenly the change, the angel stopped. It would appear from the human standpoint, that God changed his mind about destroying Jerusalem. “And thus it repented God.”, and so we’re describing it from human language, because here’s the angel, looks like he’s ready to strike, he doesn’t strike.

But in reality, God never intended him to strike Jerusalem. He was there in a threatening posture, but God doesn’t change. God doesn’t repent, but the apparent thing, if you were looking at it from the human standpoint, you’d say, “Well he was just ready to wipe out Jerusalem, and he didn’t”, you know, “and so God changed His mind”. No, that’s not what happened, we have to use human language to define the actions of God, but God all the while was intending to spare Jerusalem.

So, “The angel of the Lord was there by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite”. Now, the city of David, was actually on the hillside below what today is, the old city of Jerusalem, called the hill of Offal. From where the dung gate is in Jerusalem today, on down that hillside, going down to the uh, spring of Gihon, and the pool of Siloam, and that whole hillside area, was the city of Offal, which was the city of Jerusalem, in David’s time. Up where the temple mount stands today, was outside the city walls, of David’s time. So the angel was coming from the north section there, and David was down there below, in the city of Offal, or the city of David, looking up back towards the north, where the temple mount presently is, and he saw there, the angel with a drawn sword. It was above the threshing floor of Araunah.

So David spake unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people and he said, Lord, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let your hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father’s house (24:17).

“Lord, I’m the guilty one!”, and David here, felt a great responsibility for what was happening to the people, and this is what made David such a great king. He had the heart of a shepherd. He really had the people at heart. “God, I’m the guilty one! I’m the one that sinned! I’m the one that’s done so wickedly! These poor, little sheep, they’ve not done anything Lord! Strike me! Strike my house, but oh, these sheep Lord, they’re innocent.” They weren’t, but in David’s eyes, they were and he was pleading for the people. Again, acknowledging his sin, his wickedness.

And Gad came that day to David, and he said unto him, Go up, and raise up an altar unto the Lord in the threshingfloors of Araunah the Jebusite. And so David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded. And Araunah looked up, and he saw the king and all of his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and he bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground. And Araunah said, Why is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloors from you, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto

David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good unto him: behold, here are the oxen for the burnt sacrifice, and the threshing instruments, and the other instruments of the oxen for wood (24:18-22).

Now the threshingfloors was usually a flat rock, and they would take the oxen, and they had sort of a sled, that was made of wood, and they would ride this sled over the top of the grain. It would roll under the uh, wooden slats. As it rolled over the grain, it would knock the husks off. Then, knocking the husks off of the grain, it was usually in an area that was open, where there was a breeze, and then they would throw the grain in the air, and the husks would fly away, and the grain would fall back down on the flat rock, threshing floor.

So, up there on the side of mount Moriah, there was this flat rock area. The threshing floor of Araunah. Where he had his oxen and the instruments for threshing this type of a sled, that they ran over the top of the grain. Suddenly, Araunah looks down towards the city gates, and here comes the king, and all of his mighty men, and he's, "Wow, he's coming up the hill towards me!". And he says, "Why are you coming to my place?", and David said, "I want to buy your threshingfloor, that I can build an altar here unto the Lord, and offer a sacrifice". Araunah said, "Hey, here is the oxen, here is the wood. You go ahead and do it, no, you know, no charge".

I'll give these things [he said] to the king, And he said, May God accept your sacrifice. ["May God accept you."] And the king said to Araunah, No way; I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. [David realized that sacrifice, is a sacrifice. If it doesn't cost you anything, it's no sacrifice. "I will not offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing. I won't give cast-offs to God." David was very honorable in this, refusing to offer God something that didn't cost him.] So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and he offered the burnt offerings and the peace offerings. So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel (24:23-25).

So, it stopped right there, it didn't come on down to the city of Jerusalem. Now, in Chronicles, it says that he bought for six hundred shekels of gold. A vast difference between the fifty shekels of silver, and six hundred shekels of gold. How come the discrepancy? You have to get into the Hebrew language actually, to discover the, that it is not a discrepancy. Here, David is off, or he is buying from Araunah this uh, threshingfloor, with the oxen itself, for the fifteen pieces of silver, or, fifty pieces of silver. However, he then went ahead and purchased the whole field and house, and everything else from the fellow.

There are two Hebrew words, one is "goran", and the other is "magum", and uh, David gave the fifty shekels of silver for the goran, the threshingfloor and the oxen. But for the magum, he went ahead then and paid the five hundred shekels of gold. Having built there the altar unto the Lord, the stayed, or the plague was stayed, it then came to David that this is the place to build the temple of God. So, he bought the whole place, in order that Solomon might then build the temple of God, and later on we read, "And Solomon built the temple of God, there on the place that David had purchased from Ornan". The field and all, the magum that he had purchased from Ornan? So, the temple was then above the city, the people would look up, and see the temple above them. Presently, of course, the side of the city of Jerusalem has been expanded, the walls of the city actually are pretty much outside of where the city of David was. The temple mount today, is within the walls of the city of Jerusalem.

An interesting thing, when you go into the Dome of the Rock, Mosque, you do see there a large rock, and a cave and so forth, and the Moslems say that, that is the site where Mohammed, after his all night horse ride from Medina, ascended into heaven. Tradition has it that, that is the site where the temple was built. That the Dome of the Rock, Mosque, they say, stands over the top of the site where the temple stood.

However, the interesting thing is that the Dome of the Rock, Mosque, could not possibly be a threshingfloor. No matter how you look at it, you could not have been using oxen, and using it as a threshingfloor. However, three hundred and twenty two feet north, of the dome of the rock, Mosque, on the western side, there is a little dome there, called the Dome of the Tablets, or the Dome of the Spirits. This is built over a very flat, smooth, bedrock stone, which would be ideal for a threshingfloor. The very kind that you find used as threshing floors.

It is my opinion, shared by others, I'm not alone, I don't know if, the whole world's against me, but

there are many who are coming to the opinion that the temple was actually built north of the Dome of the Rock, Mosque. Which is extremely significant today, because there are many Jews, Orthodox, and others, who are wanting to rebuild the temple. Those that are radical, feel that they must destroy the Dome of the Rock Mosque, in order to rebuild the temple. But from the scriptures, it would appear that, that will not be the case, nor will it be necessary. That if indeed the Dome of the Tablets is the site of Solomon's temple, which they are seeking now to prove, the temple could be rebuilt without touching the Dome of the Rock Mosque, and triggering a Jihad, a holy war, of the Moslems.

Looking at Ezekiel, chapter forty two, as Ezekiel is measuring the new temple, the Lord said, and he measured the wall around the temple, four hundred and fifty, uh, I forget what the measurement is, reeds, fathoms, or whatever. It was to separate the holy place, from the profane. When John measured the temple, in Revelation, chapter eleven, he was ordered not to measure the outer court, because it had been given over to the heathen

Thus it would appear from the Bible, that the solution, when it finally comes for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, will be a wall built next to the Dome of the Rock Mosque. Allowing the Israelis to have that whole northern section, to rebuild their temple over the Dome of the Spirits, or Tablets. Leaving the Dome of the Rock in the outer court, which was not to be measured by John, because it now belonged to the Gentiles, with a wall between them, separating the holy place, from the profane.

I won't be around to see it. That'll take place after the church is gone, but if I were a betting man, I'd say, I'll give you odds. Bet you an angel food cake when we get up there, you know.