

Sin, Satan, Judgment, Mercy

The Life of David—part 11

2 Samuel 24; April 14, 2019

DAY 1: The story of sin, judgment, repentance and hope—part 1

1. One of the biblical themes that occurs from Genesis to Revelation is how God deals with sinful man. The pattern follows these phases:

- God blesses people,
- People take His blessings for granted or take credit for them,
- People move away from God, become independent of Him,
- The natural consequences of sin produce relational “drama,” personal misery, etc.
- God sends messengers to prod the people to repent.
- Some do, some don’t.
- God sends judgment on those who don’t in an effort to bring (1) repentance on those who stubbornly rebel, and (2) to remind people or a nation of the evils of turning from God.

2. The scope of God’s judgment can fall on an individual or on an entire nation.

3. This week’s story in David and the nation of Israel is illustrative of the many complexities we usually don’t see.

2 Samuel 24:1 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."

² So the king said to Joab and the army commanders 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."

³ 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?"

⁴ 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.

4. To whom is the anger of the Lord directed in v. 1?

5. Notice, that God’s response was to test David. (“Incite” means to “test.” David will fail this test).

6. King David commands that a census be taken of the army. We are not told why this would be a terrible idea.

7. What is the response of General Joab and the commanders to David’s idea? (General Joab was not known to be a godly man, but even he realized this was a terrible idea).

9. We are just beginning to look at this story. What strikes you so far?

DAY 2: The story of sin, judgment, repentance and hope—part 2

1. As we said yesterday, there are several complexities in this story. We see another one today.

1 Chronicles 21:1 Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel.

2. Yesterday we saw these factors:

- a. The nation had sinned against God,
- b. God tested David.
- c. David failed the test.

3. The book of 1 Chronicles contains a parallel account of the same event, with some details uniquely told in this book that are not told in 2 Samuel.

4. Jot down at least three observations you make from v. 1.

5. This story may remind you of the first two chapters of the book of Job.

- a. God tests Job
- b. Satan weasels in on the testing
- c. Satan is allowed to bring incredible hardship onto Job.
- d. There is some mystery as to what sin is involved. With Israel, we are not told specifically what sin is involved. With David we're not told why taking this census was sinful. With Job we are not told if any sin was involved.

1 Chronicles 21:2 So David said to Joab and the commanders of the troops, "Go and count the Israelites from Beersheba to Dan. Then report back to me so that I may know how many there are." ³ But Joab replied, "May the LORD multiply his troops a hundred times over. My lord the king, are they not all my lord's subjects? Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring guilt on Israel?" ⁴ The king's word, however, overruled Joab; so Joab left and went throughout Israel and then came back to Jerusalem.

⁵ Joab reported the number of the fighting men to David: In all Israel there were one million one hundred thousand men who could handle a sword, including four hundred and seventy thousand in Judah. ⁶ But Joab did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, because the king's command was repulsive to him.

1 Chronicles 21:7 This command was also evil in the sight of God; so he punished Israel.

6. Israel had sinned, though we are not told specifically how. David had sinned in taking this census though we are also not told specifically how sin was involved.

7. What strikes you so far from this story?

DAY 3: The story of sin, judgment, repentance and hope—part 3

1. Joab and the commanders begin the census.

2 Samuel 24:8 After they had gone through the entire land, they came back to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

⁹ Joab reported the number of the fighting men to the king: In Israel there were eight hundred thousand able-bodied men who could handle a sword, and in Judah five hundred thousand.

2. Let's review what we know so far:

a. The nation had sinned against God.

b. David was tested by God.

c. David was tested by Satan.

d. David ordered the census, even against the counsel of a not-so-godly general.

e. The census was taken, lasting almost ten months.

3. David realizes the evil he has done, though it is unclear to us. (Additionally, we have no record of the people's conscience being stricken by their sin).

1 Chronicles 21:8 Then David said to God, "I have sinned greatly by doing this. Now, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."

4. Here is David's mea culpa.

For each of the three pieces of his mea culpa, jot down what strikes you:

a. *"I have sinned greatly by doing this."*

b. *"Now, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant."*

c. *"I have done a very foolish thing."*

2 Samuel 24:10 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, O LORD, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."

5. What does 2 Samuel 24:10 record that is not recorded in 1 Chronicles 21:8?

6. It is a divine miracle when any human being sees his sin, takes ownership of it, and goes to God for mercy and forgiveness!

7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 4: The story of sin, judgment, repentance and hope—part 4

2 Samuel 24:11 Before David got up the next morning, the word of the LORD had come to Gad the prophet, David's seer:

¹² "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.'" ¹³ So Gad went to David and said to him, "Shall there come upon you three years of famine in your land? Or three months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you? Or three days of plague in your land? Now then, think it over and decide how I should answer the one who sent me."

¹⁴ 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 the hands of men." ¹⁵ So the LORD sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.

1. God's judgment falls on the nation and on David.
2. God gives David three options for judgment. What strikes you about this? (Vv. 12-13)
3. Why does David choose a plague? (v. 14)

2 Samuel 24:16 When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD was grieved because of the calamity 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.

¹⁷ When David saw the angel who was striking down the people, he said to the LORD, "I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Let your hand fall upon me and my family."

4. Along with God's judgment comes God's mercy. (Mercy is not receiving the judgment that is fully due). What do we see about God's character in v. 16?
5. David is broken when he sees the effects of judgment on his people, his nation. He takes full responsibility for the judgment, although God's judgment is clearly, also, on the nation.
6. David's plea to God about the people being sheep, and his appeal of their innocence comes from a man who is heart-broken over the whole thing. (He is not stating a "fact" about the innocence of the people).
7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: The story of sin, judgment, repentance and hope—part 5

2 Samuel 24:18 On that day Gad went to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." ¹⁹ So David went up, as the LORD had commanded through Gad.

²⁰ When Araunah looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground. ²¹ Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

"To buy your threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped."

²² Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood.

²³ O king, Araunah gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the LORD your God accept you."

²⁴ But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them.

²⁵ David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the LORD answered prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

1. David sees that both an attitude change and some action are needed. We've already seen his attitude change in his repentance.

2. Now, David takes action. What is it he seeks to do?

3. David is determined to buy the land, build an altar and offer sacrifice to the Lord.

4. David insists on not being gifted land, oxen or materials. Why?

5. Notice that the plague was stopped by prayer (v. 25).

1 Chronicles 21:27 Then the LORD spoke to the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath.

²⁸ At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, he offered sacrifices there.

6. The altar and sacrifice signifies that Israel and David are reconciled to God.

THE EPILOGUE:

1 Chronicles 22:1 Then David said, "The house of the LORD God is to be here, and also the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

7. This was the place called Mt. Moriah during Abraham's time. It is the place where Abraham offered up his only blood son, Isaac as a sacrifice.

8. It would be the very place where God's only Son would also be offered as sacrifice for sin! Golgotha is the highest point on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem.