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**BIBLE STUDY**

**FLORIDA ECCLESIASTICAL DIOCESE**

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**SERVICE AND SACRIFICE**

**(The Posture Of The Church During The Pandemic)**

**2 Samuel 24**

***II Samuel 24:1 "And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah."***

There is a distinction between the perfect will (what God wants) and the permissive will (what God allows) of God. This explains the meaning of the statement "He moved David". This is saying, that when the LORD was kindled against Israel, David got angry, and in the heat of the moment, ordered the numbering of Israel and Judah. Sometimes, we think a suggestion from the devil is a leading of the LORD.

***I Chronicles 21:1 "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel."***

***II Samuel 24:2 "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 even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people."***

We realize, from this, that David is very hasty in having this census taken. Joab is the leader of David's army. David gives him the job of numbering the people. There are several reasons why David might have had this done. One reason would be to see who truly wanted to follow the LORD, and who did not. Another reason could have been to see how many men were of the age to go to war. This numbering is for the benefit of David, and not a God ordered numbering.

***II Samuel 24:3 "And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see [it]: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?"***

The strength of David was not in how many men he could muster out for war. His strength was in the LORD. Joab is opposed to this counting of the people. Joab reminds David, that the LORD adds to them, as is needed. They are not in control of how their growth, or decline, is so why bother to number the people? Joab is having difficulty in seeing why the king would want such a count.

***II Samuel 24:4 "Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel."***

Joab may give advice, but in the end, he must do as king David has commanded him to do. It seems from this, that some of the captains were opposed, as well. They, like Joab, had to do as David told them, and they went out, and counted them.

***II Samuel 24:5 "And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that [lieth] in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer:"***

The people would not like the census, because it usually meant they were facing heavier taxes, or it meant they were counting the men in preparation for a war. Either way, they did not like it. They began on the east side of the Jordan at Aroer in Gad.

***II Samuel 24:6 "Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim- hodshi; and they came to Dan-jaan, and about to Zidon,"***

***II Samuel 24:7 "And came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, [even] to Beer-sheba."***

***II Samuel 24:8 "So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days."***

We can see from the details of where, and to whom they went, that they covered the entire land. This was a massive job, especially since many of them did not want to be numbered. If this census had been called of God, the Levites would have done it, but this is done by a military king by his captains. This took a long time, as we see by the nine months and twenty days before their return.

***II Samuel 24:9 "And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah [were] five hundred thousand men."***

This is not the same count that is given in Chronicles. It is interesting that Israel had 800,000 men in all of their tribes, and Judah had 500,000 men by themselves. Whichever account you believe, there were over a million men the age to go to war in all of the tribes of Israel, including Judah.

***II Samuel 24:10 "And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly."***

David's heart {conscience} immediately convicted him that he had sinned. David immediately repented, and asked God to take away the iniquity. We do not know exactly what prompted David to the fact that he had sinned. We do know that his men did not want to do this, and the people did not want it either.

***II Samuel 24:11 "For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,"***

Gad was a prophet of David. Gad had access to David at this time, and brings him a message from God.

***II Samuel 24:12 "Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three [things]; choose thee one of them, that I may [do it] unto thee."***

The statement "Thus saith the LORD" shows that Gad is only the mouthpiece. The message is from God. The LORD sent David a choice of three different punishments for his sin. God will not choose. He will let David choose which one.

***II Samuel 24:13 "So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? Or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? Now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me."***

This same message in Chronicles speaks of the time of famine as 3 years. Any of these things would be a terrible punishment. David had made such a mistake in hastening to number the people, that he would hesitate to make this decision. The prophet would take the message back to the LORD, whatever David decides.

***II Samuel 24:14 "And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies [are] great: and let me not fall into the hand of man."***

David realized that he had sinned, and brought this terrible time on himself and his people. He could not bear to make this decision. He knows that God is merciful, so he lets God decide what is right for the punishment. He has placed himself in the hands of God. He does not want to be judged of man.

***II Samuel 24:15 "So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men."***

This does not say that the pestilence lasted 3 days. It says, until the time appointed. Whenever God said it was enough, is when it stopped. Seventy thousand people died. This was as many as would have died in a terrible war. It appears, that Jerusalem was spared.

***II Samuel 24:16 "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 is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite."***

This reminds us of the angel that brought death to the firstborn of Egypt. The LORD was overseeing all this. When the angel started to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD stopped him. This angel was stationed outside Jerusalem by the threshingfloor of Araunah.

***II Samuel 24:17 "And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house."***

In Chronicles, it says that David saw an angel between heaven and earth with a drawn sword. He speaks to the LORD on behalf of the people. David takes full blame for the numbering . He says, he has sinned, and deserves to be punished. Let the punishment come on him and his house. The sheep, here are speaking of the people. David is taking too much of the blame, because it was the people, who had angered God and caused this. They were wanting war.

***II Samuel 24:18 "And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite."***

***II Samuel 24:19 "And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded."***

This time David immediately obeys the message, that Gad brought him from the LORD. He goes to the threshingfloor to build the altar to God.

***II Samuel 24:20 "And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground."***

Araunah owned the threshingfloor. When he saw David and his servants, he was, probably, terrified. He immediately bowed to the king, not knowing what he might want.

***II Samuel 24:21 "And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people."***

This was, probably, a great surprise to Araunah. David explains exactly why he wants to but the threshingfloor, so there will be no delay.

***II Samuel 24:22 "And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what [seemeth] good unto him: behold, [here be] oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and [other] instruments of the oxen for wood."***

***II Samuel 24:23 "All these [things] did Araunah, [as] a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee."***

Araunah did not want money for the threshingfloor. He offered to let David use it, and even offered animals to be sacrificed. He would give David whatever was needed.

***II Samuel 24:24 "And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy [it] of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver."***

David would not bargain, but would not use anything that had not cost him something. It would not be a sacrifice, unless David paid for it. Silver is symbolic of redemption, and fifty is the number of Jubilee, when the captives are set free. This may not be significant, but is an interesting thought.

***II Samuel 24:25 "And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel."***

David obeyed the instructions of God, sent to him by the prophet Gad. David immediately paid for what he took, and built the altar, and sacrificed thereon. This does not mean that David did the actual work of the priest. He offered the things in the usual manner for a burnt offering and a peace offering. God stayed the plague. We may look at this, and see a terrible slaughter. Had not God allowed this to happen, the people could have slipped into more sin, and everyone been killed. God is always ready to reconcile with his people, if they will repent and return to worshipping Him.

**QUESTIONS**

1. The anger of the LORD was kindled against \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Who did David send to take the census?
3. What are some of the possible reasons, why David wanted the people numbered?
4. Who tried to talk David out of this?
5. Where did David's strength lie?
6. Who prevailed Joab, or David?
7. Who went with Joab to count the people?
8. Where did they begin?
9. Why did the people not want to be counted?
10. How long did it take to number the people?
11. How many people did they count?
12. What happened to David, after the numbering was over?
13. What did he do about it?
14. Who was the prophet, that brought God'sw message to David?
15. How many choices of punishments did David have?
16. What were the things David had to choose from?
17. What did David choose?
18. What did the LORD do to them?
19. How many died?
20. What city was spared?
21. When did David speak to the LORD about this?
22. Who are the sheep spoken of in verse 17?
23. What did Gad tell David to do, to stop the plague?
24. Where was the altar to be built?
25. What did Araunah offer to do for David?
26. Why would David not do that?
27. How much did David pay for the threshingfloor?
28. What did they offer at the altar?
29. What did God do, after the offerings?