

Message #32

II Samuel 24:1-25

People in the family of God can do bizarre things and actually think it is the will of God. Leaders in the family of God can do the same kind of things as well. For example, if you talk to the leaders of most churches they will tell you that they are doing the will of God and that God is blessing them.

If you would have talked with the leaders of the church of Laodicea in Revelation, they would have told you exactly that. They would have told you they were being blessed by God and didn't need a thing. They didn't even know God. If you could have talked with the leaders of the church of Thyatira, they would have told you that too and they were allowing some woman to teach who was leading the people into idolatry and immorality.

Well what we have here in the final days of David's reign is a moment when he did something he probably thought was right to do, but it turned out not to be and there were consequences.

WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE DONE SOMETHING GOD DID NOT WANT THEM TO DO, THEY NEED TO CONFESS IT AND TURN FROM IT AND LEAVE THE RESULTS TO GOD.

David has grown in his relationship with God. When he blew it, he admitted it and let God handle things. He had certainly learned he could trust God even when he had made some wrong choices in life and this was one of those moments.

There are eleven narrative observations we want to make here:

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #1 – The anger of the LORD burned against Israel. **24:1a**

We are not told what it was that caused this anger issue. There is no explanation what it was. The verse begins with the adverb "again," which indicates Israel had caused God to be angry previously and in a very similar way had done it again. Now we know from studying the Old Testament that she got involved at times in worshipping something other than God and not turning from evil. Whatever it was, they had angered God again.

It must have been something major because it takes quite a bit to get God angry. Israel must have been doing something or not doing something that caused God to become very angry. Whatever they were doing or not doing was not consistent with His word or will.

What we may conclude from this is that we don't need to know what Israel did, but what we do need to know is that you can do or not do things that can anger God and if that happens, negative things will occur.

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #2 – David was incited to number Israel. **24:1b**

God's anger incited David to number Israel; it did not command David to do this. We learn from I Chronicles 21:1 that it was Satan who was prompting David to do this. There is no problem here because God is sovereign over Satan and He is permitting him to incite David to do this.

What David did not do was go talk to God. By this point in his life, he should have known that is what he should do, but he just made a decision to do this on his own being prompted by Satan.

God's people need to know this. Satan cannot tempt or test a believer unless God sovereignly permits it, and if God sovereignly permits it and we opt to yield to Satan, there may be serious consequences.

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #3 – David commands Joab to go number and register the people. **24:2**

This seems somewhat odd. Why would you want a military leader to take his army and go number all the people? Why wouldn't you just have each city give you a count? Furthermore, the extent of the count was to be from the north Dan in Israel to the deep south Beersheba in Judah.

So what David wants Joab to do is take his military and go from place to place and count and register the people. This is like some military forced action against the people of God and it is being led by Satan and David is authorizing this.

When the government forces people to do things, it is Satanic. Don't miss this point. Government mandates may be permitted by God, but they also may be Satanic.

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #4 – Joab objects to numbering and registering the people. **24:3**

God is sovereignly permitting Joab to question this move so David could have backed away from it. Joab says I hope God blesses your kingdom with great numbers while you are here to see it; but why are you delighting in the idea of taking this census and having this registration?

Notice Joab puts the emphasis on "the LORD your God." He is implying why don't we just trust God and not have this census registration? Joab was smart enough to know if you go out and start numbering and registering people, the people will not like it. So at this point David must make a critical decision—do I listen to Joab or do I follow my feelings?

Whenever God's people are being prompted to do something not of God, God will put up roadblocks to let them know this is not an area to move.

I believe there is an eschatological point to this. The Antichrist is going to try to track down every Jewish person to kill them. There will be census registrations and there will be a numbering and Satan will be behind every bit of this. The stage is being set right now for this with the suggestion of government registrations.

This is one reason why David should have never given into this.

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #5 – David refused to listen to Joab and sent them to register the people. **24:4-9**

Joab and his military commanders went out to carry out this registration edict.

They crossed the Jordan so they are starting on the east side. They start at Aroer, 14 miles east of the Dead Sea, on the southern boundary and then they moved north to northwest and make a big loop around to Sidon and down to Tyre on the Mediterranean coast (**v. 5-6**) and then they went south down to Judah clear down to Beersheba (**v. 7**).

After making this big loop, they went back to Jerusalem. According to **verse 8**, the project took 9 months and twenty days or about 285 days.

According to **verse 9**, there were 800,000 **valiant** fighting men who drew the sword, numbered in Israel, and there were 500,000 men in Judah. The total number of men is 1.3 million.

If we analyze I Chronicles 21:5, the numbers for Israel are 1.1 million who **drew the sword** and the numbers for Judah are 470,000 men who **drew the sword**.

Why the seeming discrepancy? The simplest explanation that takes the words literally is this. Of the 1.1 million fighting men who drew the sword, 800,000 were valiant men. Of the 500,000 total men in Judah, 470,000 were men who skillfully drew the sword.

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #6 – David’s heart is troubled by what he did. **24:10**

When we do something wrong, our heart will be troubled. You can count on that. It is very clear that after David had done this, he came under horrible conviction. He had not prayed about this and he did not stop his actions and now his conscience was bothering him.

What David does here is what every person should do when they are under conviction; they need to confess to God.

David had learned this lesson in life. There is no point trying to cover sin; the wisest thing to do is to confess sin.

David does not sugar coat this in any way. He goes to God and says, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done, please take away the iniquity of your servant for I have acted foolishly.”

There are at least seven times in the Bible where David says, “I have sinned”—II Sam. 12:13; II Sam. 24:10; II Sam. 24:17; I Chron. 21:8; I Chron. 21:17; Psalm 41:4; Psalm 51:4.

The thing David says in this episode that he does not say in the other episodes is that “I have sinned greatly.” One would logically think that the sin he committed with Bathsheba that led to all of the ugly consequences would be the one where he would say, “I have sinned greatly.”

But this is the one of which he says that. Why? **Well David’s sin with Bathsheba was flesh instigated. It was a lust-driven, spur of the moment sin that was prompted by his own flesh. This sin here was Satanically driven and willfully planned.** David realized the magnitude of it in view of all God had done for him.

David did the right thing; he admitted he sinned, he asked God to take away the iniquity and he admitted he had acted foolishly.

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #7 – God sends Gad to give David a message. **24:11-13**

David asked God for forgiveness and Gad, who was a prophet of God, received a message from God to go tell David.

According to **verse 12**, God gave David three options for a disciplined chastisement:

- 1) There could be seven years of famine in the land.
- 2) There could be three months of fugitive running.
- 3) There could be three days of disease and pestilence.

God gave David the option of selection. So Gad says think it over carefully and tell me your decision.

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #8 – David decides to let God pick the punishment. **24:14**

David certainly knew about the mercy of God and he decided to turn the matter over to God and let Him decide. David knew that the Lord’s anger is always tempered by His mercy.

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #9 – God decides to send a disease killing pestilence as a punishment. **24:15-16**

God sent a time-controlled pestilence from Dan to Beersheba that killed 70,000 men. As the angel was sent to carry out the punishment on Jerusalem, God said that is enough and the plague was stopped.

There are many people who seem to think God would never send some sickness or disease to kill people as a punishment. Well He does and He did. We know that both Paul and Jesus warned the church that He can do the same thing.

If God's people move away from God's word and get involved in things Satanic and evil, He can send disease and He can kill.

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #10 – David again speaks to the Lord about his sin. **24:17**

As David saw God carrying out His judgment, he said to God, “I am the one who sinned, so why are you punishing the people for my sin?”

David says I deserve it, so let the punishment come to me and my family. These people don't deserve it. David was praying this just outside the city at the “threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite.”

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #11 – Gad comes to David and tells him to build an altar and offer a burnt offering and peace offering. **24:18-25**

David and his servants went to Araunah to buy the threshing floor in order to build an altar. Once the property was purchased, David built an altar and sacrificed offerings and the plague stopped.

Sometimes God's people fail. When we do, go to God and confess it. Leave things to Him. What else can we do? If we will do that, we learn the lesson David learned in his life.

We must thank God for David, for who of us has lived a perfect life after salvation? There is not one of us who has not failed in some way. The grace of God stands ready to renew and restore. That is one lesson David learned in II Samuel.