

## 10-8-2025 – Journey with King David – Week 14 – The Sin of a Census

**Last week - David survived the rebellion of Absalom.** Back to Jerusalem.

- The people welcome him back, but many had turned against David.
- **2 Sam. 18:7 – 20,000 died.**

**2 Sam 24 & 1 Chron. 21** tell the story of a census / sin / punishment /mercy

--- many questions arise in this story . . . will give you answers, truth.

This is a 3-pt story, with points

**2 Sam. 24** – “Again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, “Go and take a census of Israel and Judah. <sup>2</sup> So the king said to Joab and the army commanders<sup>la</sup> with him, “Go throughout the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba and enroll the fighting men, so that I may know how many there are.”

<sup>3</sup> But Joab replied to the king, “May the LORD your God multiply the troops a hundred times over, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king want to do such a thing?” <sup>4</sup> The king’s word, however, overruled Joab and the army commanders; so they left the presence of the king to enroll the fighting men of Israel. . . . <sup>8</sup> After they had gone through the entire land, they came back to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. <sup>9</sup> Joab reported the number of the fighting men to the king: In Israel there were 800,000 able-bodied men who could handle a sword, and in Judah 500,000.

<sup>10</sup> David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the LORD, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, LORD, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing.”

**Two Questions – 1<sup>st</sup>: did God cause David to sin?**

- **Bible** says God doesn’t sin, doesn’t cause us to sin
  - **God is holy.** There can be no sin in holiness. He is good. Pure.
    - **James 1:13** – “And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, ‘God is tempting me.’ God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away.”

- **God's nature is unchanging.** That's why we can depend on Him... always pure, always good, always loving. There.
- **So look to scripture to interpret scripture.**
  - **1 Chron. 21:1** – “Satan rose up against Israel and caused David to take a census of the people of Israel.”
- How to reconcile this? Satan or God?
  - **God is sovereign. God allows . . .** but sin comes from w/in ourselves & we may be incited by Satan.
    - **Luke 22:31** – “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat.”
    - Satan/permission to **test Job**. God allowed it . . . limits.
- Here, we see **God allows** it b/c He **was angry** with Israel.
  - Why? Not said. Maybe for **rejecting** David, Lord's anointed.
    - Note: death in store for those who reject Jesus.
  - **God allows things to accomplish His purpose.** At the **heart of God** is love/ **return** to Him. At the **heart of us** is sin/our actions led by imperfect hearts. **Don't ignore** our role/give in to temptation. And **don't assume punishment**/ Job was tested

## Two Questions – 2<sup>nd</sup> : **What is the sin in taking a census?**

- Joab questions him – why? It suggests he knows this is wrong.
  - Some have suggested this is David's **pride**. Count... rely on self.
- The answer lies in **Exodus 30`**
- <sup>11</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, <sup>12</sup> “Whenever you take a census of the people of Israel, each man who is counted must pay a ransom for himself to the LORD. Then no plague will strike the people as you count them. <sup>13</sup> Each person who is counted must give a small piece of silver as a sacred offering to the LORD. (This payment is half a shekel, based on the sanctuary shekel, which equals twenty gerahs.) <sup>14</sup> All who have reached their twentieth birthday must give this sacred offering to the LORD. <sup>15</sup> When this offering is given to the LORD to purify your lives, making you right with him, the rich must not give more than the specified amount, and the poor must not give less.

<sup>16</sup> Receive this ransom money from the Israelites, and use it for the care of the Tabernacle. It will bring the Israelites to the LORD's attention, and it will purify your lives."

- This is the temple tax – Jesus & Peter in Capernaum. Mt. 17

- **Note:** each pays a **ransom**. Same amount. We're equal.

- Each has a responsibility to support the sanctuary. **Communal**.

- Ransom money. **Ultimately, Jesus pays our ransom.**

- <sup>11</sup> Before David got up the next morning, the word of the LORD had come to Gad the prophet, David's seer: <sup>12</sup> "Go and tell David, 'This is what the LORD says: I am giving you **three options**. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.'"
- <sup>13</sup> So Gad went to David and said to him, "Shall there come on you **3 years of famine** in your land? Or **3 months of fleeing** from your enemies while they pursue you? Or **3 days of plague** in your land? Now then, think it over and decide how I should answer the one who sent me."
- <sup>14</sup> David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into human hands." <sup>15</sup> So the LORD sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and 70,000 of the people from Dan to Beersheba died. <sup>16</sup> When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD relented concerning the disaster and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, "Enough! Withdraw your hand." The angel of the LORD was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.
- <sup>17</sup> When David saw the angel who was striking down the people, he said to the LORD, "I have sinned; I, the shepherd,<sup>[a]</sup> have done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Let your hand fall on me and my family."

David: 2 sides of this man: did wrong, but acknowledged it. True Shepherd.

- What does this teach us? **3 things**:

1. Our **sin has consequences to others**.

- **But also** – God was angry with Israel. It's not random.

- 2. This shows us **David's maturity**. No need for someone to convince him of his guilt. Sees it himself. He repents. Genuine.

- **Mature Christians are reflective... accept responsibility. Repent.**

- 3. God's **judgment** was **tempered** by **mercy**.

- "Enough." It's why David trusted God more than people.

- **God was merciful**. Compassionate. Withholding.

The rest of the story. Gad tells David to “build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.” - Vs. 18

David tells Arauna: “I have come to buy your threshing floor and to build an altar to the LORD there, so that he will stop the plague.”

<sup>22</sup> “Take it, my lord the king, and use it as you wish,” Araunah said to David. “Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and you can use the threshing boards and ox yokes for wood to build a fire on the altar. <sup>23</sup> I will give it all to you, Your Majesty, and may the LORD your God accept your sacrifice.”

<sup>24</sup> But the king replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on buying it, for I will not present burnt offerings to the LORD my God that have cost me nothing.” So David paid him fifty pieces of silver<sup>10</sup> for the threshing floor and the oxen.

<sup>25</sup> David built an altar there to the LORD and sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings. And the LORD answered his prayer for the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

- What we offer to God can't be empty. Worthless.
- David shows us sacrificial worship & giving.
  - We can't just give God what's leftover... what's free.
    - God blesses sacrificial worship – **making time for Him**. Giving of ourselves – our time, our talents, our resources.
  - Finally – this unholy place – the threshing floor – will become the site of the future temple, built by Solomon.