

## 1 Chronicles Chapter 20

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V: 1 Spring time was typically the time being spoken of here. Winter & summer could be harsh, and difficult to operate in. ([Farmers & herdsman](#))

- They had not completely defeated the Ammonites, who had retreated to their fortress capital – and now it was time to finish the job.

**2 Samuel 11:1** “And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that [David sent Joab](#), and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and beside Rabbah. [But David tarried still at Jerusalem.](#)”

- The account of David’s adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite is completely omitted from this narrative - but it is fully described in **2 Samuel chapter 11** and forward. (Authorship - David vs: Ezra)

V: 2-3 Victory and and subjugation; Joab and the army conquer Rabbah and David comes in for the glory:

- The young king of Ammon ([Hanun / Nahash](#)) had treated David’s kind gesture with such contempt. Now David personally takes the crown from off his head and puts it on his own.
- The crown weighed in at a talent of gold, along with the jewels: 1 talent (3,000 shekels) 75.6 lb.. 1.8 million dollars @ \$1,500 / oz.
- Some victories are just a headache...
- Going back to David’s adultery with Bathsheba: Before David repented of his sin when judging the man who had stolen his neighbors lamb ordered the man executed; an excessive punishment for the theft of a lamb. Here David behaves in the same harsh manner, he’s in sin, he’s not walking in the Spirit, and because of that he’s not gracious or merciful in the least.

V: 4-8 There is war again with the Philistines at Gezer ([map](#)). As Israel conquered the Philistines, they finished off the remainder of the Nephalim / the giants / relatives of Goliath in the process.

**2 Samuel 21:15** “Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint.”

- David had learned a lesson here, he didn't just send Joab out to war and remain at home - David went out with the army; but at the same time he's lost some of his edge, he wasn't as strong as he'd once been, he waxed feint and needed help.

**Romans 6:23** "The wages of sin is death..." - death is a process, David is in that process. David isn't quite the man that he once used to be.

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## 1 Chronicles Chapter 21

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V: 1 **Satan stood up against Israel:** Satan is always against Israel, he is the original anti-Semite. Anti-Semitism which is rampant in our world today is demonic at it's very core. (2 Samuel 24:1 "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.)

- Satan provoked (**enticed**) David: Like many of us, David just had a thought, an evil thought - which he then entertained. We all have thoughts, evil thoughts that we should recognize and deal with:

**2 Corinthians 10:5** "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

- The battlefield in Christianity is always in the mind: the thoughts that we have will determine our actions

R.W. Emerson: "Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow and act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny."

**1 Corinthians 10:13** "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

- Up to this point David was known for trusting in the Lord, this becomes an issue of faith. So now the question: is David going to trust in the size or strength of the armies of Israel or is he going to trust in the God of Israel?

V: 2-4 David instructs Joab and the rulers to go through the nation from (**Map**) Beersheba in the South to Dan in the North, and to number the people – meaning the army, those that can bear the sword – all the men between 20-50.

- To his credit Joab recognizes this as a sin and resists the king trying to persuade him not to do this thing.

Joab quotes:

**Deuteronomy 1:11** “The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as He hath promised you!”

- When Jesus was challenged / tempted with sin by the enemy, He responded 3 different times “it is written...” He responded with the Word of God; here God does the same thing through Joab.
- Satan uses David; so God responds in a way and says “Oh yeah? I’m gonna use your guy - and he’s gonna quote my word...” - Oh the irony of it all!
- Numbering the people this way was a sin: the sin of pride – “oh look how great our army is...” This is also be a step towards depending on their army as opposed to depending on their God.

**Psalms 20:7** “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.”

- The strength of Israel, and of any nation is in it’s devotion to God.

**Proverbs 14:34** “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”

V: 5-6 Joab and his men go through the nation counting the men of military age from one end of the country to the other.

- Joab didn’t bother counting Benjamin or the Levites because he despised his mission.

V: 7 God is displeased, further proof that this was a sinful act, and smites the nation - there is always a consequence for sin.

V: 8 David was stricken in his heart; David was convicted by the Holy Spirit.

**2 Samuel 24:10** “And David’s heart smote him after that he had numbered the people...”

- David said: “I have sinned greatly in what I have done.”
- David confesses and acknowledges his sin, no attempt to minimize it or cover it up, he takes full responsibility for it.
- This is part of why David was a man after God’s own heart; he was willing to admit he was wrong, to confess his sin, and to ask for forgiveness.

**1 John 1:8-9** “<sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- Scripture records at least 6 different times when David says “I have sinned...” including when David confessed to adultery and murder, yet here he says that he’s sinned “**greatly**” – most people would consider adultery & murder to be “greater” sins than that of numbering the people, but it might not be so.
- The sin of adultery and murder were sins of the flesh, yielding to lust, for which there were definite and severe consequences.
- The census was willful rebellion (*transgression*), it smacked of pride, the root of all sin.

**Proverbs 6:16-17** “<sup>16</sup>These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: <sup>17</sup>A proud look...”

**1 John 2:15-16** “<sup>15</sup>Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

- Even Joab was against this – which would have been a clue.
- While pride may have been the motivation behind numbering the armies of Israel there is also another possibility to consider which goes back to the previous chapter.

**2 Samuel 21:15** “Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint.”

- This is after David’s sin with Bathsheba - he had learned his lesson, he had not stayed home but had gone out to battle - and almost got killed.
- Whereas before he’d always been victorious and valiant in battle he might have started wondering if God had left him on his own or abandoned him in some way. Or like us at times he might have wondered if he was even saved.
- At about this time David wrote **Psalm 51**.

**Psalm 51:10-12** “<sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. <sup>11</sup>Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. <sup>12</sup>Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.”

- David's motivation in numbering the men may have been fear, fear that he was now on his own apart from God that God wasn't with him anymore.
- If so, this is proof again that we shouldn't make decisions based on fear!

**1 John 4:18** "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

**2 Timothy 1:7** "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

- Faith and fear are mutually exclusive terms - they cannot exist together.

**Hebrews 11:6** "Without faith it is impossible to please God..."

- Having already numbered the men and realizing now what he's done:
- David asks God, he begs God to take away his iniquity, knowing that God is the only One who can take it away, we are incapable of removing our own sin.

**Psalms 51:1-4** "1Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."

- There is a precedent for this in the OT: In Exodus when the high priest was preparing to minister unto the Lord and or to enter into the Holy of Holies, before donning the priestly garments he was washed by someone else, then he was clothed by someone else - not allowed to do these things for himself.
- Jesus washes us, then He clothes us in His righteousness - then we are acceptable before the Lord. We can't do these things for ourselves.

**Isaiah 61:10** "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

**Matthew 22:11-13** "11And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12And he saith unto him, friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13Then said the king to the servants, bind him

hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

V: 9-13 1<sup>st</sup> note that God isn't speaking to David directly, He's speaking through Gad, as with Nathan / Bathsheba (**Isaiah 59:1-2**) that will only happen after David fully repents. God sends the prophet Gad to David with 3 options:

1. 3 years of famine.
2. 3 months of being wasted by their enemies.
3. 3 days of pestilence upon the land.

- Our God is a forgiving God, but there are repercussions to our sin, we reap what we sow.

**Galatians 6:7-8** “<sup>7</sup>Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. <sup>8</sup>For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

- **God gives David 3 options.** David's sin was that of the will, a deliberate choice on David's part; so God required him to make another choice, to choose from some very difficult options, to again exercise his will.
- These 3 options stem from the punishments described in **Deuteronomy Ch. 28** which starts off describing the blessings for obedience, then the cursings for disobedience which fell into three basic categories: famine, military defeat, and pestilence.
- David doesn't know what to do so he throws himself and the nation upon God's mercy – which is always the smart thing to do.

**Psalms 103:8** “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.”

V: 14-15 The Lord sends pestilence and slays 70,000 men of the men that were just numbered.

- David and the elders humble themselves, they are in sackcloth, as we'll see they are falling on their faces and David crying out that he's at fault.
- David's heart is breaking for the sheep of Israel, God's flock – this again is part of why God chose David to begin with because he had the heart of shepherd.

“... <sup>15</sup>*The Lord beheld*,...” then He repented. What did He see?

- The Lord saw David's broken heart, for both his sin, and for the plight of the people, He saw the people suffering and crying out to Him. [Fruit / repentance.](#)

**Psalms 51:17** "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

That is simply part of God's character, of who He is:

**Exodus 34:6-7** "6... the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..."

"15... *He repented*..." - does God repent, or change His mind, does He make mistakes that He needs to?

**Numbers 23:19** "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

**Hebrews 6:17-18** "17Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

1. God doesn't change.
2. God doesn't lie.

**Hebrews 13:8** "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

- The problem is in describing the actions of an infinite God by means of a finite ability to understand and describe what we see happening. ([Anthropomorphism](#)).

V: 16-17 David and the elders saw the Angel of the Lord with His sword raised, ready to destroy, then He didn't. From David's perspective the Angel turned away from what He was about to do – but this was God's intent all along: He was bringing David and the elders to the place of crying out to God on behalf of the nation – and they did.

- David is crying out to God taking full credit for his sin, crying out on behalf of the people, he's interceding for them and willing to die in their place.

**John 15:13** "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."

- David truly loved the sheep; this is another reason why he was still a man after God's own heart, a heart that is akin to that of Jesus.

Jesus said:

**John 10:11** “I am the good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.”

V: 18-23 <sup>18</sup>As David cried out to God on behalf of the nation, and God responded by sending the prophet Gad.

- God provided a way for reconciliation!
- <sup>19</sup>And David was obedient to what God had said, go make an altar unto the Lord and offer sacrifices to God at the threshing floor of Ornan /Araunah the Jebusite.

**Picture / map** – Moriah compared to the Old City of David:

- Ornan looks and sees the king and his servants coming, he humbles himself before the king – apparently not knowing the peril that he is in.
- <sup>22</sup>David asks, “grant me” he didn’t just take it, a sign of humility. Ornan offers to give it **all** to David along with the animals and tools for the sacrifice.

V: 24-27 David refuses the gift, insisting on paying for it because he won’t just take it, and he won’t offer a sacrifice to God of something that costs him nothing.

**2 Samuel 24:24** “... neither will offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing...”

- This speaks to “sacrificial” giving, it has to cost us something – it won’t always be convenient or affordable.
- 2 Samuel describes that David buys the “threshing floor” (goren) which would have been a relatively small area, and the oxen for 50 shekels of silver.
- Chronicles describes that David bought the rest of the estate, for a much larger sum of money.
- This was no ordinary piece of property, this was the place where Abraham had placed Isaac upon the altar (**Genesis 22**) and where Solomon would later build the Temple.
- David builds the altar and sacrifices unto the Lord with burnt offerings, offerings of consecration, and peace offerings of fellowship / communion. The Lord was entreated / satisfied for the land and the plague was stopped.

**Hebrews 9:22** “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

- God answered: God demonstrates His approval of David's sacrifice & repentance by sending fire down from Heaven to consume the sacrifice upon the altar. ([Tabernacle / Elijah](#))

V: 28-30 With God's apparent approval, David continues to sacrifice / worship God there.

- ([Map / Gibeon](#)) The proper place to offer sacrifices was at the Tabernacle and the altar of sacrifice related to the Tabernacle - which was in Gibeon.
- Prior to this David refrained from going to Gibeon because he feared the Lord. He knew that he was in sin and was afraid of what God would do.

**Matthew 5:23-24** “<sup>23</sup>Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; <sup>24</sup>leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”

- All of this comes full circle and bring David and us back to the beginning, to the place of fearing the Lord.

**Proverbs 9:10** “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding.”