

## 2 Samuel 24 — Needing A Better King

**February 4, 2024**

Good morning, CrossWinds Church! If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. We are grateful to have you. Today is an exciting day at CrossWinds because we will finish our studies in the book of 2 Samuel. We began the study of 1 Samuel in January 2022. Today, we finish 2 Samuel in February 2024. That is a long time. We took breaks along the way. It was a great study. I will miss it.

Our next study will be in the books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. They are very practical. There is plenty of stuff about the end times in those books. If you are interested in the return of Christ and how things will wrap up, pay close attention to that series.

We won't begin 1 Thessalonians next week. We will begin it the following week, February 18. Why are we waiting a week to start it?

Pastor Jordan and I will be in Chicago this week at the Theology Conference held at Trinity Seminary. We will be part of an in-depth study of the theology of marriage. Marriage and sexuality are under attack in our culture. As pastors, we felt it was a good use of our time to be part of the theology conference to better address that issue in our culture. Since we will be gone most of the week and will have minimal prep time for Sunday, we decided to push the start of the series back a week.

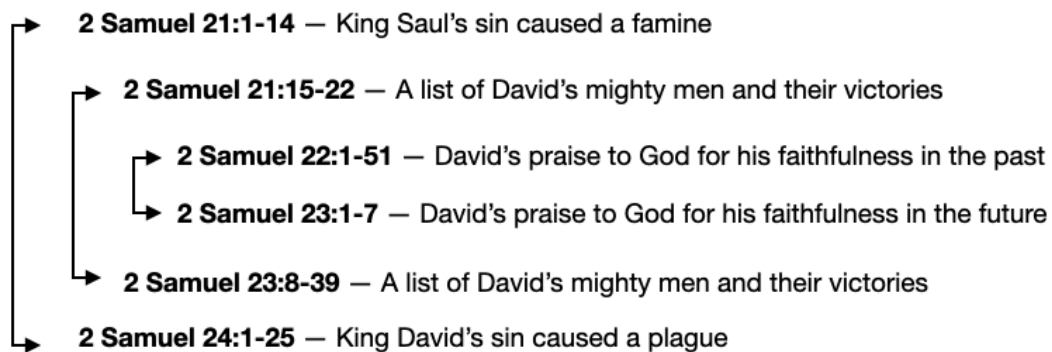
Next week, Pastor Jordan and I will teach messages we taught in the past on our respective campuses but didn't share with the opposite campus. Pastor Jordan will be here teaching a message titled "Money is a Matter of the Heart." I

will be in Spencer teaching a message on money titled “What does the Bible say about money?” That will save a little prep time in a busy week.

Let’s get to the last chapter of 2 Samuel and see how the story of David’s life ends.

## Background

As those of you who are regular already know, the chronological story of King David’s life ended in 2 Samuel 20. The last four chapters of the book are not part of the chronological story. They are a summary of David’s life. They form a Hebrew inclusio, where the front and the back mirror one another, just in the opposite order. The main application points are in the center. We looked at this in previous weeks.



This morning, we are in 2 Samuel 24. It connects with 2 Samuel 21. In 2 Samuel 21, the nation of Israel faced a three-year famine because King Saul attempted to genocide an entire people group called the Gibeonites. Israel had sworn a covenant to protect them. They lived in King Saul’s community. He wanted their land. King Saul didn’t care about them. He attempted to kill them off and take their land. It was his version of Hitler, Auschwitz, and the final solution. As you would guess, God wasn’t pleased. As a result, the entire nation suffered

three years of famine. 2 Samuel 21 was about David trying to solve the problem of God's just wrath against the nation's sin.

In 2 Samuel 24, we meet the problem of God's wrath again. God's just wrath against the nation's sins shows up again. David will again try to save the nation. Ultimately, he saved the nation but could only suspend God's wrath, not pay for it.

2 Samuel ends by pointing us to the need for a better king, a king better than David. As we saw, David defeated the enemy nations around Israel. He couldn't conquer the biggest enemy the nation would face, which was God's fully just wrath against them for their sin. As the Bathsheba and Uriah incident showed us, David was a great king, but he was also a flawed and sinful person, just like the rest of us. David couldn't solve the problem of God's just wrath against the nation or the problem of God's just wrath against his sin. The chapter ends by pointing us to the need for a king better than David. We need a king who can set up an everlasting kingdom and a king who can solve the problem of God's wrath against us. We have that king. His name is Jesus.

This chapter is built around the wrath of God. It breaks into four part.

1. The wrath of God and the numbering of the people.
2. The wrath of God and the plague on the nation
3. The wrath of God and the mercy of God.
4. The wrath of God and atonement for sin.

### **The wrath of God and the numbering of the people.**

Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah." 2 Samuel 24:1 (ESV)

This is a difficult start. This verse raises many questions, some of which we cannot fully answer, but all of which we should consider.

**When did this occur?** We do not know. We only know this took place while David was king. It probably happened in the later part of David's reign, after Absalom's rebellion.

It says God's anger was roused *again*. This was not God's first frustration with his people's sin. When did God pour out his wrath earlier in the nation's history? We don't know, but most likely, this refers to what we studied a few weeks ago in 2 Samuel 21, where the nation experienced three years of hard famine for Saul's attempt to genocide the Gibeonites.

**Why was God angry with the nation?** In 2 Samuel 21, we know the reason for God's anger. It was the blood guilt of King Saul on the Gibeonites. In this chapter, we do not know why God was angry with the nation. We can guess, but the Bible doesn't tell us the reason. It doesn't tell us the reason because, for the purpose of this chapter, the reason doesn't matter. We can be ok with that. All that matters is that God was angry at the nation for their sins, and David was trying to figure out a way to solve the problem.

**Why did God incite David against the people?** What God did in his wrath to discipline the nation is not what we would expect. He incited David against them. David, as the king of the nation, became a tool in the hand of God to discipline the nation for their rebellion. Here, we run across a mind-bending truth most of us don't think about. *One of the ways God disciplines a nation for*

*rebellion against Him is He gives them foolish leaders, or He takes their wise leaders and allows them to make foolish choices.*

As soon as I say that, many of you are thinking about politics. Don't go there. The principle is that God uses the leader of a nation to discipline a nation through foolish choices. David was a wise leader, but God used him to discipline the nation. God led David to make foolish and prideful decisions that led to the nation's suffering.

*So the king said to Joab, the commander of the army, who was with him, "Go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and number the people, that I may know the number of the people." 2 Samuel 24:2 (ESV)*

**Why did David want Joab to take a census?** It was so David could know the number of the people. David wanted to know the size of his kingdom and the power of his kingdom. Joab, who usually had a different idea about things than David, disagreed with David. In this case, I think Joab was right, and David was wrong.

*But Joab said to the king, "May the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see it, but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?" 2 Samuel 24:3 (ESV)*

**What was Joab's objection?** The king should not delight in this thing. David wanted to know the number of the people. Joab told him the nation's size and the strength of its military power didn't matter. Maybe God would give even more people to David after the census, in which case, the census would be out of date. In addition, Joab was implicitly reminding David that in the past, God gave David military victories when his army was vastly outnumbered. There was no need to number the people to find security in the size of your army. Victory came from the size of your God, not the size of your military.

Aren't we the same way? It is easy to look at our retirement plan and find security for our future. We go to the doctor for a health checkup, and the doctor says you are in top shape and you will live for years. Isn't it easy to find security for the future in those things? The size of our bank account and the health of our bodies do not give us any security for the future. Only God gives us security for our future. He is the one we should trust. It appears David lost sight of that. On this occasion, David overruled Joab's objection. The census would move forward.

But the king's word prevailed against Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel. 2 Samuel 24:4 (ESV)

Here we see that Joab wasn't the only one who objected to the census, but it was also the other commanders of the army who objected. When many advisors disagree with your conclusion, as a leader, you should rethink your strategy. David didn't do that. Next, we have the route the census takers took when they traveled through the land.

They crossed the Jordan and began from Aroer, and from the city that is in the middle of the valley, toward Gad and on to Jazer. Then they came to Gilead, and to Kadesh in the land of the Hittites; and they came to Dan, and from Dan they went around to Sidon, and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and Canaanites; and they went out to the Negeb of Judah at Beersheba. So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. 2 Samuel 24:5–8 (ESV)

This territory did not include the lands David conquered. It was just the tribes of Israel. It took ten months to complete. After reading that, I wish I



had a map, so I give you a map! The census takers walked in a big circle around the nation.

And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: in Israel there were 800,000 valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were 500,000. 2 Samuel 24:9 (ESV)

How the numbers are reported implies that the reason for the census was for David to ascertain the nation's military capabilities. In Israel, 800,000 valiant men drew the sword. What David wanted to know, so he could delight in it, was the number of fighting men he had available to him.

Now begins the tougher questions. We will start with an easier one, then work our way to harder ones.

**Why does this census not match the one in 1 Chronicles?** This census is also recorded in 1 Chronicles 21:5, but the numbers differ.

And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to David. In all Israel there were 1,100,000 men who drew the sword, and in Judah 470,000 who drew the sword. 1 Chronicles 21:5 (ESV)

Is this an error in the Bible? This discrepancy is sometimes used by those who claim the Bible can't be trusted. If there is a good explanation, what would it be? I think I have one. The census was to determine the size of David's potential army. It was to know how many people he had available if he called up a military draft. It was not to know the number of people in his standing army. He already knew that number. If we turn to 1 Chronicles 27, it gives the number of men in David's standing army by tribes. If we add that up, it totals 288,000. That rounds to 300,000. The number of people in the standing army was included in the 1 Chronicles reference. However, the standing army was not included in the 2 Samuel 24 reference. If you add the potential draft army of Israel, which was

800,000, to the standing army of 300,000, they combine to make the 1.1 million number, which is what 1 Chronicles tells us. What about the small discrepancy between Judah's draft army numbers, which 1 Chronicles claims was 470,000 and 2 Samuel 24 claims was 500,000? How do we account for those differences? The answer is that 2 Samuel 24 is speaking in round numbers.

**Why did God incite David to sin?** While God was behind David's bad idea for a census, as far as David was concerned, it was his bad idea. David didn't sense God didn't make him do it. He was rightfully responsible for it. This passage gives us a window into a difficult tension in Scripture. It is the difference between the secret will of God and the revealed will of God. This is sometimes called Deep Sovereignty. Get ready to bend your mind.

God's revealed will is given to us in the Bible. The Bible tells us all God requires us to believe, do, or avoid. We are responsible for obeying God's revealed will as it is given to us in the Scriptures.

In addition to God's revealed will, the Bible also tells us about God's secret will. That consists of everything God ordained to happen in eternity past. Let me show you how these work together. When Jesus died on the cross, did that surprise God? Absolutely not! it was God's secret will that it would happen. God ordained that Jesus would die on the cross in our place for our sins from the beginning of time. Look how the apostle Peter talks about this.

...but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you 1 Peter 1:19–20 (ESV)

God's secret will, his plan before the world began, was that Jesus would die on the cross for our sins. All the details of how that would happen and when



that would happen were ordained by God before he made the universe. That is mind-bending.

God didn't just have a plan for Jesus before the world was created, but he had a plan for you and me, not just before we were born, but before creation came into existence. God's plan, which was done before time and space came into existence, was to put you and me together with Jesus for all of eternity.

even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. Ephesians 1:4 (ESV)

Those are all references to God's secret will. God's plan was that we would be put together with Jesus, and we would be saved by Jesus. Nothing can change that.

It was God's secret will that Jesus would die on the cross for our sins, but what about the Romans who killed Jesus when he was innocent? Were they still guilty of murder, even though God ordained that they would kill him? What about the Jewish leaders and people who called out for Jesus' crucifixion? Were they guilty of murder when they asked for the crucifixion of an innocent man? Yes! Look how Peter talks about this on the day of Pentecost. We see God's secret will for Jesus next to a clear violation of God's revealed will in the same verse, as Peter claims those who killed Jesus were guilty of murder!

...this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. Acts 2:23 (ESV)

We see the same thing in the book of Genesis when Joseph was sold to be a slave in Egypt by his brothers. His brothers were guilty of sin. They knowingly chose to violate God's revealed will. Instead of loving their brother, they hated him and sold him into slavery. They were fully responsible for their

sinful choices. Yet, in his secret will of God, God used the evil done against Joseph as part of his good plan to bring Joseph to Egypt to make him second in command over Pharaoh to save many lives, even the lives of the brother who betrayed him. Listen to Joseph speaking to his brothers after they were in Egypt, and we can see God's secret will living in tension with a clear violation of God's revealed will because his brothers treated Joseph so poorly.

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. Genesis 50:20 (ESV)

What Joseph's brothers did to him, which they meant for evil and for which they were fully responsible, God, in his secret will, planned to use to bring Joseph to Egypt to save the lives of countless people.

This is why Romans 8:28 is such an encouraging verse. We should all have it memorized. Memorize Romans 8:28 this week if you don't already know it. It reminds us that when people sin against us when people hurt us and violate God's revealed will, or even when we sin and violate God's will, hope is not lost. God, in his secret will and amazing power takes the sin done against us, and even the sin regrettably done by us, then incorporates it into his good plans to achieve about his good purposes.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28 (ESV)

I know some of you had terrible things done to you. Some of you had a spouse divorce you. Others of you feel lost because a loved one died and is no longer with you. No matter what evil is done to you and even evil regrettably done by you, if you know God through Jesus Christ, you can rest assured that

God is at work behind the scenes, overruling evil intentions, and is achieving his good plans and good purposes for us and his kingdom through our lives. That is why, as Christians, we never lose hope no matter what happens to us. God will take all things that happen to us, even the evil things done to us, he will turn them on their head and use them for good, just like we saw in the life of Joseph.

Back to David. God's people sinned. God, in his secret will, incited David to sin by numbering the people, but in all this, God will achieve his good purposes.

**Who incited David to sin?** This gets interesting, especially when we look at the parallel account in 1 Chronicles, which tells a different story about who incited David to sin.

[Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel. 1 Chronicles 21:1 \(ESV\)](#)

Who incited David to take a census of the nation? Was it Satan, or was it God? Is the Bible contradicting itself? How do we resolve this difficulty?

Satan and God are not equals but opposites. God is large and in charge. Satan isn't. Satan is a created being that is part of creation. God is the ruler over all of creation. Satan is ultimately a tool in the hand of God who serves God's purposes. When God decided to incite David to number the nation and to make the foolish choice, he did it by allowing Satan to tempt David with greater severity. Rather than restraining Satan from David, he allowed Satan to tempt David. David gave into the temptation and pridefully wanted to know the size of his military so he could boast about the numbers.

This is similar to what we see in the Book of Job. Satan could not touch Job unless God gave him permission. Job was harassed by Satan, and he passed the test. David was enticed by Satan, and he failed the test.

This is another window into the way God works and the way Satan works. It is more deep sovereignty. Look what the Bible says about the way temptation works in our lives.

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. James 1:13–14 (ESV)

James 1:13 says God is not the author of sin, and God does not tempt anyone to sin. Yet God tests people by occasionally removing some of his protective hand from their lives when temptations or tests. God allowed Satan to tempt David with pride. All Satan could do was lure David. David gave in to the temptation, and he was fully responsible for giving in to it.

This is why in the Lord's prayer we are to pray.

(We are to pray...) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Matthew 6:13 (ESV)

We are to ask God in prayer to protect us from temptations that we might give in to them and be led to sin.

In David's case, God allowed Satan to tempt David. David, on his own free will, and for which David was fully responsible, gave into Satan's temptation of pride and took a census of the people.

**What was wrong with a census?** There is nothing wrong with a census. In Exodus 30:11-16, God gave his people instructions on how to conduct a

census. What was wrong with this census was probably the motive behind it or the method of taking it.

**Motive — David likely took the census out of pride.** In the Chronicles account, which describes the same event, this census was conducted after several notable military victories brought peace to the nation. There was no need to take a census to discover the size of the army's potential size by a draft. There were no imminent threats. David simply wanted to know the number so he could boast about it. It was bragging rights. That is pride. This was David putting his trust for the future in the size of his military, not the size of his God who gave him the victories. Don't we do that today? In America, don't we trust in the size of our military for peace, not in the care of God, who gives us peace? In David's younger years, he wrote these words.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. Psalm 20:7 (ESV)

It seems David forgot what he wrote. He delighted in the numbers.

**Method — David may have neglected the ransom payment.** There may be another reason things went wrong with the census. Exodus 30:11-16 describes how to take a census in Israel. It gave a requirement that David may have neglected.

The LORD said to Moses, "When you take the census of the people of Israel, then each shall give a ransom for his life to the LORD when you number them, that there be no plague among them when you number them." Exodus 30:11–12 (ESV)

The Israelites were all sinners redeemed by God. A half-shekel ransom was bearing witness to the nation's need of payment for their sins.

We have no record of David doing this. Interestingly, the consequence of not taking a ransom payment during a census was a plague, which is exactly what happened.

### **The wrath of God and the plague on the nation.**

But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly." 2 Samuel 24:10 (ESV)

As we said a moment ago, a census wasn't sinful; it was either David's motive for the census, which would have been pride, or the method by which it was done, which would have been neglecting a ransom payment. Either way, after it was done, David's conscience bothered him. He realized what he did was wrong.

There is good news here. The good news is not that David sinned in his motives or methods but that when he realized his sin, he was heartbroken about it. He called out to God, asking for forgiveness. This is the sign of a true Christian. It is not that we don't sin, but when we do sin, we feel terrible about it. We confess it to God and ask Jesus' death on the cross to forgive us. We do whatever we must to make things right. The good news is God positively responds to that.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 (ESV)

In David's case, it wasn't that simple. While there was something sinful about David's decision to take the census, it was the sin of the nation that created God's wrath against the nation. There was more than simple forgiveness of David's foolish actions to be dealt with. There was national sin.

And when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you. Choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'" 2 Samuel 24:11–12 (ESV)

David must have prayed at least for part of the night. In the morning, the prophet Gad came to him. Gad has been around for a while. We last time we saw him was in 1 Samuel 22. I am sure David hoped for good news from Gad, but that wasn't what Gad brought. David was to choose the consequences of his sin. He could choose what was behind the curtains: one, two, or three.

Let us not forget that God was disciplining the nation through David, not just disciplining David.

So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me." 2 Samuel 24:13 (ESV)

Presumably, the decreasing periods meant increased intensity of suffering. David, do you want this to be a matter of longevity or severity?

Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man." 2 Samuel 24:14 (ESV)

Wow, this was a tough choice. David's response was not a clear choice, but it was a good choice. In all the confusion of what to do, he knew the one thing he didn't want was for the nation to fall into the hands of people for judgment. He wanted the nation to fall into the hands of God for judgment because life taught him that God's mercies are great. God is incredibly compassionate, and rarely does God give sinners like you and me the full punishment we deserve for our

sins. The only hope for anyone when it comes to God's wrath against their sin is the God who is merciful toward us in our sins.

God made the decision. He would send a plague on the nation.

So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning until the appointed time. And there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba 70,000 men. 2 Samuel 24:15 (ESV)

We should notice how the punishment fits the crime. Most likely, the reason for David's census was his desire to boast about the size of his army. In less than three days, God cut those numbers back. The dead amounted to 1/20 of the army or about five percent. What a reminder that God can easily take away whatever we put our hope and confidence in beside Him. Has anyone experienced that?

I know what some of you are thinking. It is easy to object to God's action. "God, how dare you send a plague to kill 70,000 innocent people." Wait a minute. Let's not forget where we started. It was the sin of the entire nation that aroused God's wrath against the nation. God only used David as a tool to discipline the people. David's sinful census was the secondary cause, not the primary cause. The primary cause was the sin of the nation. Still, it is easy to think this is too severe. Was it too severe? How would we know? The chapter never told us what the nation did to arouse God's anger. If we knew all the reasons God was angry at the nation's sin, we might think 70,000 dead was God being kind, not severe.

As we look at this, we need to remember the character of God. God is just. Any of his wrath he extends toward sin is always fair, or it is graciously less than we deserve. It is *never* overdone. That would violate God's character.



## The wrath of God and the mercy of God.

And when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, "It is enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. 2 Samuel 24:16 (ESV)

This is a strange scene. The plague began when God sent an angel to bring it about. The angel came to Jerusalem and was about to destroy it with the plague when God relented. God promised three days of plague. It appears he cut that short and spared the city of Jerusalem from death. I told you God is merciful and gives us less than we deserve!

**Why did God not destroy Jerusalem?** That was the city that housed the Ark of the Covenant. It was the city of David. It was the city God promised to establish forever. God commanded the destroying angel to stop. He stopped by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. That will be important. Tuck that in the back of your mind for a few minutes.

While 2 Samuel 24 presents this event from God's perspective, the same event described in 1 Chronicles, which shows it from David's perspective.

And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. 1 Chronicles 21:16 (ESV)

The 1 Chronicles account tells us David could see the angel standing between heaven and earth with his destroying sword stretched over the city of Jerusalem. David and the elders fell on their faces in repentance, asking for mercy.

Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these

sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house.” 2 Samuel 24:17 (ESV)

This shows us David thought of the nation as innocent. He didn't know this was all part of God's discipline on the nation. To David, it looked like the people were suffering unjustly. We know the back story. We know they were suffering justly for their sin. David didn't know that, but we do.

It also shows us that David was willing to offer himself as a substitute for the people. David was willing to die for them. God didn't take him up on his offer because God couldn't take him up on his offer. David couldn't die for the nation's sin because he had his own problem with the wrath of God for his sin!

### **The wrath of God and the Atonement of God.**

And Gad came that day to David and said to him, “Go up, raise an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.” 2 Samuel 24:18 (ESV)

The threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite was an elevated location (That is why it says, “Go up.”) It was high ground just outside of Jerusalem. David was to build an altar in that place and offer sacrifices for the people's sins.

So David went up at Gad's word, as the LORD commanded. 2 Samuel 24:19 (ESV)

He immediately did what he was supposed to do. What happens next is oriental bargaining. You start out generous and end up with an acceptable offer that closes the deal.

And when Araunah looked down, he saw the king and his servants coming on toward him. And Araunah went out and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground. And Araunah said, “Why has my lord the king come to his servant?” David said, “To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be averted from the people.” Then Araunah said to David, “Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him. Here are the oxen for the burnt offering and the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood. All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king.” And Araunah said

to the king, “May the LORD your God accept you.” But the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. 2 Samuel 24:20–24 (ESV)

David refused to offer to the Lord an offering that would cost him nothing. True worship must cost us something, or it is not worship. Sometimes, people claim they don’t want to attend church because it is inconvenient. Worship, by definition, must be inconvenient. It must cost us something. Sometimes, people are not excited about giving; if they give, it is no more than pocket change. That is worship. True worship must cost us something. True worship involves a sacrifice of our time, treasures, or talents.

And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel. 2 Samuel 24:25 (ESV)

What was a temporary pause in the plague became a permanent end of the plague when David offered sacrifices for the nation’s sins. The last act of 2 Samuel was David establishing an altar at God’s direction on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, where he offered sacrifices for the sin of the people to avert God’s wrath against them. David tried to offer himself as a sacrifice for the people, but that was unacceptable because David was a sinner in need of forgiveness like everyone else.

Here is where an interesting backstory unfolds. If we turn to 2 Chronicles, we learn a little more about the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to David his father, at the place that David had appointed, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 2 Chronicles 3:1 (ESV)

The threshing floor of Aranuah the Jebusite was on Mount Moriah. Do you remember that location from our studies in the book of Genesis? In Genesis 22, Abraham was told to build an altar on Mount Moriah and sacrifice his son Isaac. There, God stopped him and provided a ram caught in the thicket that died in Isaac's place. In the same place where a ram died in Isaac's place, a thousand years later, David erected an altar where animals would die in place of the nation to turn away God's wrath. After David, Solomon erected the temple in the same location. There, every day, week, and year, animals were sacrificed to turn away God's wrath from his people.

As the book of Hebrews pointed out, all the sacrifices offered in the Old Testament never paid for sin. They just temporarily covered sin. They were a constant reminder of sin, but they never dealt with the problem of sin. They were a reminder that it was only by a pure and spotless sacrifice that sin could be truly paid for. David offered to give himself up for the people, but he couldn't. He was a sinner who was also in need of God's forgiveness.

A thousand years later, Jesus came to the earth. He was a descendant of David. He was fully man and fully God. He never sinned. He was fully man, so he could identify with us. He was fully God, so he was of infinite worth. Just outside the city, next to where the blood of sacrificial animals covered sin, on the hill called Calvary, Jesus died paying for all of our sins. He paid for all of them. David saved the nation from their enemies, but because of his sin, he couldn't save the nation from its greatest enemy, which was God and his wrath. The people needed a better king. Jesus, the descendent of David, is that better king. He

conquered the enemy no human being could conquer, God's just wrath against our sin. This is why the apostle Paul says these amazing words to everyone who has repented their sins and asked Jesus to be their king.

**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.  
Romans 8:1 (ESV)**

No matter what you have done. No matter how you have failed or rebelled. God loves you. Jesus came to die for you, to conquer the wrath of God and restore our relationship with God. If you do not know him, I ask that you would call out to him in your heart today before you leave. Run to Jesus, the better king.



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