



# A BETTER KING

## A SERIES IN 2 SAMUEL



### 2 Samuel 24 – Needing A Better King

February 4, 2024

#### 1. The wrath of God led to a census 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)*

A. When did this occur?

B. Why was God angry with the nation?

C. Why did God incite David against the people?

- 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.

*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)*

D. Why did David want Joab to take a census?

*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)*

E. What was Joab’s objection?

*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)*

*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)*

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)

#### F. Why does this census not **match** the one in 1 Chronicles?

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)

#### G. Why did **God** incite David to sin?

- **Deep Sovereignty** — This is the difference between **the secret will of God** and **the revealed will of God**. The revealed will of God is what God tells us in the Bible we are to believe, do, or avoid. The secret will of God is what God decreed eternity past to happen.

...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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

#### H. **Who** incited David to sin?

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

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)

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

#### I. What was **wrong** with David's census?

##### 1. **Motive** — David probably conducted the census out of pride.

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

##### 2. **Method** — David may have neglected the ransom payment.

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)

## 2. The wrath of God led to a 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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

## 3. The wrath of God led to 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)

### A. Why did God not destroy Jerusalem?

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)

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)

#### 4. The wrath of God led to sacrifices for sin.

*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)*

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

*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)*

*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)*

*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)*

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

#### Life Group Questions

---

1. **Read 2 Samuel 24.** In this chapter, how is God's wrath wrapped in his mercy?
2. **Read 2 Samuel 24:1.** How can David be blamed for his sin if God incited David to sin?
3. How does knowing the difference between the secret will of God and the revealed will of God help you find comfort in an unsteady world? (Read the notes under 1.G. for help.)
4. **Read Ephesians 1:4, Matt 25:34, Revelation 13:8.** How does knowing that God planned for you to be with Jesus before the foundation of the world change how you look at life?
5. **Read 2 Chronicles 3:1 and 1 Peter 1:18-19.** What is significant about these verses and what they say about the sacrifices of Abraham, David, Solomon, and Jesus?
6. Does it strike you as significant that the last story in the books of Samuel leaves us longing for a king who is better than David, a king who can conquer the one thing David couldn't conquer: the wrath of God?