

Lessons from Old Testament Biblical History and Characters - David – Numbering Israel

This lesson's episode in David's life is not particularly well known or taught, but it does carry some challenges for our walk with Christ. We will use it to close our look at David.

The lesson reveals yet another sinful act of David. In searching for its lessons, we do not want to lose sight of the "legacy" of Israel's greatest king.

- David is called the "sweet **psalmist**", 2 Samuel 23:1,2
- The coming **Messiah** would be a descendant of David, cp. Matthew 1:1; 21:9,15
- Jerusalem, the center of God's people is called the **city** of David, cp. 1 Kings 2:10, 3:1
- For "**David's sake**", God did not destroy Judah in times of serious sin, cp. 1 Kings 11:12; 2 Kings 8:19;
- David was the **measure** of righteousness for succeeding kings, 1 Kings 3:14; 14:8; 15:3, 11

2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21;

Hebrew history is not written in a strict timeline fashion. 2 Samuel places this episode at the **end** of David's life; about 38 years after he ascended to the throne and 2 years before his death. 1 Chronicles seems to place it earlier. My thought is that it is at the end of his life. If so, there were four decades of victory over their enemies and prosperity in the land (blessing), but they had slipped **spiritually**.

1. The setting.

- God's anger is kindled against **Israel**, 24:1; 1 Chron. 21:7. The consequences to follow affect the nation.
- We are not told the specific reason, but we can assume that they had fallen back into sin; idolatry, co-mingling with the people of the land, lack of God-prescribed worship, failure to obey the Law...

2. A **thought** or **idea** comes to David's mind. 24:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1

- 24:1; "**he**" moved David. The antecedent to "he" is not God, but Satan; 1 Chronicles 21:1.
- God does not tempt anyone to do **wrong** or **evil**, James 1:13, but He will sovereignly allow temptation to come from other sources; cp. Job 1:6-12. **If my thought/idea is contrary to the written Word, it does not come from God.** Satan does have access to a believer's **mind**, Acts 5:3, but not all temptation comes from Satan. Our sin nature can be tempted by the **world**, and our **flesh**. Regardless of the source, God is sovereign over it, 1 Corinthians 10:13. Satan **cannot** make us sin. The sin happens when we yield to the temptation.
- David had a choice to make when the thought/idea came to him; **follow**/submit to it, or **reject**/change his thoughts.

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- David is at the end of his life. At **no age** are we free from being tempted or to make **foolish** choices, 2 Samuel 24:10
 - **Leaders** are always special targets of Satan, and wisely so; Matthew 26:31
 - David did not consider the **counsel** (challenge to David's **thinking**) of Joab; 2 Sam. 24:3; 1 Chron. 21:3. We would be wise not to quickly dismiss all counsel.
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3. Numbering Israel.

- Why is this a problem? It was **sin**, 2 Sam. 24:10; 1 Chronicles 21:8. What is the sin? The text does not indicate the reason, nor is it a direct violation of something in the Law. We to dive deeper.
- Some have thought that the issue was that David was preparing to **tax** the people and or conscript more labor. These would be **selfish ends**, not advancing the things of God.

- In my mind it is more likely (and probably related to the above reason), that the core sin was an attitude of **pride** and **self**-sufficiency, evidenced in acting apart from seeking and obeying God. In 2 Samuel 24:9; The numbers reported are related to military strength. (possibly progress?)
- The Word always directs us to focus our thoughts on God and to trust in Him. Pride will lead us to **trust** in our **own** abilities and strength, our own planning and organization, and our own reasoning and methods.

4. **David's conviction.** 2 Samuel 24:10.

5. **The choice of consequences.** 2 Samuel 24:13

- Seven years of famine
- Flee three months before their enemies
- Three days pestilence

David's choice: to fall into the **Lord's hand**, for His **mercies are great**. God is more merciful than people. Note: David does not ask for the **removal** of the consequences, but submits to what God says.

The result was a plague that claimed 70,000 men, 2 Samuel 24:15.

Note the intercession of David, 2 Samuel 24: 16-17. I think it is appropriate to ask God to lessen or cut short the consequences out of His great mercies. That prayer was accompanied by an attitude of **repentance** and confession.

6. **God reorients David's mind**, commanding the building of an altar and sacrifice. 2 Samuel 24:18-19.

- 2 Samuel 24:24; 1 Chronicles 21:24; The sacrifice/offering needed to be from David **personally** and **cost** him something. Our offerings /giving unto the Lord should cost us something. (cp. easy, ease, convenience?)
- The site was the site where Abraham offered Isaac. The site would be the site of Solomon's Temple