

Commentary on 2nd Samuel chapter 24, by Chuck Smith 5.11.22

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May memory verse: Romans 6:14 (NKJV) For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

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Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, and number Israel and Judah. For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and number the people, that I may know the number of the people ([2Sa 24:1-2](#)).

Now Joab rightfully objected to David from this numbering process. He said, "Why do you need to know how many people there are? God is able to give you a great multitude, why do you need to know how many you have?" But David insisted that they be numbered.

Now the Lord was opposed to the census. On the basis of the fact that God had declared that He was gonna multiply Abraham's seed so that it would be as the sands of the seas, and the stars of the heavens, innumerable. For David then to seek to number the people, or to count the people, to take the census, was actually in a defiance in a way, against the promise of God, which God had declared that He was gonna multiply them until they were innumerable.

But David's pride, for whatever reason, sought to count the number of fighting men that he had both in Judah and in Israel. So he commissioned Joab to go throughout the whole land and number them all. Joab went throughout the land, took him nine months to take the census. When he came back after nine months, he found that there were five hundred thousand men in Judah who were valiant. There were some eight hundred thousand in Israel.

Now David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David confessed, Lord, I've sinned greatly in what I have done: and now, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly ([2Sa 24:10](#)).

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So David after it was over with, realizes his folly, realizes his sin, and he asks forgiveness.

And so the Lord said, I'll give you three choices, either [Number one] there'll be seven years of famine come into the land, or you will flee three months before your enemies, or I will bring a pestilence for three days into the land, take your choice. So David said, [Well, I don't want to fall into the hands of my enemies, because I don't think they are merciful.] I'd rather fall into the hands of God; for he is merciful. [So, I'll take the three days pestilence in the land. So the angel of the Lord went through the land with a plague, and began to smite the men of Israel.] The Lord sent the pestilence from morning until evening, from Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men were wiped out in this pestilence. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It's enough: stay now thy hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing place of Araunah the Jebusite. David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and he said, Lo, I have sinned, I've done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and my father's house ([2Sa 24:12-17](#)).

"Lord it was me, I sinned, what have these people done? They're just poor sheep, they haven't done anything." David is seeking the Lord, actually though you go back to the first verse, and the Lord was angry with Israel, no doubt for their apostasy and all. God sought this cause against Israel.

And so the prophet Gad came that day to David and said to him, Go up and raise up an altar unto the LORD at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David, according to the saying of Gad went up as the Lord commanded. Araunah looked and he saw the king and he started coming toward him: and he went out, and bowed himself unto David. And he said, Why has the king come to his servant? [And so forth] And David said, I've come to buy your threshing floor, that I might build an altar to the LORD, and offer a sacrifice that the plague might be stayed from the people. And Araunah said to David, [Hey, take it man, I don't want it,] you can have it: and here you can kill these oxen, and you can take the plows and all to make the wood for the altar, and you can have them. And David said, No, I will not offer unto God that which cost me nothing ([2Sa 24:19-24](#)):

I think with David this is a very interesting principle. We talk about making sacrifices unto God, but we don't really understand what it is to sacrifice unto the Lord. Very few people actually sacrifice in giving to God. Most generally people give from their abundance. Very few ever sacrifice, or give sacrificially unto God. So often we're giving to the Lord that which cost us nothing. It doesn't really cost;

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it doesn't really take away from me. If it should take away from me, then I'd think twice about giving it to God. Very few people are willing to actually give sacrificially to God, give God that really costs them something. In reality I feel that the poor actually always give much more to God than the rich. Even as when Jesus was with His disciples watching the people cast their money into the treasury, and the rich came by casting their great gifts in, all the people standing there going, "Oh wow, wow."

This poor little widow came along and dropped her mite in, which today is one fortieth of a penny. You can buy forty mites for a penny. And when this widow put that mite in, Jesus turned to His disciples and He said, "Did you see that? She gave more than all of the rest of them."

"What do you mean Lord? You got to be kidding."

"No, I'm not kidding. You see, she dropped in all that she had. That's her very sustenance. That's all she's got. That cost her. The rest of them, they're all giving from their abundance, it didn't cost them to give, they're giving their surplus, their abundance; it doesn't cost them anything. She has given of her very sustenance unto the Lord, it cost."

That's what the Lord measured. Thus, the poor people are those that will be rich in the kingdom of God because their giving unto the Lord has been costly. They give out of their sustenance. Whereas the rich, though you may count them in dollar amounts, give much more, God doesn't count in dollar amounts. God counts in what it costs to give.

David declares, "I will not give unto God that which cost me nothing." I think that demonstrates an excellent principle, that our giving to God should cost us something in order for it to be true sacrificial giving.

And thus David bought the threshingfloor from Araunah, and he bought the cattle. And there he offered the sacrifice of God, and the plague was stayed, the angel's hand was stayed, and did not smite Jerusalem, and did not smite any further than Israel ([2Sa 24:24-25](#)).

Now because of this, they did not take a census in Israel after this time. But every man was required once a year to drop a shekel into the treasury of the temple. They would count the shekels so they knew how many men there were. But they wouldn't count people after this anymore.

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Now if you're at a party, you need to play a game, a game in which the people in the room have to be numbered, you really can't count the people so you say, "Well, you're not one, you're not two, you're not three, you're not four, you're not five." So you're not counting them. Little ways around everything.

It is sad that David's career ends in sort of tragedy. But after the sin with Bathsheba, there was a penalty to be paid though the prophet said, "The Lord has forgiven thy sins, yet the sword will never depart from your house. Your own children will rise up against you." First of all Absalom rising up against him, next week Adonijah rising up against him. The sword, the rebellion by the northern tribes, the attack by the Philistines. The sword is constantly there. Yes, he's forgiven, but oh the price that he paid for his sins.

It should cause us to think twice before we would entertain the thought of sinning. God will forgive of course, but sometimes the price that has to be paid is very steep.

Shall we pray?

Father we thank You again for the privilege of studying Your Word. We pray Lord that we might walk in its light. Give us, Father a richer, fuller, understanding of Your purpose, of Your plan of Your love, as You unfold it to our hearts through Thy Word. Lord, let us examine ourselves, our own lives that we might walk circumspectly before Thee. Father, we pray that You'll help us to even examine our giving to Thee. That we would not, Lord, just give to You cast-offs, but giving that counts. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shall we stand?

May the Lord be with you, may the Lord watch over you this week, may the Lord bless you. May He fill you with His love, with His Spirit, with His grace, that you might show forth that grace of God in your dealings with others. That you might manifest the Spirit, the nature of Jesus Christ, in your relationship with others. That you might walk, even as He walked, in Jesus' name.