

Day 320 - THURSDAY: December 21st

2 Samuel 24 & 1 Chronicles 21

2 Samuel 24:1-25 NKJV

Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah." So the king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, "Now go throughout all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and count the people, that I may know the number of the people." And Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times more than there are, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king desire this thing?" Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the army. Therefore Joab and the captains of the army went out from the presence of the king to count the people of Israel. And they crossed over the Jordan and camped in Aroer, on the right side of the town which is in the midst of the ravine of Gad, and toward Jazer. Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim Hodshi; they came to Dan Jaan and around to Sidon; and they came to the stronghold of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and the Canaanites. Then they went out to South Judah as far as Beersheba. So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to the king. And there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men. And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned

greatly in what I have done; but now, I pray, O LORD, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly." Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, "Go and tell David, 'Thus says the LORD: "I offer you three things; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do it to you." ' " So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or shall you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' plague in your land? Now consider and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me." And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man." So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel from the morning till the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of the people died. And when the angel stretched out His hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "It is enough; now restrain your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house." And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the

king come to his servant?" And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people." Now Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever seems good to him. Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood. All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you." Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.

1 Chronicles 21:1-30 NKJV

Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel. So David said to Joab and to the leaders of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beersheba to Dan, and bring the number of them to me that I may know it." And Joab answered, "May the LORD make His people a hundred times more than they are. But, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? Why then does my lord require this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt in Israel?" Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came to Jerusalem. Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to David. All Israel had one million one hundred thousand men who drew the sword, and Judah had four hundred and seventy thousand men who drew the sword. But he did not count Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's word was abominable to Joab. And God was displeased with this thing; therefore He struck Israel. So David said to God, "I have sinned

greatly, because I have done this thing; but now, I pray, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly." Then the LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying, "Go and tell David, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "I offer you three things; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do it to you." ' " So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Choose for yourself, either three years of famine, or three months to be defeated by your foes with the sword of your enemies overtaking you, or else for three days the sword of the LORD—the plague in the land, with the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now consider what answer I should take back to Him who sent me." And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are very great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man." So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell. And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As he was destroying, the LORD looked and relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying, "It is enough; now restrain your hand." And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. Then David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. So David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces. And David said to God, "Was it not I who commanded the people to be numbered? I am the one who has sinned and done evil indeed; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued." Therefore, the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. So David went up at the word of Gad, which he had spoken in the name of the LORD. Now Ornan turned and saw the angel; and his four sons who were with him hid themselves, but Ornan continued threshing wheat. So David came to Ornan, and Ornan looked and

saw David. And he went out from the threshing floor, and bowed before David with his face to the ground. Then David said to Ornan, "Grant me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build an altar on it to the LORD. You shall grant it to me at the full price, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people." But Ornan said to David, "Take it to yourself, and let my lord the king do what is good in his eyes. Look, I also give you the oxen for burnt offerings, the threshing implements for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; I give it all." Then King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will surely buy it for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings with that which costs me nothing." So David gave Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the place. And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the LORD; and He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering. So the LORD commanded the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath. At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there. For the tabernacle of the LORD and the altar of the burnt offering, which Moses had made in the wilderness, were at that time at the high place in Gibeon. But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "The parallel accounts of David's census give some seemingly contradictory details which, when properly understood, shed additional light on this regrettable incident in David's life. While 1 Chronicles 21:1 says that it was Satan who moved David to take the census, 2 Samuel 24:1 attributes this to God, as a result of His anger toward Israel for some unstated reason. No doubt God *allowed* Satan to act, as He did with Job, for His own purposes. But why would God be upset

at anyone taking a census, when He ordered them several times Himself in the past (e.g., in Numbers 1 and 26)?

Apparently there was an attitude problem here that even Joab was able to see. Perhaps David and the rest of the people were glorying unduly in their own physical might and power, as seems to be implied by 2 Samuel 24:3. In context, the previous chapter, 2 Samuel 23, dealt with the deeds of David's mighty men, while 2 Chronicles 20 discussed wars and great deeds that had been accomplished. As we've seen, by the time of the census, God was clearly already angry with the Israelites for some reason—and the possibility that they had become swollen with pride and were beginning to put their trust in their own greatness (rather than giving glory to and trusting in God) seems to fit. Or maybe David was considering some unauthorized military expansion campaign, since all of those counted by David's chief general were "valiant men who drew the sword" (2 Samuel 24:9). The NIV says Joab and the army commanders went out "to enroll the fighting men of Israel" (verse 4). One of the proposed punishments would have allowed David to go through with any such plans, but he would have spent three months losing his battles.

Joab and the army officers start by crossing the Jordan, counting the eastern tribes as they journey north, then coming back south among the western tribes, and taking nearly 10 months to do it (verses 5-8). The discrepancies in the counts may be attributable to a variety of reasons, including differences in age versus readiness to fight, counting or excluding those already in the standing army, and the fact that 1 Chronicles specifically excludes Levi and Benjamin (perhaps from Judah's total) while 2 Samuel does not.

Following the census, David finally realizes his error, but as is usually the case with our own sins, the consequences were still something he would have to face. In this case, through the prophet Gad, God offers him a choice of consequences, all of which would affect the entire nation. This may seem unfair, but remember the whole incident was prompted because "the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel." Israel as a nation was already guilty of something, and God is dealing here with David and the nation simultaneously according to His own divine purposes in a manner that seems to have been designed to humble all concerned.

One of the differences in the two accounts is in the number of years of the proposed famine. While Chronicles says three, Samuel gives seven. One possibility is that four years of famine had already taken place, and the Chronicles account was offering three more, for a total of seven. In any case, David does not choose that option—or the option of warfare. David's decision is implied by his confidence that God will be far more merciful than man—meaning he evidently chooses the plague. He trusts that God may be willing to not make it overly severe, or that He will perhaps cut the punishment short, which is indeed what seems to happen (2 Samuel 24:16).

As the plague is halted at Jerusalem, David pleads for mercy with God, stating that he should really be the one to suffer from the plague, and not the people. It is interesting to note that David wrote quite eloquently about sickness in some of his psalms, especially in Psalms 41, 38, 39 and 6. While many of these passages could be figurative of sin, most seem to imply a literal, dread disease that David may have had at some time in his life. It is entirely possible that he may have contracted this plague

himself and that these psalms constitute prayers for deliverance from the disease, as well as the sin that brought it about.

The angel stops at the threshing floor of Ornan (or Araunah), a Jebusite, located on the top of Mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3:1), and gives a command through Gad for David to erect an altar there (1 Chronicles 21:18). David asks to purchase the site to build the altar and offer burnt offerings. Ornan offers to give David the site, and the animals for the offerings, but David states that he would not "offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing." It is a valuable principle for all of us that our offerings to God of service or money require a certain amount of sacrifice from us, or they are not really sacrificial offerings."

[END]

Verse 1 of both chapters – I would like to dive a bit more into the apparent contradiction of verse 1 of both chapters. The NKJV of 2 Samuel 24:1 states "Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah." The NKJV of 1 Chronicles 21:1 states "Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel."

Did God do this or Satan? First, there are problems with understanding that God caused David to number Israel. One, why would God be angry with David if He caused David to do sin? That doesn't make sense. Two, why would David later have a conscience issue in 2 Samuel 24:10 if God led him to do it? Third, James 1:13 states: "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone."

Applying the scripture in James, 1 Chronicles 21 seems to align more accurately and be more clear on who is responsible for

tempting David. So how do we reconcile this apparent contradiction in 2 Samuel 24? Let's look a bit closer at the NKJV wording; "and He moved David against them to say". "HE" is not in the Hebrew. It's inserted. So what words are in the Hebrew? Moved – Hebrew word meaning "to prick, to entice, to provoke" A word not translated – Hebrew word indicating that "self" did the verb.

David – Hebrew word meaning David's name.

To Say – Hebrew word meaning "to say, to speak to utter"

When we really break down the words here, nothing indicates or says that God moved David to say anything. What it really says is that "David himself was moved to say...". Combining this with 1 Chronicles 21, we can easily understand that Satan tempted David and David fell for the temptation and moved himself to say "Go, number Israel and Judah."

This now also fits with James 1:14 "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

Satan was responsible, but so was David himself. Lastly, I looked at two different literal translations to see if they agreed with how I was reading the Hebrew.

Literal Standard Version: 2 Samuel 24:1 And the anger of YHWH adds to burn against Israel, and [*an adversary*] moves David about them, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

Young's Literal Translation: 2 Sameul 24:1 And the anger of Jehovah addeth to burn against Israel, and [*an adversary*] moveth David about them, saying, 'Go, number Israel and Judah.'

Notice how both of the literal translations do not attribute God to moving David. Both show that there is no Hebrew word showing

who moved David to say anything. While the NKJV chose to insert that God was the one responsible, both literal translations chose to assume and insert that “an adversary” moved David. That would fit with 1 Chronicles 21.

This is a long answer to say, there is no contradiction in the Hebrew words of the Bible. Satan is clearly responsible and David himself was responsible as well.

Verses 9 (2 Samuel 24) & Verse 5 (1 Chronicles 21) – Well which is it, 800,000 + 500,000 or 1.1 million + 470,000? Let’s first look at the 800,000 versus 1.1 million: It appears, that the book of Chronicles includes the 300,000 men who are already enlisted in the military (See 1 Chronicles 27:1-9 = 288,000 troops + 12,000 separate attachment of the 12 princes of the tribes of Israel) in the number where the book of Samuel does not, and only records men who could be enlisted if necessary. In comparing 500,000 to 470,000 it’s possible that the book of Samuel includes the 30,000 men stationed on the Philistine front (see 2 Sam 6:1) whereas the book of Chronicles does not. The long and short of it is, that we can get different numbers depending on who we include in the number or don’t include. Just because we see a difference in the count, could simply be an issue of “definitions” and not a Bible “mistake”.

Verse 24 (2 Samuel 24) & verse 25 (1 Chronicles 21) - Again, which is it, 50 shekels of silver or 600 shekels of gold? That seems like a big difference. 2 Samuel clearly states that David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for 50 shekels of silver. 1 Chronicles tells us that David paid 600 shekels of gold for the place.

Jamieson-Faucet-Brown commentary states: "At first he bought only the cattle and the threshing instruments, for which he paid fifty shekels of silver (2Sa_24:24); afterwards he purchased the whole property, Mount Moriah, on which the future temple stood." Albert Barnes commentary states about the difference: In explanation, it is supposed - that the fifty shekels here mentioned were gold shekels, each worth twelve silver shekels, so that the fifty gold shekels are equal to the 600 silver; that our text should be rendered, "David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for money," namely, "fifty shekels;" and that the passage in Chronicles should be rendered, "David gave to Ornan gold shekels of the value" (or weight) "of 600 shekels." What is certain is that our text represents the fifty shekels as the price of the threshing-floor and the oxen."

I share both of those commentaries explanations to say, I'm not sure how these two numbers agree, but I trust (have faith) that they do.