

2 Samuel 24:1-25 **David's Census and its Consequence**

David's Census of Israel and Judah (1 Chronicles 21:1-6)

¹ Again the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

² So the king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, "Now go throughout all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and count the people, that I may know the number of the people."

³ And Joab said to the king, "Now may the Lord your God add to the people a hundred times more than there are, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king desire this thing?"

⁴ Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the army. Therefore Joab and the captains of the army went out from the presence of the king to count the people of Israel.

⁵ And they crossed over the Jordan and camped in Aroer, on the right side of the town which is in the midst of the ravine of Gad, and toward Jazer. ⁶ Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim Hodshi; they came to Dan Jaan and around to Sidon; ⁷ and they came to the stronghold of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and the Canaanites. Then they went out to South Judah as far as Beersheba. ⁸ So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

⁹ Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to the king. And there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

Judgment of God against the people – David's three choices (1 Chronicles 21:7-17)

¹⁰ And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, I pray, O Lord, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

¹¹ Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, ¹² "Go and tell David, 'Thus says the Lord: "I offer you three things; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do it to you.'""

¹³ So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or shall you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' plague in your land? Now consider and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me."

¹⁴ And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

The Plague

15 So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel from the morning till the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of the people died. 16 And when the angel stretched out His hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord relented from the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "It is enough; now restrain your hand." And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

17 Then David spoke to the Lord when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house."

The Altar on the Threshing Floor (1 Chronicles 21:18-27)

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

19 So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded.

20 Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground.

21 Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the Lord, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people."

22 Now Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever seems good to him. Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood. 23 All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king."

And Araunah said to the king, "May the Lord your God accept you."

24 Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

25 And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

So the Lord heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.
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Facts Revealed:

David's Census of Israel and Judah [2 Samuel 24:1-9] (1 Chronicles 21:1-6)

- ✧ Again the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah." [2 Samuel 24:1]
- ✧ The problem was with the people of Israel who had sinned against Yahweh, and the Lord was seeking an occasion against them.
- ✧ David was king of Israel and could then be used for God's purpose.
- ✧ So the Lord moved David to call for a numbering of all the fighting men of his kingdom, both the men of Judah and the men of Israel.
- ✧ So the king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, "Now go throughout all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and count the people, that I may know the number of the people." [2 Samuel 24:2]
- ✧ David did not know that it was all in the will of God for the purpose of punishing the people of Israel for their iniquity. [2 Samuel 24:1]
- ✧ So David called for a military census with Joab the commander of the army to head it up.

- ✧ There was no apparent need to number the fighting men because God had already delivered all their enemies into their hand and they were at peace. [2 Samuel 22:1]
- ✧ God Himself had twice called for the numbering of the fighting men as He led the children of Israel to the Promised Land.
 - ✧ **First** to establish their number before they faced war and rebelled in fear, starting the 40 years of wandering in the Wilderness, The number was **603,550**. [Numbers 1:46, 2:32]
 - ✧ **Second** before they entered the Promised Land, The number was **601,730**. [Numbers 26:51]
 - ✧ This was to demonstrate that conquering the land was not accomplished by the strength of the number of men in the army, but was the result of God delivering the enemy into their hands.
- ✧ Joab and the captains of the army disapproved and questioned David about the reason for the numbering, but David was king and his word prevailed. [2 Samuel 24:3-4]
 - ✧ The numbering took in the tribes east of the Jordan River, along the border of Sidon and Tyre, and all of the western tribes as far south as Beersheba. [2 Samuel 24:5-9]
 - ✧ It took nine months and twenty days to finish the numbering and return to David at Jerusalem with the report.
 - ✧ There were **800,000** valiant men in Israel, and **500,000** in Judah, for a total of **1,300,000**. [2 Samuel 24:9]

Judgment of God against the people – David's three choices [2 Samuel 24:10-14] (1 Chronicles 21:7-17)

- ✧ And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, I pray, O Lord, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly." [2 Samuel 24:10]
 - ✧ Realizing the foolishness of numbering the fighting men at this point in time, David's conscience bothered him and he confessed his error.
 - ✧ Before God our conscience enters into God's judgment. [Romans 2:11-16]
- ✧ God was the One Who initiated the numbering because of His anger at the people, so God did not accuse David of sin, but did allow David to choose the punishment upon the people who had sinned. [2 Samuel 24:1, 11-13]
 - ✧ The options were;
 1. Seven years of famine.
 2. Three months of defeat before their enemies.
 3. Three days of plague at the hand of God.
- ✧ David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man." [2 Samuel 24:14]
 - ✧ Any of the choices would impact the people of Israel, and David demonstrated his love and confidence in God by his choice.

The Plague [2 Samuel 24:15-16]

- ✧ Lord sent a plague upon Israel from the morning till the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba **seventy thousand men of the people died**.
And when the angel stretched out His hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, Yahweh (the Lord) relented from the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "**It is enough; now restrain your hand.**" And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. [2 Samuel 24:15-16]
 - ✧ There was a specific number of the people to be killed, **70,000**, and when that number was reached, God ended the plague and allowed the angel to be seen by David.
- ✧ Then David spoke to the Lord when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house." [2 Samuel 24:17]

- ✧ David did not know that it was all God's doing, and being king with a guilty conscience, David took responsibility for the losses to Israel in his prayer of intercession.

The Altar on the Threshing Floor of Araunah [2 Samuel 24:18-25] (1 Chronicles 21:18-27)

- ✧ And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." [2 Samuel 24:18]
 - ✧ God again demonstrated that atonement for sin is through the blood of a sacrifice as a substitute for the sins of the people, this has been the theme of Atonement from the very beginning and continues to the very end. [Leviticus 17:10-16]
 - ✧ It was the requirement at the first sin in the Garden of Eden, and at the time of the first offerings to the Lord. [Genesis 3:21, 4:1-6]
 - ✧ It is the requirement at the end. [Matthew 26:28, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Revelation 7:14, 12:11]
- ✧ David did as the Lord commanded, and bought the threshing floor from Araunah the Jebusite for the site of the altar to Yahweh. [2 Samuel 24:19-25]
 - ✧ David demonstrated the heart of a righteous man, by refusing to take it as a gift from the owner, but insisted on paying for it himself, saying, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing." [2 Samuel 24:24]
- ✧ And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. [2 Samuel 24:25]
- ✧ So the Lord heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.
 - ✧ Thus brought closure to the series of events and fully accomplished the will of God for this time in the history of Israel.
 - ✧ It also established the location Yahweh had chosen for His Name to rest in Jerusalem, which became the location of the Holy of Holies in the Temple Solomon was to build.
 - ✧ The location was at Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah where Abraham offered Isaac, The threshing floor of Araunah (Ornan), David built the altar, and Solomon built the Temple. [Genesis 22:2, 2 Samuel 24:18-25, 2 Chronicles 3:1]