

# 2 Samuel 24 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

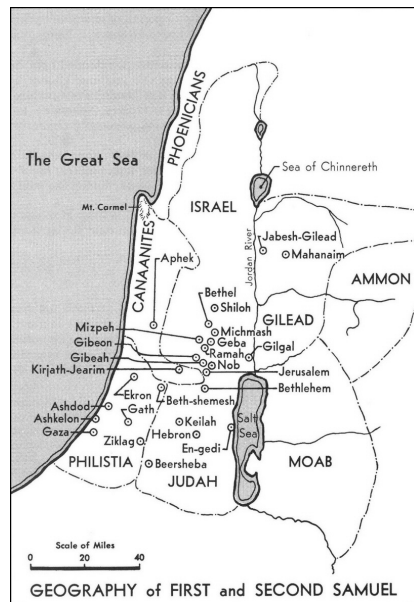
**CLICK VERSE**  
To go directly to that verse

- [2 Samuel 24:1](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:2](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:3](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:4](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:5](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:6](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:7](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:8](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:9](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:10](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:11](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:12](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:13](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:14](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:15](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:16](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:17](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:18](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:19](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:20](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:21](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:22](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:23](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:24](#)
- [2 Samuel 24:25](#)

Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
2 Samuel Chart, from Charles Swindoll

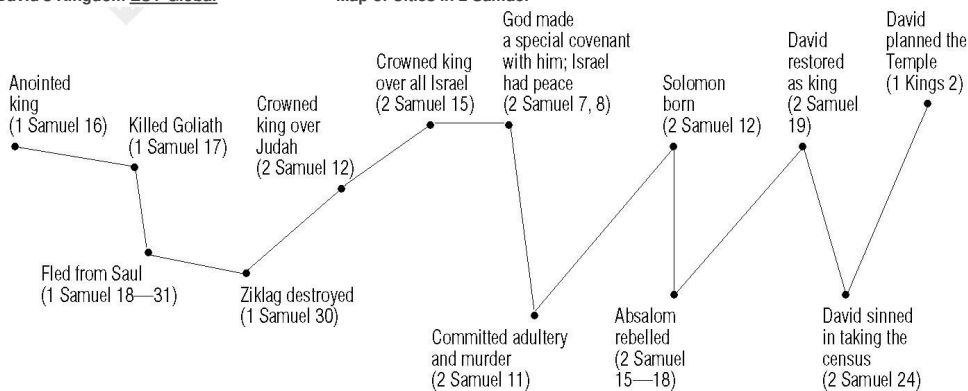
TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES									
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel		2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings	
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1Chr 10		1 Chr 11-19		1 Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931 BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931 BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.



Map of David's Kingdom-ESV Global

Map of Cities in 2 Samuel



HIGHS AND LOWS OF DAVID'S LIFE  
Source: Life Application Study Bible (borrow)

**2 Samuel 24:1 Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."**

NET 2 Samuel 24:1 The LORD's anger again raged against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go count Israel and Judah."

CSB 2 Samuel 24:1 The LORD's anger burned against Israel again, and He stirred up David against them to say: "Go, count the people of Israel and Judah."

ESV 2 Samuel 24:1 Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

NIV 2 Samuel 24:1 Again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go and take a census of Israel and Judah."

NLT 2 Samuel 24:1 Once again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and he caused David to harm them by taking a census. "Go and count the people of Israel and Judah," the LORD told him.

TLB Once again the anger of the Lord flared against Israel, and he caused David to harm them by taking a national census. "Go and count the people of Israel and Judah," the Lord told him.

NRS 2 Samuel 24:1 Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, count the people of Israel and Judah."

NJB 2 Samuel 24:1 Again, Yahweh's anger was aroused against Israel, and he incited David against them. 'Go,' he said, 'take a census of Israel and Judah.'

NAB 2 Samuel 24:1 The LORD'S anger against Israel flared again, and he incited David against the Israelites by prompting him to number Israel and Judah.

YLT 2 Samuel 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.'

GWN 2 Samuel 24:1 The LORD became angry with Israel again, so he provoked David to turn against Israel. He said, "Go, count Israel and Judah."

- **Now again:** 2Sa 21:1-14
- **it:** Jas 1:13-14
- **incited:** 2Sa 12:11 16:10 Ge 45:5 50:20 Ex 7:3 1Sa 26:19 1Ki 22:20-23 Eze 14:9 20:25 Ac 4:28 2Th 2:11
- **number:** 1Ch 27:23,24
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 21:1+ Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.

## THE ANGER OF YAWHEH BURNS

**Now again** - This time phrase raises the question when was the previous time? This could refer to the famine God sent on the nation because of Saul's slaughter of the Gibeonites (See 2Sa 21:1-14+).

**The anger of the LORD burned against Israel** - What a word picture! God's anger is likened to a fire, hot, unpleasant, destructive.

**And it incited David against them** - NLT = "he caused David to harm them by taking a national census." How can we explain this? First note "**it**" is translated "he" in most of the other translations, which would suggest God was the cause. Second, note that what David did by numbering was referred to as a sin. Third, we know that God does not tempt us to sin, James 1:13-14+ says "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust." Then if we compare the parallel passage in 1Ch 21:1, it says "Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David." Fourth, Satan can and does tempt men to sin, so clearly tempted David. He could not force David to sin but could shoot fiery missiles at his mind (Eph 6:16+) which energized his fallen flesh to volitionally (his own will) carry out the sin of numbering Israel and Judah. Most likely Satan appealed to his pride, with thoughts like "Look how big your army is!" or "Why don't you count your army, as this will help you feel secure if it returns a big number?" In other words the Tempter could appeal to the "boastful pride of life" (1Jn 2:16+)

**Warren Wiersbe** - 2 Samuel 24:1 states that God incited David to number the people, while 1 Chronicles 21:1 names Satan as the culprit. Both are true: God permitted Satan to tempt David in order to accomplish the purposes He had in mind. Satan certainly opposed God's people throughout all of Old Testament history, but this is one of four instances in the Old Testament where Satan is named specifically and seen openly at work. The other three are when he tempted Eve (Gen. 3), when he attacked Job (Job 1-2) and when he accused Joshua the high priest (Zech. 3). (See Wiersbe's book [The strategy of Satan : how to detect and defeat him](#) for discussion of all of these OT appearances of Satan) (Borrow [Be restored : 2 Samuel & 1 Chronicles](#))

**To say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."** - Two flaming missiles entered David's mind in the form of commands, like "You must do this to satisfy your flesh!" In 2Sa 24:2 David yields to the temptation and in turn commands his commander(s) to number the people. The command to "**Go**" in the Septuagint is in the active voice indicating David made a choice of his will (he was not forced as passive voice might indicate) to issue this command.

**TSK explanation** - This verse, when read without reference to any other part of the word of God, is very difficult to understand, and has been used by those who desire to undermine the justice of God, to show that He sought occasion to punish--that He incited David to sin; and when He had so incited him, gave to him the dreadful alternative of choosing one of three scourges by which his people were to be cut off. On the face of the passage these thoughts naturally arise, because "the Lord" is the antecedent to the pronoun "**he**,"--**He** moved David. But to those who "search the Scriptures," (Acts 17:11) this difficult passage receives a wonderful elucidation, By referring to 1Ch 21:1, the reader will there find that Satan was the mover, and that the Lord most righteously punished David for the display of **pride** he had manifested. Oh! that Christians, who sometimes have their minds harassed with doubts, would remember the promise, that what they know not now they shall know hereafter; and if no other instance of elucidation than this passage occurred to them to remove their doubts, let this be a means of stirring them up to dig deeper than ever into the inexhaustible mines of the Inspired Word.

## 2 SAMUEL 24:1—How can this passage claim that God moved David to number Israel when 1 Chronicles 21:1 claims that it was Satan?

**PROBLEM:** This passage reports the sin of David in numbering the people of Israel and Judah. Verse one affirms that God moved David to number the people. However, according to 1 Chronicles 21:1, it was Satan who moved David to number the people. Who was responsible for prompting David to act?

**SOLUTION:** Both statements are true. Although it was Satan who immediately incited David, ultimately it was God who permitted Satan to carry out this provocation. Although it was Satan's design to destroy David and the people of God, it was God's purpose to humble David and the people and teach them a valuable spiritual lesson. This situation is quite similar to the first two chapters of Job in which both God and Satan are involved in the suffering of Job. Similarly, both God and Satan are involved in the crucifixion. Satan's purpose was to destroy the Son of God (John 13:2; 1 Cor 2:8). God's purpose was to redeem humankind by the death of His Son (Acts 2:14–39).

---

**QUESTION - [Why was God so angry at David for taking the census?](#)** See the [accompanying video discussion](#).

**ANSWER** - 2 Samuel 24:1 says, "Again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, 'Go and take a census of Israel and Judah.'" The parallel account of the incident surrounding the census, however, reveals it was Satan who incited David to take the census: "Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel" (1Ch 21:1). This discrepancy is often explained by the understanding that, in order to achieve His purposes, sometimes God sovereignly permits Satan to act. God can use Satan in various ways, with the result being the refining, disciplining, and purification of disobedient believers (Lk 22:31–32; 1Co 5:1–5; 2Co 12:7–10). Such might have been the case with David. God allowed Satan to tempt him, and David sinned, revealing his pride, and God then dealt with David accordingly.

There are other considerations concerning the passages relating David's sinful census. Here is 2 Samuel 24:1 in four translations:

"Again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he incited David against them . . ." (NIV).

"Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them . . ." (ESV).

"And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them . . ." (KJV).

"Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them . . ." (NASB).

Note that the New American Standard Bible says "it" (the anger of the Lord) is what caused David to take the census. The other translations say "he" (the Lord) did the inciting. The reason for the differences in translation is that, in the original language, there is no subject for the verb *incited*. The fact is we aren't told who exactly moved David to take the census. To translate the verse literally, we would say, "There was who moved David against them" or "For one moved David against them." The translations above have taken this to mean it was either God or His anger that caused David to take the census. But there are other options:

- The unstated thing that moved David to conduct the census could have been David's own evil imagination.
- The "one" who moved David could be Satan, as 1 Chronicles 21:1 says.
- The "adversary" (the meaning of the word *Satan*) mentioned in 1 Chronicles could be someone other than the devil; it could have been an unnamed counselor to David who prompted him into a foolish (or sinful) action.

As to why God was angry at David, in those times, a man only had the right to count or number what belonged to him. Israel did not belong to David; Israel belonged to God. In Exodus 30:12 God told Moses, "When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each one must pay the LORD a ransom for his life at the time he is counted. Then no plague will come on them when you number them." It was up to God to command a census, and if David counted he should only have done it at God's command, receiving a ransom to "atone" for the counting. This is why God was angry again with Israel and is also why David was "conscience-stricken" after he counted Israel. David knew it was wrong and begged God to take away the guilt of his sin (2 Samuel 24:10).

God gave David a choice of three punishments for his sin—three years of famine, three months of fleeing before his enemies, or three days of plague. David chose the third, and the Lord then punished Israel with a plague that killed 70,000 men from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south. As for why God punished the whole nation for the sin of the king, that is exactly the question David asks in 2 Samuel 24:17. Why, when he was the one who had sinned, did the people have to suffer? He even requested that God's hand be against him and his family only, and that God would spare the people. But, as with the account of Job, God chose not to

give a reason for His actions. Perhaps it was because of Israel's multiplied sins and rebellion against God throughout the centuries. Perhaps it was a lesson to the people (and to us as well) that the people suffer when their leaders go astray. The reality is that God didn't justify His actions with a reason, nor does He have to.

Of the three choices presented to David, the first two would have involved some level of dependency upon the mercy of man: the warfare, of course, would be as severe as the enemy wanted it to be; the famine would require Israel to seek food from other nations, relying on the pity of their neighbors. Instead of relying on the mercy of any human, David chose to rely on the mercy of God—the [pestilence](#) was, after all, the most direct form of punishment from God, and in the plague they could only look to God for relief.

The psalmist tells us, "As for God, His way is perfect" (Psalm 18:30). If God's ways are "perfect," then we can trust that whatever He does—and whatever He allows—is also perfect. Our responsibility to God is to obey Him, to trust Him, and to submit to His will, whether we understand it or not.

As we see in 2 Samuel 24:16, God was grieved because of the things that were happening to His people, and He called off the punishment. Even in His rebuke God still shows His love and mercy. [GotQuestions.org](#)

#### **Related Resource:**

- [Why did God order a census in the book of Numbers? | GotQuestions.org](#)

---

#### **Walter Kaiser - p 213 in [Hard Sayings in the Bible](#) - Why Was the Census a Sin?**

God had commanded Moses twice to take a census in Numbers 1 and 26, yet in 2 Samuel David numbers Israel because God, angry with Israel, incites him to it; 1 Chronicles attributes the result to the influence of Satan on David. Are these contradictory passages an instance where error has crept into Scripture?

Let us first establish why census-taking could be sinful. In effect, the census acted as a draft notice or a mustering of the troops. Some conclude, based on 1 Chronicles 27:23–24, that David sinned by numbering those people under twenty years of age—an illegal act. Others see the numbering as doubting God's promise that David's descendants would be as measureless as the sand and stars. The best solution is that it was motivated by presumption. God had given David no objective or reason to go out to battle. Only David's pride and ambition could have brought on such an act.

The and at the beginning of 1 Chronicles 21:1 in some translations seems to invite us to look at the conclusion of the previous chapter. First Chronicles 20:8 mentions that the giant's descendants were among those whom David and his men vanquished. The connection could be that David, flushed with his successes, grew too big in his own eyes and opened the door for Satan to successfully tempt him.

This brings us to the second difficulty of this hard saying: Was it God or Satan who tempted David to sin? Satan is mentioned infrequently in the Old Testament. He was introduced in Job 1–2 and in the postexilic period in Zechariah 3:1. However, in both of these latter cases, the definite article is used; 1 Chronicles 21:1 does not use it. Even though the doctrine of the supernatural being named Satan was not well developed in the Old Testament, the appearance of Satan cannot be reduced to Persian dualism or one's adversary in general. Even in the Garden of Eden there exists a hostile presence called "the serpent." What is new in this passage is the formalizing of his name as "the adversary" or "opposer." But the activities of the serpent and Satan make it clear that they are the same person.

How then does this relatively unidentified but never-absent personage play a key role in one version of David's sin when God receives the dubious credit in another?

The thought that God instigates or impels sinners to do evil is incorrect. In no sense could God author what he disapproves of and makes his whole kingdom stand against. How then shall we understand 2 Samuel 24:1, where God seems to instigate something which he will immediately label as sin?

God may and does occasionally impel sinners to reveal the wickedness of their hearts in deeds. God merely presents the opportunity and occasion for letting the evil desires of the heart manifest themselves outwardly. In this manner, sinners may see more quickly the evil which lies dormant in their hearts and motivates them to act counter to God's will.

It is also true, according to Hebrew thinking, that whatever God permits he commits. By allowing this census-taking, God is viewed as having brought about the act. The Hebrews were not very concerned with determining secondary causes and properly attributing them to the exact cause. Under the idea of divine providence everything ultimately was attributed to God; why not say he did it in the first place?

Since the number of variations here between Samuel and Chronicles are greater than usual and point to no clear rationale for emphasizing one set of facts over another, scholars suggest that Chronicles may represent the better and more dependable text tradition of the original Hebrew rather than that reflected in English versions of Samuel.

Although we should not overestimate the textual variants between Samuel and Chronicles in this chapter, some of the texts from Qumran's Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that some of its Samuel readings agree with readings previously found only in Chronicles. This would bring more harmony to the differences among texts.

Almost all students of Scripture judge that Chronicles was composed during the exile or just after it. Therefore it likely was based on an earlier form of the Samuel narrative no doubt well known and widely used. Note the way that the writer of Chronicles linked his materials; it reflects a linkage explicitly made in 2 Samuel 24:1. There the writer of 2 Samuel 24:1 noted, "Again the anger of the LORD burned," a reference to 2 Samuel 21:1–14, which also had to do with atonement for guilt. Accordingly, even though the chronicler omitted the material in 2 Samuel 23–24, he had a literary precedent for linking the materials in 2 Samuel 21 and 24. The selection of a site for the temple in Jerusalem marked a fitting climax to this phase of David's activity.

Having shown that David did indeed sin and that Satan, not God, was to blame, that still leaves all Israel the victims of the plague God sent to punish the sin. But David's subjects were as guilty as their king, according to 2 Samuel 24:1. Thus God dealt with all Israel through the act of the king who exemplified the national spirit of pride.

---

### **Gleason Archer - page in [New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#) - Who moved David to number his people, God or Satan?**

In 2 Samuel 24:1 we read, "And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." In the parallel account in 1 Chronicles 21:1–2 it is stated: "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beer-sheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it." The wording of 1 Chronicles 21:2 is very similar to that of 2 Samuel 24:2; there is no significant difference. But so far as the first verse of each chapter is concerned, it appears in 2 Samuel 24 that God Himself incited David to conduct the census, whereas in 1 Chronicles 21 it was Satan, the adversary of God. This would seem to be a serious discrepancy—unless both statements are true.

In neither book are we given a definite context for this census taking, and we have no way of knowing whether it took place before or after Absalom's revolt. But since it led indirectly to the acquisition of the hill (Mt. Moriah) that became the location of the temple and of the royal palaces, it must have occurred several years before the end of David's career. Only thus could he have had opportunity to amass the large amount of costly ornamentation and material that Solomon was later to use in fashioning that temple (1 Chron. 29:3–5).

Without being fully aware of what was going on in his heart, David had apparently been building up an attitude of pride and self-admiration for what he had achieved in the way of military success and economic expansion of his people. He began to think more in terms of armaments and troops than in terms of the faithful mercies of God. In his youth he had put his entire trust in God alone, whether he was facing Goliath with a slingshot or an army of Amalekites with a band of four hundred men. But in later years he had come to rely more and more on material resources, like any hardheaded realist, and he learned to measure his strength by the yardstick of numbers and wealth.

The Lord therefore decided that it was time for David to be brought to his knees once more and to be cast on the grace of God through a time of soul-searching trial. He therefore encouraged David to carry out the plan he had long cherished, that of counting up his manpower resources in order to plan his future military strategy with a view to the most effective deployment of his armies. Quite possibly this would also afford him a better base for assessment of taxes. And so God in effect said to him: "All right, go ahead and do it. Then you will find out how much good it will do you."

Though he was a hard-bitten and ambitious commander, General Joab felt a definite uneasiness about this whole project. He sensed that David and his advisors were becoming increasingly puffed up over their brilliant conquests, which had brought the Palestinian, Syrian, and Phoenician kingdoms into a state of vassalage and dependency on Israel. Joab was fearful that the Lord was displeased with this new attitude of self-confidence and self-esteem, and he tried to dissuade David from his purpose. 1 Chronicles 21:3 records Joab as saying, "The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? Why then doth my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?" There is a definite sense in which Yahweh gave David a final warning through the lips of Joab, before David finally committed himself to the census.

It was not that census taking was inherently evil. The Lord was not displeased with the two censuses taken in the time of Moses; in fact, He gave Moses positive directions to number all his military effectives (Num. 1:2–3; 26:2), both at the beginning of the forty



years' wandering in the desert and at the end of that period, as they were on the threshold of the conquest. The second census was designed to show that the total of Israel's armed forces was actually a bit less than it had been forty years earlier. And yet with that smaller force they would sweep all their enemies before them, rather than cowering in fear at the prospect of war as their fathers had done at Kadesh-Barnea. The second census would also serve a useful purpose as a basis for the distribution of the conquered territory among the Twelve Tribes. The more numerous tribes should be awarded the larger tracts in the apportionment of land. But this census on which David had set his heart could serve no other purpose than to inflate the national ego. As soon as the numbering was complete, God meant to chasten the nation by a disastrous plague that would cause a considerable loss of life and a decrease in the numbers of their citizens.

But as we turn back to the opening verse in 1 Chronicles 21, we are faced with the statement that it was Satan who moved David to conduct the census even over Joab's warning and protest. The verb for "incited" is identical in both accounts (wayyāset). Why would Satan get himself involved in this affair if God had already prompted David to commit the folly he had in mind? It was because Satan found it in his own interest to do so. The situation here somewhat resembles the first and second chapters of Job, in which it was really a challenge to Satan from God that led to Job's calamities. God's purpose was to purify Job's faith and ennoble his character through the discipline of adversity. Satan's purpose was purely malicious; he wished to do Job as much harm as he possibly could, and if possible drive him to curse God for his misfortunes. Thus it came about that both God and Satan were involved in Job's downfall and disaster.

Similarly we find both God and Satan involved in the sufferings of persecuted Christians according to 1 Peter 4:19 and 5:8. God's purpose is to strengthen their faith and to enable them to share in the sufferings of Christ in this life, that they may rejoice with Him in the glories of heaven to come (1 Peter 4:13–14). But Satan's purpose is to "devour" them (1 Peter 5:8), that is, to draw them into bitterness or self-pity, and thus drag them down to his level and his baneful destiny. Even in the case of Christ Himself, it was Satan's purpose to deflect the Savior from His messianic mission by the three temptations he offered Him; but it was the Father's purpose for the Second Adam to triumph completely over the very tempter who had lured the first Adam to his fall.

Also, at the Crucifixion it was Satan's purpose to have Jesus betrayed by Judas (whose heart he filled with treachery and hate [John 13:27]); but it was the Father's purpose that the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world should give His life as a ransom for many—and this was symbolized by the cup that Christ was forced to accept at Gethsemane. And in the case of Peter, Jesus informed him before his triple denial in the court of the high priest: "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31–32, NIV).

Here, then, we have five other examples of incidents or situations in which both Satan and God were involved in soul-searching testings and trials—God with a basically benevolent motive and a view to eventual victory and increasing usefulness for the person so tested, but Satan with an altogether malicious motive, hoping to do as much damage as he possibly can. Therefore we can say without hesitation that both accounts of David's incitement were correct. God incited him in order to teach him and his people a lesson they needed to learn and to humble them in a way that would promote their spiritual growth. Satan incited him in order to deal a severe blow to Israel and to mar David's prestige before his subjects. As it turned out (and this is true of virtually all the other examples as well), Satan's success was limited and transient; but in the end God's purpose was well served and His cause was substantially furthered.

In the aftermath of the plague, which cost the lives of seventy thousand Israelites (2 Sam. 24:15), the angel of the Lord designated the exact spot on Mount Moriah where the plague was stopped as the chosen spot for the future temple of the Lord (v.18). This structure was destined to bring much blessing into the lives of God's people for many generations to come. Once again Satan's malice was surpassed by the overruling grace of God.

**2 Samuel 24:2 The king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, 'Go about now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and register the people, that I may know the number of the people.'**

BGT 2 Samuel 24:3 κα ε πεν Ιωαβ πρ ς τ ν βασιλ α κα προσθε η κ ριος θε ς σου πρ ς τ ν λα ν σπερ α το ς κα σπερ α το ς κατονταπλασ ονα κα φθαλμο το κυρ ου μου το βασιλ ως ρ ντες κα κ ρι ς μου βασιλε ς να τ βο λεται ν τ λ γ το τ

LXE 2 Samuel 24:3 And Joab said to the king, Now may the Lord add to the people a hundred-fold as many as they are, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it: but why does my lord the king desire this thing?

KJV 2 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?

NET 2 Samuel 24:3 Joab replied to the king, "May the LORD your God make the army a hundred times larger right before the eyes of my lord the king! But why does my master the king want to do this?"

CSB 2 Samuel 24:3 Joab replied to the king, "May the LORD your God multiply the troops 100 times more than they are-- while my lord the king looks on! But why does my lord the king want to do this?"

ESV 2 Samuel 24:3 But Joab said to the king, "May the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see it, but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?"

NIV 2 Samuel 24:3 But Joab replied to the king, "May the LORD your God multiply the troops a hundred times over, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king want to do such a thing?"

NLT 2 Samuel 24:3 But Joab replied to the king, "May the LORD your God let you live to see a hundred times as many people as there are now! But why, my lord the king, do you want to do this?"

NRS 2 Samuel 24:3 But Joab said to the king, "May the LORD your God increase the number of the people a hundredfold, while the eyes of my lord the king can still see it! But why does my lord the king want to do this?"

NJB 2 Samuel 24:3 Joab said to the king, 'May Yahweh your God multiply the people a hundred times -- however many there are -- while my lord the king still has eyes to see it, but why should my lord the king be set on this?'

- **Joab:** 2Sa 2:13 8:16 20:23 23:37
- **Go:** 1Ch 21:2
- **Dan to Beersheba:** 2Sa 3:10 17:11 Jdg 20:1
- **that I may:** De 8:13,14 2Ch 32:25,26,31 Pr 29:23 Jer 17:5 2Co 12:7
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

1 Chronicles 21:2+ So David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring me word that I may know their number." (NET = David told Joab and the leaders of the army, "Go, count the number of warriors from Beer Sheba to Dan. Then bring back a report to me so I may know how many we have.")

## SENSELESS CENSUS!

**The king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him** - The parallel adds "to Joab and to the princes of the people ("leaders of the army" = NET)," which would be a command to Joab and all the commanders under him.

**"Go about now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba** - From north to south through all 12 tribes.

**and register the people, that I may know the number of the people** - NET = "muster the army, so I may know the size of the army." NIV = "enroll the fighting men." David is not interested in a population census, but a military force census. How many able bodied soldiers did he have access to?

**TSK** on why did David number - It however would appear that pride and ambition, and a desire of conquest, induced David to this measure, and rendered it so displeasing to God.

**2 Samuel 24:3 But Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see; but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?"**

- 2Sa 10:12 1Ch 21:3-4 Ps 115:14 Pr 14:28 Isa 60:5
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

1 Chronicles 21:3+ Joab said, "May the LORD add to His people a hundred times as many as they are! But, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? Why does my lord seek this thing? Why should he be a



cause of guilt to Israel?"

## JOAB'S OBJECTION

**But Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see - NET** = "May the LORD your God make the army a hundred times larger right before the eyes of my lord the king!" Joab's reply is like a prayer and his exhortation is for David to stand and watch what God would do. Joab, although often impetuous and rash, once again gives reasonable counsel to David, which David should have seen as a warning. David is a man after God's own heart, but as we have seen is not perfect and sometimes acts more like a man after a man's (fallen) heart! Can't we all identify? (Rhetorical!)

**but why does my lord the king delight in this thing** - Joab presses the point home asking why David would even want to do this? Clearly, as commander over David's armies, Joab of all people, should have known whether Israel's army was lacking adequate numbers to carry out war. And yet he sees no need for numbering.

1Ch 21:3 adds not just an objection but a clear warning - **'Why should he be a cause of guilt to Israel?'** so that on this point Joab is more righteous than David! **NLT** paraphrases it as a blunt, clear warning from Joab "Why must you cause Israel to sin?"

**2 Samuel 24:4 Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to register the people of Israel.**

NET 2 Samuel 24:4 But the king's edict stood, despite the objections of Joab and the leaders of the army. So Joab and the leaders of the army left the king's presence in order to muster the Israelite army.

CSB 2 Samuel 24:4 Yet the king's order prevailed over Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army left the king's presence to register the troops of Israel.

ESV 2 Samuel 24:4 But the king's word prevailed against Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel.

NIV 2 Samuel 24:4 The king's word, however, overruled Joab and the army commanders; so they left the presence of the king to enroll the fighting men of Israel.

NLT 2 Samuel 24:4 But the king insisted that they take the census, so Joab and the commanders of the army went out to count the people of Israel.

- **the king's:** 1Ch 21:4 Ec 8:4
- **went:** Ex 1:17 Ac 5:29
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passage:

1 Chronicles 21:4+ Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore, Joab departed and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.

## DAVID IGNORES JOAB'S WISE WORDS

**Nevertheless** - A sad term of contrast. David ignores Joab's wise words.

**The king's word prevailed against Joab and against the commanders of the army** - Note that David's word prevailed not just against Joab but the other commanders, implying that they also had objections against David's command.

**So** - For this reason. Term of conclusion. In light of David's

**Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to register the people of Israel** - Joab and commanders disagree but do not disobey.

---

**Warren Wiersbe** sums up the problem with the census - There was nothing illegal about a national census, if it was done according to the rules laid down in Exodus 30:11-16 (and see Num. 3:40-51). The half shekel received at the census was used to pay the bills for the sanctuary of God (Ex. 38:25-28). As a good Jewish citizen, Jesus paid his temple tax (Matt. 17:24-27), even though He knew that much of the ministry at the temple in that day was corrupt and had been rejected by His Father (Matt. 23:37-24:1). The phrase "the people" used in 2 Samuel 24:2, 4, 9, 10 refers to the Jewish military forces and is used this way in the Authorized Version of 1 Samuel 4:3, 4, 17. But the census that David ordered wasn't to collect the annual temple tax; it was a military census to see how big his army was, as verse 9 makes clear. But there had been military censuses in Israel in the past and the Lord hadn't judged the nation (Num. 1 and 26). What was there about this census that was wrong?

Joab and his captains were against the project (v. 4) and Joab's speech in verse 3 suggests that David's command was motivated by pride. The king wanted to magnify his own achievements rather than glorify the Lord. David may have rationalized this desire by arguing that his son Solomon was a man of peace who had no military experience. David wanted to be certain that, after his death, Israel would have the forces needed to preserve the peace. Another factor may have been David's plan to organize the army, the government, and the priests and Levites so that Solomon could manage things more easily and be able to build the temple (1 Chron. 22-27).

Whatever the cause, the Lord was displeased (1 Chron. 21:7), but He permitted Joab and his captains to spend the next nine months and twenty days counting the Israelites twenty years old and upward who were fit for military service. Sometimes God's greatest judgment is simply to let us have our own way. The census takers left Jerusalem, traveled east across the Jordan, and started counting at Aroer in the vicinity of the Dead Sea. Then they moved north through Gad and Gilead to Israel's northernmost border, where David had conquered the territory and expanded his kingdom (2 Sam. 8). The men then went west to Tyre and Sidon and then south to Beersheba in Judah, Israel's farthest border city. (Borrow [Be restored : 2 Samuel & 1 Chronicles](#))

**2 Samuel 24:5 They crossed the Jordan and camped in Aroer, on the right side of the city that is in the middle of the valley of Gad and toward Jazer.**

- **Aroer:** De 2:36 Jos 13:9,16 1Sa 30:28 Isa 17:2
- **Jazer:** Nu 32:1,3,35 Isa 16:8,9
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JOAB AND COMMANDERS HEAD EAST OF JORDAN

**They crossed the Jordan and camped in [Aroer](#), on the right side of the city that is in the middle of the valley of Gad and toward Jazer** - **Crossed the Jordan** means they went east of the Jordan River. Jazer ("God helps") is a Levitical city allotted to the Merarite Levites (Josh 21:39) east of the Jordan, in Gilead in the territory of Gad (Nu 32:1, 35; Josh 13:25), formerly an Amorite city.

**Valley of Gad** - In 2Sa 24:5 we read that Joab and the captains of the host passed over Jordan and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that is in the midst of the valley of Gad.

**2 Samuel 24:6 Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi, and they came to Dan-jaan and around to Sidon,**

- **Gilead:** Ge 31:21,47,48 Nu 32:1,39
- **land of Tahtimhodshi:** Jos 19:47 Jdg 18:29
- **Sidon:** Ge 10:15 Jos 11:8 19:28 Jdg 18:28
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## TAKING THE CENSUS NORTH AND EAST

**Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi** - Gilead was a mountainous region east of the Jordan and north of the Arnon River. It is called also "the land of Gilead" (Nu 32:1), and sometimes simply "Gilead" (Ps 60:7; Ge 37:25). It comprised the possessions of the tribes of Gad and Reuben and the south part of Manasseh (Dt. 3:13; Nu 32:40). It was bounded on the north by Bashan, and on the south by Moab and Ammon (Ge 31:21; Dt. 3:12-17). The site of **the land of Tahtim-hodshi** is uncertain.

**and they came to Dan-jaan** - **Dan-jaan** or woodland Dan, is a place probably somewhere in the direction of Dan, near the sources of the Jordan, so this would be to the north border of Israel. So from the east, Joab and the commanders went north.

**and around to Sidon** - From northeast they went toward [Sidon](#) a town on the Mediterranean coast, about 25 miles north of Tyre.

**2 Samuel 24:7 and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites, and they went out to the south of Judah, to Beersheba.**

- [Tyre](#): Jos 19:29
- [Beersheba](#): 2Sa 24:2 Ge 21:31-33
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CENSUS IN NORTHEAST TRAVELED TO THE SOUTH

**and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites-** [Tyre](#) on the Mediterranean coast north of Israel. The main body of the Hivites were in the northern confines of western Palestine

**and they went out to the south of Judah, to Beersheba** ("well of oath") - This would be the central territory of Israel and finally moving to the southernmost section in Beersheba.

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

- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## END OF NINE MONTH CENSUS

**So when they had gone about through the whole land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days-**

Having covered the land from east to north to west and then to south, their census taking had reaching "[parturition](#)" so to speak! One is reminded of the sobering words of James about the birth of sin for "each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has **conceived**, it **gives birth to sin**; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth **death**. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren." (Jas 1:14-16+) David had been enticed by pride or prestige and the census brought this desire to conception which birthed sin that would soon bring death to many Israelites because of David's deception (sin always deceives us beloved! Heb 3:13+). So for 9+ months David had a chance to confess and repent but that did not happen because of his pride which wanted the number of soldiers under his command!

**2 Samuel 24:9 And Joab gave the number of the registration 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.**

KJV 2 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.

NET 2 Samuel 24:9 Joab reported the number of warriors to the king. In Israel there were 800,000 sword-wielding warriors, and in Judah there were 500,000 soldiers.

CSB 2 Samuel 24:9 Joab gave the king the total of the registration of the troops. There were 800,000 fighting men from Israel and 500,000 men from Judah.

ESV 2 Samuel 24:9 And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: in Israel there were 800,000 valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were 500,000.

NIV 2 Samuel 24:9 Joab reported the number of the fighting men to the king: In Israel there were eight hundred thousand able-bodied men who could handle a sword, and in Judah five hundred thousand.

NLT 2 Samuel 24:9 Joab reported the number of people to the king. There were 800,000 capable warriors in Israel who could handle a sword, and 500,000 in Judah.

NRS 2 Samuel 24:9 Joab reported to the king the number of those who had been recorded: in Israel there were eight hundred thousand soldiers able to draw the sword, and those of Judah were five hundred thousand.

NJB 2 Samuel 24:9 Joab gave the king the census results for the people; Israel had eight hundred thousand fighting men who could wield a sword, and Judah five hundred thousand.

- **eight hundred thousand:** 1Ch 21:5-6 1Ch 27:23,24
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 21:5-6+ Joab gave the number of the census of all the people to David. And all Israel were 1,100,000 men who drew the sword; and Judah was 470,000 men who drew the sword. 6 But he did not number Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's command was abhorrent to Joab.

1 Chronicles 27:23; 24 But David did not count those twenty years of age and under, because the LORD had said He would multiply Israel as the stars of heaven. 24 Joab the son of Zeruiah had begun to count them, but did not finish; and because of this, wrath came upon Israel, and the number was not included in the account of the chronicles of King David.

## JOAB'S TROOP TOTALS

**And Joab gave the number of the registration of the people to the king-** CSB - "Joab gave the king the total of the registration of the troops" Note that 1Ch 21:6 adds another detail "But he (JOAB) did not number Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's command was abhorrent to Joab."

**and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men - NIV -** "In Israel there were eight hundred thousand able-bodied men who could handle a sword, and in Judah five hundred thousand." See Gleason Archer's explanation below regarding the differences in the numbers in the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 21:5-6.

---

**Gleason Archer - page in [New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#) - 2 Samuel 24:9 gives the total population for Israel as 800,000, which is 300,000 less than the corresponding figure in 1 Chronicles 21:5. On the other hand, 2 Samuel 24 gives 500,000 for Judah, as over against a mere 470,000 in 1 Chronicles 21. How can these apparent discrepancies be reconciled?**

A possible solution may be found along these lines. So far as Israel (i.e., the tribes north of Judah) is concerned, the 1 Chronicles figure includes all the available men of fighting age, whether battle seasoned or not. But from 2 Samuel 24 we learn that Joab's report gave a subtotal of "mighty men" (ʾiš ḥayil), i.e., battle-seasoned troops, consisting of 800,000 veterans. But in addition there may have been 300,000 more men of military age who served in the reserves but had not yet been involved in field combat. These two contingents would make up a total of 1,100,000—as 1 Chronicles 21 reports them, without employing the term ʾiš ḥayil.

So far as Judah was concerned, 2 Samuel 24 gives the round figure of 500,000, which was 30,000 more than the corresponding item in 1 Chronicles 21. Now it should be observed that 1 Chronicles 21:6 makes it clear that Joab did not complete the numbering, for he did not get around to a census of the tribe of Benjamin (nor that of Levi, either) before David came under conviction about completing the census at all. Joab was glad to desist when he saw the king's change of heart. The procedure for conducting the census had been to start with the Transjordanian tribes (2 Sam. 24:5) and then shift to the northernmost tribe of Dan and work southward back toward Jerusalem (v.7). This meant that the numbering of Benjamin would have come last. Hence Benjamin was not included with the total for Israel or that for Judah, either. But in the case of 2 Samuel 24, the figure for Judah included the already known figure of 30,000 troops mustered by Benjamin (which lay immediately adjacent to Jerusalem itself). Hence the total of 500,000 included the Benjamite contingent.

Observe that after the division of the united kingdom into North and South following the death of Solomon in 930 B.C., most of the Benjamites remained loyal to the dynasty of David and constituted (along with Simeon to the south) the kingdom of Judah. Hence it was reasonable to include Benjamin with Judah and Simeon in the subtotal figure of 500,000—even though Joab may not have itemized it in the first report he gave to David (1 Chron. 21:5). It would seem then that the completed grand total of the fighting forces available to David for military service was 1,600,000 (1,100,000 of Israel, 470,000 of Judah-Simeon, and 30,000 of Benjamin).

---

**Norman Geisler - borrow [When critics ask : a popular handbook on Bible difficulties](#) - 2 SAMUEL 24:9—Why do the numbers of men recorded in 2 Samuel 24:9 and in 1 Chronicles 21:5–6 disagree?**

**PROBLEM:** When David was moved to number the people of Israel and Judah, he sent Joab to carry out the task. According to the report in 2 Samuel 24:9, the number of the men of valor in Israel was 800,000, and the number of the men of valor in Judah was 500,000. However, according to 1 Chronicles 21:5–6, the number of the men who drew the sword in Israel was 1,100,000, and the number of the men who drew the sword in Judah was 470,000. Which of these calculations is correct?

**SOLUTION:** This discrepancy involves the difference in who was included in each report. In the report in 2 Samuel, the number of men of valor who drew the sword was 800,000, but did not include the standing army of 288,000 described in 1 Chronicles 27:1–15, or the 12,000 specifically attached to Jerusalem described in 2 Chronicles 1:14. Including these figures gives the grand total of 1,100,000 men of valor who composed the entire army of the men of Israel. The figure of 470,000 in 1 Chronicles 21 did not include the 30,000 men of the standing army of Judah mentioned in 2 Samuel 6:1. This is evident from the fact that the Chronicler points out that Joab did not complete the counting of the men of Judah (1 Chron. 21:6). Both calculations are correct according to the groups which were included and excluded from each report.

**2 Samuel 24:10 Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."**

- **David's heart:** 1Sa 24:5 Joh 8:9 1Jn 3:20,21
- **I have sinned:** 2Sa 12:13 1Ch 21:8 2Ch 32:26 Job 33:27,28 Ps 32:5 Pr 28:13 Mic 7:8,9 1Jn 1:9
- **take away:** Job 7:21 Ho 14:2 Joh 1:29
- **foolishly:** 2Sa 12:13 De 32:6 1Sa 13:13 26:21 2Ch 16:9 Mk 7:22 Titus 3:3
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DAVID DEVELOPS "HEART DISEASE!"**

**Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people**- Is this not a marker of a man after God's own heart? He sinned (like we all do), but he did not harden his heart, but was willing to have his heart pierced by the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. (cf Jn 16:8).

**So** - Term of conclusion. Therefore. For this reason. Ask what reason (that's a "softball" in this context!)?

**David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done**- Conviction gave way to confession which is the way back home for David and all of us! Six times David confesses "I have sinned" (2Sa 12:13; 2Sa 24:10, 17; Ps. 41:4, Ps 51:4; 1Ch 21:8). Notice that this time (and 1Ch 21:8) David adds to his confession the adjective GREATLY! Here 70,000 people have died!

**Wiersbe adds on sinned greatly** - Most of us would consider his sins relating to Bathsheba far worse than the sin of numbering the people, and far more foolish, but David saw the enormity of what he had done. David's sins with Bathsheba took the lives of four of David's sons (the baby, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah) plus the life of Uriah; but after the census, God sent a plague that took the lives of seventy thousand people. The Lord must have agreed with David that he had indeed sinned greatly. (Borrow [Be restored : 2 Samuel & 1 Chronicles](#))

**But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly**- David asks for forgiveness. He does not ask for God to take away the consequences, as surely by this time of his life, he is fully aware that sin ALWAYS calls forth consequences of one degree or another. Notice the nature of sin -- it is utterly foolish! In short, sin is stupid! When we sin we are acting like fools!

**THOUGHT** - Regarding consequences of every sin, at the very least, every time we sin and fail to confess and repent, we disturb our fellowship with the Father as well as grieving and/or quenching the flame (and power) of the Holy Spirit, thus short circuiting His flow of supernatural power we need to this this Christian life. Are you failing and falling in your Christian life, unable to fend off temptations? One thought is to ask God to do a David-like heart checkup (pray Psalm 139:23-24+). If the Spirit reveals unconfessed sin, do not cover it up, but put it under the blood of Jesus (1Jn 1:7, 9+).

It is worth recalling another king named Saul who made a similar declaration and request - "Then Saul said to Samuel, **I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words**, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. "Now therefore, **please pardon my sin** and return with me, that I may worship the LORD." But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." (1Sa 15:24-26+) Notice that Saul's confession had a caveat or disclaimer, in essence saying the people made me do it! He did not "own it" for himself, by himself! We don't see that "half-confession" in David's declaration neither here or when confronted by the prophet Nathan = "Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die." (2Sa 12:13+) Notice the clear distinction between the two confessions! To reiterate, genuine confession is "**I sinned!**" not "**I sinned...but!**"

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, let us all learn from this powerful lesson **to own our own sin**, not looking for scapegoats, not making excuses, not deceiving ourselves that simply saying the words "I have sinned" mean that we truly mean it! God grant us all the Spirit given grace to personally, fully "own" (or "[own up to](#)") our own sin so that the blood of Jesus might cover and cleanse us (1Jn 1:7+). And then we must be cognizant of the consequences, understanding that confession wipes out the sin before our Father, but does not wipe out the consequences related to that sin. These hard truths should drive us all to Paul's words in Romans 8:13+ so that we are ever ready and willing by the Spirit to put to death the deeds of the flesh (aka sins) so that we might live!

## 2 Samuel 24:11 When David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

- **Gad:** 1Sa 22:5 1Ch 2:19 1Ch 29:29
- **seer:** 1Sa 9:9
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passage:

1 Samuel 9:9 (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he used to say, "Come, and let us go to the seer"; for he who is called a prophet now was formerly called a seer.)

1 Chronicles 29:29 Now the acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the chronicles of Samuel the seer, in the chronicles of Nathan the prophet and in the chronicles of Gad the seer,

## ANOTHER PROPHET CONFRONTS DAVID

**When David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer**([chozeh](#); Lxx - horao - seeing, catching sight of), **saying** - David must have done a "double take" when he saw Gad the seer the next morning after his confession. The last time David had confessed "I have sinned," it set into motion a string of consequences that were still reverberating in his family's lives! So you can imagine his trepidation as Gad begins to speak!

---

**Seer**([02374](#))(**chozeh** from **chazah** = to see, behold) is an authoritative person who receives and communicates a message from God, possibly with an emphasis on the visual nature of the message. This is a prophet, who sees or perceives. In Isaiah a rebellious people sought to curb the functions of these seers (Isa. 30:10). In 1 Samuel 9:9, the author parenthetically states that the word for prophet in his day, nāḇiy' (5030), was formerly called a seer. However, for seer, he did not use ḥôzeh but a present participle of the verb rā'āh (7200), meaning to see, to perceive. It appears that the participles of ḥôzeh and of rā'āh function synonymously. But, terminology aside, a seer functioned the same as a prophet, who was moved by God and had divinely given insight. This Hebrew word is also used in parallel with the word prophet (2 Kgs. 17:13; Amos 7:12, 14); hence, its meaning overlaps with that term as well (cf. 2 Chr. 33:18; Isa. 29:10). Seers sometimes served a specific person: Gad served as King David's seer and did not hesitate to declare the words the Lord gave him for the king (2 Sam. 24:11). David had more than one seer (cf. 1 Chr. 25:5; 2 Chr. 29:25). The



functions of a seer as indicated by this term included, besides receiving and reporting the word of the Lord, writing about David's reign (1 Chr. 29:29); receiving and writing down visions (2 Chr. 9:29); writing genealogical records under Rehoboam's reign (2 Chr. 12:15). In general, the Lord forewarned His people through His prophets and seers (2 Kgs. 17:13; 2 Chr. 33:18). In many cases, these warnings were recorded in writing (2 Chr. 33:19).

**Chozeh - 17v - pact(1), prophets(1), seer(12), seers(3).** 2 Sam. 24:11; 2 Ki. 17:13; 1 Chr. 21:9; 1 Chr. 25:5; 1 Chr. 29:29; 2 Chr. 9:29; 2 Chr. 12:15; 2 Chr. 19:2; 2 Chr. 29:25; 2 Chr. 29:30; 2 Chr. 33:18; 2 Chr. 35:15; Isa. 28:15; Isa. 29:10; Isa. 30:10; Amos 7:12; Mic. 3:7

---

#### QUESTION - [Who was Gad the seer?](#)

**ANSWER** - Gad the [seer](#) (or prophet) is first mentioned in 1 Samuel 22:5. Before the Holy Spirit was poured out on believers at Pentecost (Acts 2), God communicated to His people primarily through His chosen prophets. In the Old Testament, those prophets are sometimes called seers (1 Samuel 9:9). Seers were sought by kings and others in authority when they needed direction from the Lord (2 Kings 17:13; 1 Chronicles 25:5).

Gad appears suddenly in the book of 1 Samuel as a consultant to [David](#) while he was on the run from Saul. At that time, Gad counsels David to leave Moab and return to Judah (1 Samuel 22:5). Gad is not mentioned again until David took the throne as the king of Israel and Gad is named as his seer (2 Samuel 24:11). At that time, kings had specific prophets whose counsel they sought, much as an American President has an advisory council. The difference is that these seers were to represent the Lord's counsel and not merely present good advice. However, seers were not always trustworthy, and the Lord brought judgment on those who spoke from their own authority (Jeremiah 14:14–15).

Gad, it appears, was an honorable man and faithfully spoke the Lord's words to David. After David had sinned by numbering the troops, the Lord sent Gad to rebuke him and give three options of punishment (2 Samuel 24:11–14). Gad later went back to David to give him the Lord's command about making his sin right through offering a sacrifice (2 Samuel 24:18). Gad remained loyal to David throughout his reign and is later listed as a compiler of the king's chronicles (1 Chronicles 29:29). Gad must have been a young man when he first joined David's band, since he outlived David and wrote a history of his life.

Though rarely mentioned by name, Gad the seer may have played a crucial role in David's success as king. His initial advice while David was on the run from Saul not only kept David safe, but it allowed David to build a reputation as a mighty warrior, making him popular with the people (1 Chronicles 12:1–22). From that, we learn that leaders need to surround themselves with wise people who understand God's Word and can communicate God's message accurately (see Isaiah 6:8–9; 1 Corinthians 14:1–4). For every great leader, there are nameless supporters who advise, rebuke, encourage, and warn, using their gifts for the betterment of another. Though his name is rarely mentioned, Gad's influence is seen throughout the incredible life and successes of King David. Where David excelled, Gad's counsel was right behind him. When David failed, Gad's rebukes and advice quickly followed. Gad worked in harmony with God's other influential prophet, Nathan, to keep David's heart and life pleasing to God and worthy of the throne (2 Chronicles 29:29; 2 Samuel 12:1). Because Gad was faithful to his calling, David had the godly insights he needed to fulfill the role God called him to play. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Samuel 24:12 "Go and speak to David, 'Thus the LORD says, 'I am offering you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I will do to you.'"**

- **I am offering:** 1Ch 21:10,11
- **I will:** 2Sa 12:9,10,14 Lev 26:41,43 Job 5:17,18 Pr 3:12 Heb 12:6-10 Rev 3:19
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **GOD COMMANDS GAD TO OFFER DAVID A "MULTIPLE CHOICE"!**

**Go and speak to David, 'Thus the LORD says, 'I am offering you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I will do to you** - God gives David a "divine multiple choice" and will carry out the one he chooses. This is a most unusual occurrence that David will be allowed to select the consequence he desires.

Notice that last phrase **"which I will do TO YOU!"** David would personally experience the "doing" by God. While he himself did not die, clearly he knew that it was his sin of counting numbers ironically resulted in smaller numbers in Israel, almost like it was divine "poetic justice." (Poetic justice is defined in the secular world as an occasion when something bad happens to a person who seems

to deserve it, usually because of bad things that person has done. Another definition says it refers to a punishment or unfavorable outcome that is particularly appropriate or ironic.)

**2 Samuel 24:13 So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider and see what answer I shall return to Him who sent me."**

BGT 2 Samuel 24:13 κα ε σ λθεν Γαδ πρ ς Δαυιδ κα ν γγειλεν α τ κα ε πεν α τ κλεξαι σεαυτ γεν σθαι ε λθ σοι τρ α τη λιμ ς ν τ γ σου τρε ς μ νας φε γειν σε μπροσθεν τ ν χθρ ν σου κα σονται δι κοντ ς σε γεν σθαι τρε ς μ ρας θ νατον ν τ γ σου ν ν ο ν γν θι κα δ τ ποκριθ τ ποστε λαντ με μα

LXE 2 Samuel 24:13 And Gad went in to David, and told him, and said to him, Choose one of these things to befall thee, whether there shall come upon thee for **three years famine in thy land**; or that thou shouldst flee three months before thine enemies, and they should pursue thee; or that there should be for three days mortality in thy land. Now then decide, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.

KJV 2 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.

NET 2 Samuel 24:13 Gad went to David and told him, "Shall **seven years of famine** come upon your land? Or shall you flee for three months from your enemy with him in hot pursuit? Or shall there be three days of plague in your land? Now decide what I should tell the one who sent me."

CSB 2 Samuel 24:13 So Gad went to David, told him the choices, and asked him, "Do you want **three years of famine** to come on your land, to flee from your foes three months while they pursue you, or to have a plague in your land three days? Now, think it over and decide what answer I should take back to the One who sent me."

ESV 2 Samuel 24:13 So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall **three years of famine** come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me."

NIV 2 Samuel 24:13 So Gad went to David and said to him, "Shall there come upon you **three years of famine** in your land? Or three months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you? Or three days of plague in your land? Now then, think it over and decide how I should answer the one who sent me."

NLT 2 Samuel 24:13 So Gad came to David and asked him, "Will you choose **three years of famine** throughout your land, three months of fleeing from your enemies, or three days of severe plague throughout your land? Think this over and decide what answer I should give the LORD who sent me."

NRS 2 Samuel 24:13 So Gad came to David and told him; he asked him, "Shall **three years of famine** come to you on your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to the one who sent me."

- **seven**: 2Sa 21:1 Lev 26:20 1Ki 17:1-7 1Ch 21:12 Eze 14:13,21 Lu 4:25
- **flee**: Lev 26:17,36,37 De 28:25,52
- **three days'**: Lev 26:16,25 De 28:22,27,35 Ps 91:6 Eze 14:19-21
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

1 Chronicles 21:11-12+ So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Take for yourself 12 either **three years of famine**, or three months to be swept away before your foes, while the sword of your enemies overtakes you, or else three days of the sword of the LORD, even pestilence in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now, therefore, consider what answer I shall return to Him who sent me."

## TAKE YOUR CHOICE PAY THE PRICE

So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? (1Ch 21:12 while the sword of your enemies overtakes you) Or shall there be three days' pestilence ([deber](#); Lxx - [thanatos](#) = death) in your land? Now consider and see what answer I shall return to Him who sent me - Gad presents the consequences as (1) a 7 year famine (he had already experienced a 3 year famine in 2Sa 21:1 but note the parallel passage in 1Ch 21:11 says 3 years - see [Archer's comment](#) below), (2) 3 months of fleeing foes ("swept away") or (3) 3 days' of pestilence which 1Ch 21:12 describes as "**three days of the sword of the LORD, even pestilence in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.**"

**NET Note on seven years** (versus 3 years in 1Ch 21:12) - The **LXX** has here "**three**" rather than "seven," and is followed by NAB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, TEV, NLT (See various translations above).

---

**Pestilence** ([01698](#)) [deber](#) from **dabar** = to speak) refers to plague. In the first 3 uses in Exodus [deber](#) speaks of divinely induced pestilence on Egypt (Ex 5:3, 9:3, 15). In Lev 26:25 as punishment for Israel's sin God promises "I will send **pestilence** among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands." (Compare Nu 14:12, Dt 28:21) In 2Sa 24:13, 15 we see the **pestilence** was sent on Israel because of King David's sin and as a result 70,000 men died! King Solomon referred to **pestilence** as one of the judgments that should stimulate the people to pray asking God to hear their cries (1Ki 8:37, 2Chr 6:28). God delivers from pestilence (Ps 91:3). **Pestilence** is clearly a [key word](#) in the book of Jeremiah (17/48 uses in the OT) which is summed up well in Jeremiah 21:6 where God promises "I will also strike down the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they will die of a great **pestilence.**"

**Pestilence** in the English dictionary = a deadly or highly infectious epidemic outbreak usually of an infectious disease but figuratively can be an evil influence.

**ISBE on [deber](#)** - Any sudden fatal epidemic is designated by this word, and in its Biblical use it generally indicates that these are divine visitations. The word is most frequently used in the prophetic books, and it occurs 25 times in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, always associated with the sword and famine. In 4 other passages it is combined with noisome or evil beasts, or war. In Amos 4:10 this judgment is compared with the plagues of Egypt, and in Habakkuk 3:5 it is a concomitant of the march of God from the Arabian mountain. There is the same judicial character associated with pestilence in Exodus 5:3; Exodus 9:15; Leviticus 26:25; Numbers 14:12; Deuteronomy 28:21; 2 Samuel 24:21; 1 Chronicles 21:12; Ezekiel 14:19, Ezekiel 14:21. In the dedication prayer of Solomon, a special value is besought for such petitions against pestilence as may be presented toward the temple (2 Chronicles 6:28). Such a deliverance is promised to those who put their trust in God (Psalm 91:6). Here the pestilence is called noisome, a shortened form of "annoying," used in the sense of "hateful" or that which causes trouble or distress. In modern English it has acquired the sense of loathsome. "Noisome" is used by Tyndale where the King James Version and the Revised Version (British and American) have "hurtful" in 1 Timothy 6:9. The Latin word *pestilentia* is connected with *pestis*, "the plague," but pestilence is used of any visitation and is not the name of any special disease; *deber* is applied to diseases of cattle and is translated "murrain."

---

**Gleason Archer - page 193 in [New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#) - Why is there a discrepancy in the number of years of famine mentioned in 2 Samuel 24:13 and in 1 Chronicles 21:11–12?**

2 Samuel 24:13 relates the visit of the prophet Gad to King David after he had finished the census of his kingdom in a spirit of pride. Gad relays God's message to him in the following terms: "Shall **seven years of famine** come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land?" (NASB). To this David replies in a spirit of humble repentance, "Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man" (v.14, NASB).

In 1 Chronicles 21:11–12, Gad comes to David and says to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Take for yourself either **three years of famine**, or three months to be swept away before your foes ..., or else three days of the sword of the LORD, even pestilence in the land.' " (NASB). Note that the wording here is significantly different from that of 2 Samuel 24:13 (i.e., "Shall **seven years of famine** come to you?"). Rather than that simple question in 2 Samuel, we have it given here in 1 Chronicles as an alternative imperative ("Take for yourself either three years of famine ...").

From this we may reasonably conclude that 2 Samuel records the first approach of Gad to David, in which the alternative prospect was seven years; the Chronicles account gives us the second and final approach of Nathan to the king, in which the Lord (doubtless

in response to David's earnest entreaty in private prayer) reduced the severity of that grim alternative to three years rather than an entire span of seven. As it turned out, however, David finally opted for God's own preference (whether famine or pestilence); and God sent three days of severe pestilence, which carried off the lives of seventy thousand men of Israel.

---

**Norman Geisler - borrow [When critics ask : a popular handbook on Bible difficulties](#) - 2 SAMUEL 24:13—Why are the numbers of the years of the famine different from those in 1 Chronicles 21?**

**PROBLEM:** God spoke to Gad and instructed him to offer David three alternative punishments for his sin. According to 2 Samuel 24:13, the famine was to be seven years. However, according to 1 Chronicles 21:12, the famine was to be three years. Which one of these is correct?

**SOLUTION:** There are two possible ways to reconcile these accounts. Some commentators propose that the prophet Gad actually confronted David on two occasions. This proposal is based on the difference in language used to present the alternatives to David. In the 2 Samuel passage, Gad presents the alternatives as a question, "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land" (v. 13). In the 1 Chronicles passage the alternatives are presented more along the lines of a command, "Choose for yourself, either three years of famine, or three months to be defeated" (vv. 11–12). Those who offer this solution assume that perhaps the 2 Samuel passage records the first encounter of Gad and David in which the alternatives are presented for David's consideration, and that after some fasting and prayer, Gad returned for David's decision by which time God had reduced the duration of the famine from seven to three years in response to David's supplication.

**Another group of commentators suggests that the record in 2 Samuel is a copyist error.** They point out that there are more reliable manuscripts which preserve the number "three" for the duration of the famine and that the NIV has employed this manuscript reading in its translation.

**2 Samuel 24:14 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."**

- **I am in:** 1Sa 13:6 2Ki 6:15 Joh 12:27 Php 1:23
- **for His mercies:** Ex 34:6,7 1Ch 21:13 Ps 51:1 86:5,15 103:8-14 119:156 145:9 Isa 55:7 Jon 4:2 Mic 7:18
- **do not let me fall:** 2Ki 13:3-7 2Ch 28:5-9 Ps 106:41,42 Pr 12:10 Isa 47:6 Zec 1:15
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passage:**

1 Chronicles 21:13+ 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."

### **DAVID CHOOSES TO FALL INTO YAHWEH'S HAND**

**Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress - NET = "I am very upset!" CSB "I have great anxiety. NLT = "I'm in a desperate situation." Why is David so upset? He grasps the consequences of his sin and how it will impact his entire nation. One cannot imagine how heavily this weighed on his heart!**

**Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man NET = "I prefer that we be attacked by the LORD. I do not want to be attacked by men!" In one sense all 3 choices were under the sovereign control of Yahweh, but David sees the best option as throwing himself and his nation into the hands of the LORD, because he knows the heart of God is filled with **great mercies** (plural not singular)! He knows man will not show the mercies God will show.**

---

**Norman Geisler - borrow [When critics ask : a popular handbook on Bible difficulties](#) - 2 SAMUEL 24:14—Is it fearful to fall into the hands of God?**

**PROBLEM:** David here implies that it is not fearful to fall into the hands of the living God. In fact, he chooses it over all other options. At the same time, the writer of Hebrews declares that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

**SOLUTION:** The two passages are speaking of two different conditions. In David's case, it was a matter of choosing his own punishment for his self-acknowledged sin. The Hebrews passage speaks of those who, far from being repentant, had sinned

“willfully” after having “received the knowledge of the truth” (v. 26). In brief, whether it is fearful or not will depend on the condition of the person who falls into God’s hands.

- **IT IS FEARFUL FOR:** The sinner, The unrepentant, The unfaithful
- **IT IS NOT FEARFUL FOR:** The righteous, The repentant, The faithful

**2 Samuel 24:15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time, and seventy thousand men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.**

BGT 2 Samuel 24:15 κα μ ραι θερισμο πυρ ν κα δωκεν κ ριος ν Ισραηλ θ νατον π πρωθεν ως ρας ρ στου κα ρξατο θρασις ν τ λα κα π θανεν κ το λαο π Δαν κα ως Βηρσαβεε βδομ κοντα χιλι δες νδρ ν

LXE 2 Samuel 24:15 So David chose for himself the mortality: and they were the days of wheat-harvest; and the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from morning till noon, and the plague began among the people; and there died of the people from Dan even to Bersabee seventy thousand men.

KJV 2 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 Beersheba seventy thousand men.

NET 2 Samuel 24:15 So the LORD sent a plague through Israel from the morning until the completion of the appointed time. Seventy thousand men died from Dan to Beer Sheba.

CSB 2 Samuel 24:15 So the LORD sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the appointed time, and from Dan to Beer-sheba 70,000 men died.

ESV 2 Samuel 24:15 So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning until the appointed time. And there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba 70,000 men.

NIV 2 Samuel 24:15 So the LORD sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.

NLT 2 Samuel 24:15 So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel that morning, and it lasted for three days. A total of 70,000 people died throughout the nation, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south.

NRS 2 Samuel 24:15 So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel from that morning until the appointed time; and seventy thousand of the people died, from Dan to Beer-sheba.

NJB 2 Samuel 24:15 So David chose the epidemic. It was the time of the wheat harvest. So Yahweh unleashed an epidemic on Israel from that morning until the time determined; plague ravaged the people and, of the people from Dan to Beersheba, seventy thousand died.

NAB 2 Samuel 24:15 Thus David chose the pestilence. Now it was the time of the wheat harvest when the plague broke out among the people. (The LORD then sent a pestilence over Israel from morning until the time appointed, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beer-sheba died.)

YLT 2 Samuel 24:15 And Jehovah giveth a pestilence on Israel from the morning even unto the time appointed, and there die of the people, from Dan even unto Beer-Sheba, seventy thousand men,

GWN 2 Samuel 24:15 So the LORD sent a plague among the Israelites from that morning until the time he had chosen. Of the people from Dan to Beersheba, 70,000 died.

BBE 2 Samuel 24:15 So David made selection of the disease; and the time was the days of the grain-cutting, when the disease came among the people, causing the death of seventy thousand men from Dan as far as Beer-sheba.

RSV 2 Samuel 24:15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time; and there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men.

- **So the LORD:** Nu 16:46-49 25:9 1Sa 6:19 1Ch 21:14 27:4 Mt 24:7 Rev 6:8
- **from Dan:** 2Sa 24:2
- **seventy thousand men:** Isa 37:36
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passage:

1 Chronicles 21:14+ So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel; 70,000 men of Israel fell.

## PESTILENCE FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

**So** - For this reason. What reason?

**the LORD sent a pestilence** ([deber](#); Lxx - [thanatos](#) = death) **upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time, and seventy thousand men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died** - True to His promise, Yahweh sent the plague on all the land, from the north to the south with a death toll of 70,000, all because of David's sin! The consequences to a nation can be horrible when the leader sins against God. America are you listening? (see [mentions of God in the Democratic Party Platform](#))

---

### QUESTION - [What is the meaning of pestilence in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER - Pestilence** is a deadly disaster, usually a disease, that affects an entire community. Pestilence is contagious, virulent, and devastating. For example, the Black Plague in Europe that killed over thirty percent of the population during the late Middle Ages was a pestilence. In the Bible, pestilence is usually a sign of God's judgment on a nation or people group (Deuteronomy 32:24; 1 Chronicles 21:12; Ezekiel 7:14–15). The God who protects and blesses is also the God who sends disaster and pestilence when it accomplishes His righteous purposes on earth (Isaiah 45:7; Ezekiel 5:16–17; Amos 4:10). Pestilence is promised as part of God's final judgment on the world in Revelation 18:8.

The word translated "pestilence" is often translated as "plague" or "disaster" in new versions of the English Bible. However, because the word is often paired with both of those, it may imply a greater devastation than mere physical disease. Pestilence incorporates any and all forms of public and mass destruction and often accompanies famine (Ezekiel 7:15) or war (Jeremiah 21:9). Jesus forewarned of pestilence when He described the end times (Luke 21:11).

After David's sinful census, the Lord brought judgment upon Israel in the form of pestilence: "The Lord sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning until the appointed time. And there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba 70,000 men" (2 Samuel 24:15, ESV). God had also sent pestilence in the aftermath of [Korah's rebellion](#) (Numbers 16:49) and as a judgment for Israel's immorality at [Baal Peor](#) (Numbers 25:9), but the epidemic recorded in 2 Samuel 24 was the most deadly ever to hit the Israelites. Then God had mercy and halted the judgment: "When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD relented concerning the disaster and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, 'Enough! Withdraw your hand'" (verse 16).

Our sovereign God is Lord of any pestilence (Habakkuk 3:5). Knowing that God is in control, we do not need to fear, whatever happens (see Psalm 91:5–6). Believers are not immune from the effects of living in a fallen world, but we are assured that "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). God may test our faith through a time of pestilence, but Christians know such an ordeal is not God's judgment on them (see 1 Corinthians 11:32; James 1:3; 1 Peter 1:7).

Among the various forms of judgment that God brings upon the unrighteous and rebellious is pestilence. Not every epidemic is the direct judgment of God, but the Bible indicates that some instances of pestilence in history have been a punishment for sin. God sent pestilence to punish the Israelites for their ongoing idolatry and disobedience (Deuteronomy 32:24; Jeremiah 42:22), and during the [tribulation](#) He will send pestilence to punish the unrepentant: "The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly, festering sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped its image" (Revelation 16:2; cf. Revelation 18:8; Matthew 24:7).

**2 Samuel 24:16** When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who destroyed the people, "It is enough! Now relax your hand!" And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

- **the angel:** Ex 12:23 2Ki 19:35 1Ch 21:15-16 2Ch 32:21 Ps 35:6 Ac 12:23
- **repented:** Ge 6:6 1Sa 15:11 Ps 78:38 90:13 135:14 Jer 18:7-10 Joe 2:13,14 Am 7:3,6 Hab 3:2
- **It is enough:** Ex 9:28 1Ki 19:4 Isa 27:8 40:1,2 57:16 Joe 2:13,14 Mk 14:41 2Co 2:6
- **Araunah:** 2Sa 24:18 1Ch 21:15 2Ch 3:1, Ornan
- **the Jebusite:** 2Sa 5:8 Ge 10:16 Jos 15:63 Jdg 1:21 19:11 Zec 9:7
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## Related Passage:

1 Chronicles 21:15-16+ And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; but as he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw and was sorry over the calamity, and said to the destroying angel, "It is enough; now relax your hand." And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 16 Then David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, covered with sackcloth, fell on their faces.

## ANGEL OF THE LORD'S HAND TOWARD JERUSALEM

(1Ch 21:15 "And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it") **When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the** (1Ch 21:15 = "the LORD saw and was sorry over the") **calamity and said to the angel who destroyed the people, "It is enough! Now relax your hand!"** - David had appealed to the mercy of the LORD, and now he was a beneficiary of it as God called a halt to His wrath just as the Angel of the LORD was about to strike David's City.

**And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite** - In 1Ch 21:15 **Ornan the Jebusite**. This is a parenthetical statement introducing a geographic site what would have great import in the history of Israel (even to this day for the [Dome of the Rock](#) is located there). This site was destined to become the most valuable piece of property in the world.

**MacArthur** - The **threshing floor of Ornan** is today believed to be the very flat rock under the Moslem mosque, the Dome of the Rock, inside the temple ground in Jerusalem. (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

---

### QUESTION - [Who was Araunah \(AKA Ornan\) the Jebusite?](#)

**ANSWER** - Araunah the Jebusite was a [Canaanite](#) who sold King David a site and supplies to make a sacrifice to the Lord, even though he himself does not appear to have been a believer in the God of Israel. The land purchased from Araunah was eventually used as the site of the temple in Jerusalem.

The story of Araunah and his threshing floor is linked to that of David's [sinful census](#) in 2 Samuel 24. King David ordered a census of the fighting men of Israel; this census was contrary to God's will. (Perhaps the census was a source of pride or a sign that David was relying upon the strength of his men rather than the strength of the Lord.) As a result of David's sin, God gave David a choice: three years of famine, three months of fleeing before his enemies, or three days of pestilence. David picked the last one as he explains in verse 14: "I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the Lord for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man." Therefore, God sent a plague upon the people, and 70,000 men of Israel died (thus significantly weakening the fighting force that had just been counted). Toward the end of the third day, the Angel of the Lord is about to destroy Jerusalem but relents. At the time the plague stops, the Angel of the Lord was standing at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (verse 16).

2 Samuel 5 gives the account of David's capture of Jerusalem, which originally belonged to the Jebusites. For the first seven years of his kingship, David reigned in Hebron over Judah and Benjamin. But after all the tribes united under him, he wanted to found a new capital. He chose Jerusalem, a stronghold of the Jebusites, some of the original Canaanite inhabitants of the area. David defeated them and took the city. Although God had commanded that all the Canaanites be exterminated because of their great sin (Leviticus 18:24–25), this had never happened, even in David's day. Throughout the history of Israel in the Old Testament, we read of Canaanites interacting with and even living among the Israelites. It appears that Araunah may have been one of the remaining Jebusites who lived there, or at least had a threshing floor near Jerusalem.

A threshing floor like that sold by Araunah would have been a large, open, elevated area to facilitate threshing and winnowing. First, the outer husk over the grain would have to be cracked so that the grain could be separated. This could be done by beating the grain or by using a threshing sledge, an arrangement of heavy boards with abrasive material (e.g., sharp rocks) on the bottom side. The sledge was pulled by draft animals back and forth across the grain to separate the tough outer husk from the kernel. Then the grain would be tossed into the air and the wind would blow away the outer husk (the [chaff](#)—see Psalm 1:4) and the heavier grain kernel would fall back to the ground.

The prophet Gad, who had been communicating God's will to David during this whole ordeal, told David to build an altar to the Lord on Araunah's threshing floor. David went to Araunah and told him what he intended and offered to buy the threshing floor. Araunah instead offered to donate the site as well as oxen for the offering and the threshing sledges for wood. This offer is significant because these articles represent the whole of Araunah's livelihood. He is very respectful of David, but speaks of "the LORD *your* God" (2 Samuel 24:23, emphasis added), perhaps indicating that Araunah was not a believer in the God of Israel

himself. David refuses his offer and explains in verse 24: "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." [David](#) has it right—a sacrifice that costs us nothing is not a real sacrifice. Araunah sells the site to David as well as the supplies for the offering, and the plague is stopped (verse 25).

1 Chronicles 21 is the parallel passage to 2 Samuel 24, but we learn nothing new about Araunah there except that he was also called Ornan the Jebusite. There are a number of reasons why this might be. If Araunah was a Canaanite, not a Hebrew, his name would have to be translated or transliterated into Hebrew, and this can result in some variation of spelling, especially since 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles were written several hundred years apart. It is also possible that *Araunah* is a title rather than a proper name. There are quite a number of instances in Scripture where a person has two names or variations in spelling of the same name. This does not indicate any error in the text but the normal variation for that age and type of literature. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**2 Samuel 24:17 Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, "Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father's house."**

- **Then David spoke to the LORD:** 1Ch 21:16-17
- **I have sinned:** 2Sa 24:10 Job 7:20 42:6 Ps 51:2-5 Isa 6:5
- these sheep: 1Ki 22:17 Ps 44:11 74:1 Eze 34:2-6,23,24 Zec 13:7
- let thine: Ge 44:33 Joh 10:11,12 1Pe 2:24,25
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

1 Chronicles 21:16-17+ **Then David lifted up his eyes and saw the [Angel of the LORD](#) standing between earth and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, covered with sackcloth, fell on their faces.** 17 David said to God, "Is it not I who commanded to count the people? Indeed, I am the one who has sinned and done very wickedly, but these sheep, what have they done? O LORD my God, please let Your hand be against me and my father's household, but not against Your people that they should be plagued."

### DAVID ASKS FOR GOD'S JUDGMENT ON HIMSELF

(1 Chronicles 21:16 Then David lifted up his eyes and saw see [Angel of the LORD](#) standing between earth and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, covered with sackcloth, fell on their faces.) **Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, "Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? - For the second time David confesses "I...have sinned." In 1Ch 21:17 David continues to confess and intercede for the people - David said to God, "Is it not I who commanded to count the people? Indeed, I am the one who has sinned and done very wickedly, but these sheep, what have they done? O LORD my God, please let Your hand be against me and my father's household, but not against Your people that they should be plagued."**

**I have sinned** 18x in 18v - Exod. 9:27; Exod. 10:16; Num. 22:34; Jos. 7:20; 1 Sam. 15:24; 1 Sam. 15:30; 1 Sam. 26:21; 2 Sam. 12:13; 2 Sam. 19:20; 2 Sam. 24:10; 1 Chr. 21:8; Job 33:27; Ps. 41:4; Ps. 51:4; Mic. 7:9; Matt. 27:4; Lk. 15:18; Lk. 15:21

Sin is really a selfish act. It's all about bringing ourselves pleasure, caring little about the toll it will take on someone else.

-- Alan Redpath

**Please let Your hand be against me and against my father's house-** David is willing to die in place of his people, a faint picture of the willingness of the Son of David to die for the sins of the world. David accepts the blame for the sin and the loss of lives, much like he accepted the blame for the killing of the priests at Nob, declaring to the escaped priest Abiathar "I have brought about the death of every person in your father's household." (1Sa 22:19, 22+).

---

**QUESTION - [Who is the destroying angel?](#)**

**ANSWER -** The destroying angel is also commonly referred to as the [angel of death](#). On numerous occasions, God used angelic

beings— [heavenly messengers](#) of some kind—to bring judgment to sinners on earth. Various Bible translations refer to this being as a “destroying angel.” There is no clear biblical evidence that any one particular angel was given the title “destroying angel” or “angel of death.” The most we can say is that the Bible’s mentions of a “destroying angel” are references to a heavenly being or beings that came to destroy those under God’s judgment.

The most famous visitation of a destroying angel was on the first [Passover](#). Egypt was about to experience the tenth and final plague, the death of the firstborn. Moses’ instructions to the Hebrews contained this warning: “When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down” (Exodus 12:23). Some other translations have “Angel of Death” (GNT) or “death angel” (NLT) instead of “destroyer.” This being is called “the destroyer of the firstborn” in Hebrews 11:28.

Interestingly, the original Hebrew text of Exodus 12:23 does not mention an “angel” at all. It simply says that “the destroyer” or “the spoiler” or “the one who causes damage” would slay the firstborn of Egypt. It could have been the Lord Himself who was the destroyer, although the possibility exists that God sent an angel to do the deed. Psalm 78 recounts the [plagues in Egypt](#) and sums them up as God’s unleashing of “a band of destroying angels” (verse 49). The Hebrew word for “angel” is used here, but it is not limited to one particular angel.

A destroying angel—a heavenly messenger who brought destruction—was also sent by God to judge the Israelites because of David’s sin in [numbering the people](#): “The Lord sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died. When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord relented concerning the disaster and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, ‘Enough! Withdraw your hand.’ The angel of the Lord was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. When David saw the angel who was striking down the people, he said to the Lord, ‘I have sinned’” (2 Samuel 24:15–17).

The [Assyrians](#) who attacked Jerusalem during King Hezekiah’s reign also met what could be called an angel of death or a destroying angel: “That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!” (2 Kings 19:32–35). In this passage and in 2 Samuel 24, the destroying angel is actually called “the angel of the Lord,” which many scholars take to be a reference to Christ in a pre-incarnate appearance.

Another angel who brought death and destruction is mentioned in the judgment of King Herod (Acts 12:23). An angel with lethal intent, identified as “the angel of the Lord,” bearing a sword gives a warning to Balaam (Numbers 22:31–33). And Jesus mentions that angels will be involved in the end-times judgment of the wicked (Matthew 13:49–50). In none of these cases are the angels called “the angel of destruction” or “the angel of death.” We might refer to an angel who metes out God’s judgment as an “angel of destruction,” but it is not an explicitly biblical term. [GotQuestions.org](#)

---

**Alan Redpath** in his online book [The Making of a Man of God \(Life of David\)](#) writes - Though the sword was back in its sheath, there were still 70,000 fresh graves in Israel, 70,000 grieving families whose lives were marked by David’s compromise with pride. Every spiritual leader would do well to read this story once a year!

David’s experience offers us three warnings.

**1. To live an unaccountable life is to flirt with danger.** Accountability is one of the things God uses to keep His people pure. We all need to be held accountable by someone. Had David listened to Joab he would never have numbered the people . . . or been the cause of such devastation. To ignore accountability is to flirt with danger.

**2. To ignore sin’s consequences is to reject God’s truth.** The Bible is filled with the reality of the consequences of sin. Sin is really a selfish act. It’s all about bringing ourselves pleasure, caring little about the toll it will take on someone else.

**3. To fail to take God seriously is to deny His lordship.** In the midst of the fun and the delight of living—and no one believes in that more than I do—it is tempting to go too far and take the edge off His holiness. No need to take ourselves all that seriously . . . but when it comes to God, we need to take Him very seriously, not play games with Him. And when we do take Him seriously, He gives us the delight and satisfaction of a full life.

I believe if somehow we could bring David back from beyond and interview him today, one of his strongest pieces of advice would be directed toward those who are spiritual leaders . . . who have earned the respect of people . . . whom others follow and trust. If asked what one thing he would want us to remember, I think he would mention this segment from his own experience and warn against falling under the subtle spell of pride.

**If a man as great and godly as David could foul up his life so near the end of his days,**

so can anyone else.

That includes you.

That includes me.

God help us all.

**2 Samuel 24:18 So Gad came to David that day and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite."**

- **Gad:** 2Sa 24:11 1Ch 21:18-30,
- **Araunah:** Heb. Araniah, 2Sa 24:16
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 21:18-30+ Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up and build an altar to the LORD on the **threshing floor of Ornan** the Jebusite. 19 So David went up at the word of Gad, which he spoke in the name of the LORD. 20 Now Ornan turned back and saw the angel, and his four sons who were with him hid themselves. And Ornan was threshing wheat. 21 As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out from the threshing floor and prostrated himself before David with his face to the ground. 22 Then David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of this threshing floor, that I may build on it an altar to the LORD; for the full price you shall give it to me, that the plague may be restrained from the people." 23 Ornan said to David, "Take it for yourself; and let my lord the king do what is good in his sight. See, I will give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for wood and the wheat for the grain offering; I will give it all." 24 But 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, or offer a burnt offering which costs me nothing." 25 So David gave Ornan 600 shekels of gold by weight for the site. 26 Then David built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And he called to the LORD and He answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering. 27 The LORD commanded the angel, and he put his sword back in its sheath. 28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he offered sacrifice there. 29 For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were in the high place at Gibeon at that time. 30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was terrified by the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Foundation Stone in Center of Dome of Rock  
Possibly Ornan's Threshing Floor

## GAD COMMANDS AN ALTAR ON THE THRESHING FLOOR

(1Ch 21:18 ADDS = "Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David") **So Gad came to David that day and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah (1Ch 21:18 - Ornah) the Jebusite** - The threshing floors were round, level plats of ground in the open air, usually in elevated places, as they are to this day in the East, where the corn was trodden out by oxen.

#### Related Resources:

[What is the Dome of the Rock?](#) - Except from [Gotquestions.org](#) - The Dome of the Rock is a [Muslim](#) shrine that was built on the [Temple Mount](#) in Jerusalem in AD 691. The Dome of the Rock is part of a larger Muslim holy area that takes up a significant portion of what is also known as Mount Moriah in the heart of Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock gets its name from the fact that it is built over the highest part (the dome) of Mount Moriah which is where Jews and Christians believe Abraham was prepared to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God (Genesis 22:1–14). **It is also considered to be the location of the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, where David built an altar to the Lord (2 Samuel 24:18). It is also on or very near the site that Herod's Temple stood before it was destroyed in AD 70 by the Roman army. Some even believe the rock might have been the location of the Holy of Holies that was a part of the Jewish Temple where the Jewish High Priest would enter once a year to make atonement for Israel's sins.**

---

## QUESTION - [What is a threshing floor?](#)

**ANSWER** - There are dozens of references to a “threshing floor” in the Bible, some literal and some symbolic. In biblical days there was no machinery, so after the harvest, the grain was separated from the straw and husks by beating it manually. First there had to be a flat surface that was smooth and hard, and this was known as the threshing floor. The process of threshing was performed generally by spreading the sheaves on the threshing floor and causing oxen and cattle to tread repeatedly over them, loosening the edible part of cereal grain (or other crop) from the scaly, inedible [chaff](#) that surrounds it (Deuteronomy 25:4; Isaiah 28:28). On occasion, flails or sticks were used for this purpose (Ruth 2:17; Isaiah 28:27). Then winnowing forks were used to throw the mixture into the air so the wind could blow away the chaff, leaving only the good grain on the floor.

Both the Old and New Testaments refer to the threshing floor as a symbol of judgment. Hosea prophesied that, because Israel has repeatedly turned from God to false idols, His judgment upon them would scatter them to the winds as the chaff from the threshing floor. “Therefore they will be like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears, like chaff swirling from a threshing floor, like smoke escaping through a window” (Hosea 13:3). Jeremiah pronounces a similar fate on the Babylonians who persecuted Israel, likening their fate to the trampled sheaves on the threshing floor (Jeremiah 51:33).

John the Baptist uses the imagery of the threshing floor to describe the coming Messiah who would separate the true believers from the false. The true followers of Christ will be gathered into the kingdom of God just as grain is gathered into barns, while those who reject Christ will be burned up “with unquenchable fire,” just as the worthless chaff is burned (Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17). The wicked are often described as chaff that the wind drives away (Psalm 1:4; Isaiah 17:13). Similar imagery of the good grain being separated from the worthless weeds appears in the [parable of the wheat and the tares](#) (Matthew 13:36–43). [GotQuestions.org](#)

### 2 Samuel 24:19 David went up according to the word of Gad, just as the LORD had commanded.

- **as the LORD had commanded:** Ge 6:22 1Ch 21:19 2Ch 20:20 36:16 Ne 9:26 Heb 11:8
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 21:19+ So David went up at the word of Gad, which he spoke in the name of the LORD.

### DAVID OBEYS GOD'S COMMAND THROUGH GAD

**David went up according to the word of Gad, just as the LORD had commanded** Note this is an excellent definition of a prophet, as one who speaks just as **the LORD had commanded**, nothing added or deleted.

### 2 Samuel 24:20 Araunah looked down and saw the king and his servants crossing over toward him; and Araunah went out and bowed his face to the ground before the king.

- **bowed:** 2Sa 9:8 Ge 18:2 Ru 2:10 1Ch 21:20,21
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 21:20+ Now Ornan turned back and saw the angel, and his four sons who were with him hid themselves. And Ornan was threshing wheat. 21 As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out from the threshing floor and prostrated himself before David with his face to the ground.

### ARAUNAH PROSTRATES HIMSELF BEFORE DAVID

(1Ch 21:20 Now Ornan turned back and saw the angel, and his four sons who were with him hid themselves. And Ornan was threshing wheat.) **Araunah looked down and saw the king and his servants crossing over toward him and Araunah went out and bowed his face to the ground before the king** - Note that 1Ch 21:20 says first Araunah (Ornan) "saw the angel," and then he

saw King David.

**2 Samuel 24:21** Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be held back from the people."

- **Why has my lord the king come:** 2Sa 24:3,18
- **To buy:** Ge 23:8-16 1Ch 21:22 Jer 32:6-14
- **the plague:** 2Sa 21:3-14 Nu 16:47-50 25:8 Ps 106:30
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 21:22+ Then David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of this threshing floor, that I may build on it an altar to the LORD; for the full price you shall give it to me, that the plague may be restrained from the people."

### DAVID SEEKS TO BUILD ALTAR TO CURTAIL PLAGUE

**Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"** - David commands respect of Araunah.

**And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to (purpose clause) build an altar to the LORD, that (purpose clause) the plague may be held back from the people-** The purpose of David's purchase was (1) to build an altar and (2) to abort the plague. As the context shows it was not just the act of building an altar, but it was the offering that would be made on the altar.

---

#### QUESTION - [What is the significance of Mount Moriah in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Mount Moriah in Old City Jerusalem is the site of numerous biblical acts of faith. It is also one of the most valuable pieces of real estate and one of the most hotly contested pieces of real estate on earth. This is a profoundly sacred area to Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Sitting atop Mount Moriah today is the Temple Mount, a 37-acre tract of land where the Jewish temple once stood. Several important Islamic holy sites are there now, including the Dome of the Rock – a Muslim shrine built thirteen hundred years ago – and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Mount Moriah's history begins in Genesis. In the twenty-second chapter, God commands Abraham, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you" (Genesis 22:2). The place God led Abraham was Mount Moriah. Abraham didn't fully understand what God was asking him to do in light of God's previous promise to establish an everlasting covenant with Isaac (Genesis 17:19); nonetheless, he trusted God and by faith offered Isaac as a sacrifice. Of course, God intervened and spared Isaac's life by providing a ram instead. Abraham thereafter called this place "The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, 'On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided'" (Genesis 22:14). Because of Abraham's obedience on Mount Moriah, God told Abraham that his "descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed because you have obeyed me" (vv. 17, 18).

**About a thousand years later at this very location, King David bought the threshing floor of [Araunah the Jebusite](#) and built an altar to the Lord so that a "plague may be held back from the people" (2 Samuel 24:18, 21). After David's death, his son King Solomon built a glorious temple on the same site. Solomon's temple lasted for over four hundred years until it was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar's armies in 587/586 B.C.**

Seventy years later the temple was rebuilt on the same site by the Jews who returned to Jerusalem following their Babylon captivity. Around the first century, King Herod made a significant addition to this structure, which then became known as Herod's Temple. It was this temple that Jesus cleansed (John 2:15).

However, in A.D. 70, the Roman armies led by Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian, once again destroyed the temple. All that remains of the Temple Mount of that era is a portion of a retaining wall known as the "Western Wall" or the "Wailing Wall." It has been a destination for pilgrims and a site of prayer for Jews for many centuries.

The God who first called Abraham to Mount Moriah still has plans for that place. The Bible indicates that a third temple will be built on or near the site of Solomon's temple (Daniel 9:27). This would seem to present a problem given the political obstacles that stand



in the way: the religious activities on the Temple Mount are currently controlled by the Supreme Muslim Council (the Waqf). Yet nothing can put a wrinkle in God's sovereign plans. Thus, Muslim control of this area simply fulfills the prophecy of Luke 21:24 that "Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

**2 Samuel 24:22 Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what is good in his sight. Look, the oxen for the burnt offering, the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood.**

- **Let my lord:** Ge 23:11 1Ch 21:23
- **be oxen:** 1Sa 6:14 1Ki 19:21
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passage:**

1 Chronicles 21:23+ Ornan said to David, "Take it for yourself; and let my lord the king do what is good in his sight. See, I will give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for wood and the wheat for the grain offering; I will give it all."

### **ARAUNAH SEEKS TO GIVE LAND TO DAVID**

**Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what is good in his sight. Look, the oxen for the burnt offering, the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood - Araunah generously offers the land and everything necessary for the sacrifice.**

**2 Samuel 24:23 "Everything, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you."**

NET 2 Samuel 24:23 I, the servant of my lord the king, give it all to the king!" Araunah also told the king, "May the LORD your God show you favor!"

CSB 2 Samuel 24:23 My king, Araunah gives everything here to the king." Then he said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you."

ESV 2 Samuel 24:23 All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you."

NIV 2 Samuel 24:23 O king, Araunah gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the LORD your God accept you."

NLT 2 Samuel 24:23 I will give it all to you, Your Majesty, and may the LORD your God accept your sacrifice."

NRS 2 Samuel 24:23 All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God respond favorably to you."

NJB 2 Samuel 24:23 My lord the king's servant will give the king everything. And', Araunah said to the king, 'may Yahweh your God accept what you offer!'

NAB 2 Samuel 24:23 All this does Araunah give to the king." Araunah then said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept your offering."

- **king:** Ps 45:16 Isa 32:8
- **May the LORD:** Job 42:8,9 Ps 20:3,4 Isa 60:7 Eze 20:40,41 Ho 8:13 Ro 15:30,31 1Ti 2:1,2 1Pe 2:5
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **ARAUNAH PRAYS FOR THE OFFERING**

**Everything, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you-** This

latter statement is like a prayer - May the LORD your God accept your offering.

**2 Samuel 24:24** However, the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

- **No:** Ge 23:13 1Ch 21:24 Mal 1:12-14 Ro 12:17
- **So David:** 1Ch 21:25 22:1
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 21:24+ But 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, or offer a burnt offering which costs me nothing." 25 So David gave Ornan 600 shekels of gold by weight for the site. 26 Then David built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And he called to the LORD and He answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering. 27 The LORD commanded the angel, and he put his sword back in its sheath. 28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he offered sacrifice there. 29 For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were in the high place at Gibeon at that time. 30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was terrified by the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Map of Jerusalem in 1925,  
showing the location of Mount Moriah  
(Black octagonal = Dome of the Rock)

## DAVID INSISTS ON PURCHASING OF ARAUNAH'S FIELD & OXEN

However, the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings (['olah](#); Lxx - [holokautoma](#)) to the LORD my God which cost me nothing." - David wants to buy it so that it "cost" him something to offer sacrifices to God. Notice this implies he purchased the supplies (oxen, etc) from Araunah which he would use for the burnt offering. Remember the burnt offering was one that consumed everything in the offering.

**So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver**- This is about 1 pound of silver (~275 dollars). 1Ch 21:25 has a different payment amount - "So David gave Ornan 600 shekels of gold by weight (about 15 pounds ~ \$350K in 2023) for the site." See [Archer's explanation](#) below.

---

**Burnt offering** (05930) **'olah** from **'alah** = to ascend and thus the picture of **going up** in smoke) means to "ascend," literally to "go up in smoke" and refers to a whole burnt offering (one which **goes up** in smoke), which was voluntary, was understood as a sacrificial gift to God, resulting in a pleasing aroma acceptable to Jehovah (Lev 1:9). The presenter laid hands on the sacrifice which many feel signifies they saw the animal sacrifice as their substitute. The blood was sprinkled on the altar (Lev 1:6) When this offering was properly carried out (including a right heart attitude not just a "going through the motions," [which was not pleasing to God - Jer 6:20, Jer 7:21, 23, 24, see David - Ps 51:16-17+] not just an external "work," but an internal submission and obedience to Jehovah), they made atonement and were acceptable before Jehovah. The total burning indicated (or should have indicated) total consecration of the presenter's heart and soul and life to Jehovah.

As noted a key feature of **'olah** appears to be that among the Israelite sacrifices only **'olah** is **wholly burned**, rather than partially burned and eaten by the worshipers and/or the priest. Thus, the whole animal is brought up to the altar and the whole is offered as a gift (minha) in homage to Yahweh. Whole offering would be a better rendering in English to convey the theology. It is indeed burned, but the burning is essentially secondary to the giving of the whole creature to Yahweh.

**Burnt Offering** - **'olah** , "what ascends" in smoke to God, being wholly consumed to ashes. Part of every offering was burnt in the sacred fire, the symbol of God's presence; but this was wholly burnt, as a "whole burnt offering." ([Fausset's Bible Dictionary](#))

**Easton on Burnt Offering** - It was the most frequent form of sacrifice, and apparently the only one mentioned in the book of Genesis. Such were the sacrifices offered by Abel (Ge 4:3,4 , here called Minnah; i.e., "a gift"), Noah (Ge 8:20), Abraham (Ge 22:2,7,8,13 ), and by the Hebrews in Egypt (Ex 10:25). The law of Moses afterwards prescribed the occasions and the manner in

which burnt sacrifices were to be offered. There were "the continual burnt offering" (Ex 29:38-42; Lev 6:9-13), "the burnt offering of every sabbath," which was double the daily one (Nu 28:9,10), "the burnt offering of every month" (Nu 28:11-15), the offerings at the Passover (Nu 19-23), at Pentecost (Leviticus 23:16), the feast of Trumpets (Nu 23:23-25), and on the day of Atonement (Lev 16:1-34). ([Easton's Bible Dictionary](#))

**Burnt Offering** (Word Study on the Greek Word) ([3646](#))([holokautoma](#) from the verb [holokautóo](#) = to burn whole). This word is used only 3x in the NT (Mk 12:33, Heb 10:6-[note](#), Heb 10:8-[note](#)) **Holokautoma** refers to a wholly-consumed sacrifice, whole burnt offering, whole victim burned. **Holokautoma** gives us our English word "**holocaust**" (Webster says holocaust is derived from Gk holokauston, from neuter of holokaustos = burnt whole, from hol- = whole + kaustos = burnt). It is a whole burnt offering for the whole victim was burned. **BDAG** summary of **holokautoma** = (1) a cultic sacrifice in which the animal was entirely consumed by fire - whole burnt offering, literally **holocaust** (See [Jewish Holocaust](#)) (2) a person punished with death by fire because of personal conviction, whole burnt offering, holocaust figurative extension of (1) - used of [Polycarp \(who was martyred by burning at the stake\)](#)

---

#### **QUESTION - [What is a burnt offering?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The burnt offering is one of the oldest and most common offerings in history. It's entirely possible that Abel's offering in Genesis 4:4 was a burnt offering, although the first recorded instance is in Genesis 8:20 when Noah offers burnt offerings after the flood. God ordered Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, in a burnt offering in Genesis 22, and then provided a ram as a replacement. After suffering through nine of the ten plagues, Pharaoh decided to let the people go from bondage in Egypt, but his refusal to allow the Israelites to take their livestock with them in order to offer burnt offerings brought about the final plague that led to the Israelites' delivery (Exodus 10:24-29).

The Hebrew word for "burnt offering" actually means to "ascend," literally to "go up in smoke." The smoke from the sacrifice ascended to God, "a soothing aroma to the LORD" (Leviticus 1:9). Technically, any offering burned over an altar was a burnt offering, but in more specific terms, a burnt offering was the complete destruction of the animal (except for the hide) in an effort to renew the relationship between Holy God and sinful man. With the development of the law, God gave the Israelites specific instructions as to the types of burnt offerings and what they symbolized.

Leviticus 1 and Lev 6:8-13 describe the traditional burnt offering. The Israelites brought a bull, sheep, or goat, a male with no defect, and killed it at the entrance to the tabernacle. The animal's blood was drained, and the priest sprinkled blood around the altar. The animal was skinned and cut it into pieces, the intestines and legs washed, and the priest burned the pieces over the altar all night. The priest received the skin as a fee for his help. A turtledove or pigeon could also be sacrificed, although they weren't skinned.

A person could give a burnt offering at any time. It was a sacrifice of general atonement—an acknowledgement of the sin nature and a request for renewed relationship with God. God also set times for the priests to give a burnt offering for the benefit of the Israelites as a whole, although the animals required for each sacrifice varied:

- Every morning and evening (Exodus 29:38-42; Numbers 28:2)
- Each Sabbath (Numbers 28:9-10)
- The beginning of each month (Numbers 28:11)
- At Passover (Numbers 28:19)
- With the new grain/firstfruits offering at the Feast of Weeks (Numbers 28:27)
- At the Feast of Trumpets/Rosh Hashanah (Numbers 29:1)
- At the new moon (Numbers 29:6)

The ultimate fulfillment of the burnt offering is in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. His physical life was completely consumed, He ascended to God, and His covering (that is, His garment) was distributed to those who officiated over His sacrifice (Matthew 27:35). But most importantly, His sacrifice, once for all time, atoned for our sins and restored our relationship with God. [GotQuestions.org](#)

---

**Gleason Archer - page 194 in [New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#) - In 2 Samuel 24:24 it says that David "bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver." But in 1 Chronicles 21:25 it says David gave to Ornan for the place "600 shekels of gold by weight." How are these two statements to be reconciled?**

The record in 2 Samuel 24:24 refers to the immediate purchase price paid by King David to Araunah (or "Ornan," as his name was alternatively spelled) for the two oxen and the wooden threshing cart being used by the Jebusite owner at the time David came up to see him. David's exact words in v.21 are as follows: "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD" (NASB). A threshing floor is generally an area of modest dimensions, not usually broader than thirty or forty feet. The market price for the two oxen and the cart would scarcely exceed the sum of fifty shekels of silver under the market values then prevailing.

In 1 Chronicles 21:25, however, we are told that David paid the much larger price of **six hundred shekels of gold**, which was possibly 180 times as much as fifty shekels of silver. But the Chronicles figure seems to include not merely the oxen and the threshing sledge but also the entire site. The Hebrew *wayyittén ... bammāqôm* ("**And he gave for the place**") seems to be far more inclusive than the mere threshing floor. Neither in the fifth century B.C., nor in any other period in ancient history, would a threshing floor have cost anything like six hundred gold shekels. **Consequently we may safely conclude that Ornan possessed the entire area of Mount Moriah.**

About sixteen hundred feet long and on a commanding elevation, Mount Moriah was an extremely valuable piece of real estate, easily worth six hundred shekels of gold. The advisability of acquiring enough square footage for a temple site must have commended itself to King David, as he viewed the area of the threshing floor and realized how advantageous it would be to have the entire hilltop set apart for religious and governmental purposes. It was probably a somewhat later transaction with Ornan when David paid him the much larger price for the whole tract, and the Chronicler saw fit to record this entire transaction from the standpoint of its end result.

---

**Norman Geisler - borrow [When critics ask : a popular handbook on Bible difficulties](#) - 2 SAMUEL 24:24—Why does this passage say that David paid Araunah 50 shekels of silver when elsewhere it says he paid 600 shekels of gold?**

**PROBLEM:** When David offered to buy the oxen and the threshing floor for a sacrifice and altar to the Lord, 2 Samuel states that he paid for them with 50 pieces of silver. However, according to 1 Chronicles 21:25, David gave Araunah 600 shekels of gold. Which is the correct record?

**SOLUTION:** Both accounts are correct. The passage in 2 Samuel 24 records David's purchase of the oxen and the threshing floor. The passage in 1 Chronicles 21 states that David paid 600 shekels of gold "for the place" (1Ch 21:25). The Hebrew phrase that is translated "the place" includes more than just the oxen and the threshing floor. Araunah must have possessed a large portion of land on Mount Moriah which would prove valuable to David in the future.

---

**2 Samuel 24:25 David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. Thus the LORD was moved by prayer for the land, and the plague was held back from Israel.**

- **built there:** Ge 8:20 22:9 1Sa 7:9,17
- **Thus the LORD:** 2Sa 24:14 21:14 1Ch 21:26-27 La 3:32,33
- 2 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **PLAGUE STAYED BY PRAYER AND OFFERINGS**

**David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings**- David followed Gad's instructions to the letter.

**Thus the LORD was moved by prayer for the land, and the plague was held back from Israel**- The wrath of Yahweh in the form of the plague is lifted as Yahweh is propitiated. While it was too late to save the 70,000 who had lost their lives to the pestilence, it was not too late to spare the City of David and that is exactly what David's intercession and offering accomplished. As an aside is this God the Father speaking to God the Son, the Angel of God? I personally think it is in light of the other uses of angel in this section. But I would not be dogmatic.

---

**Peace offerings** (08002) [selem/shelem](#) is a noun which means fellowship offerings, thanksgiving offerings and all uses (except Amos 5:22) are in the plural form (**selamim**). The root Hebrew word conveys the idea of completion and fulfillment, of entering into a state of wholeness and unity, a restored relationship. The peace offerings were voluntary offerings (like burnt and grain offerings) given to God with thanks and praise.

**Carr** - Current understanding of the meaning of **šelem** follows three main lines of thought. First, **šelem** symbolizes the gift of **shalom**, i.e. the blessing of wholeness, prosperity, and the status of being at peace with God. This involves more than forgiveness of sin, in that fullness of life, prosperity, and peace with men is the expected result of **shalom** status. A second alternative is identified by de Vaux as "communion sacrifice," i.e. one in which there is a sharing of the sacrificial animal and the resultant fellowship around a meal. The **šēlāmîm**, then, were social occasions "**before**" (Hebrew = panim = face) the Lord never "**with**" the

Lord (Dt 12:7, 18; 14:23, 26; 15:20). There is no sense of attaining mystical union with God through these sacrifices. Rather there is a sense of joyful sharing because of God's presence. Note too, that a quarter of the animal is shared with the priest (Lev 7:32). Thirdly, the fact that the **šelem** usually comes last in the lists of the offerings (though not in the description of Lev 1–5), has prompted some scholars to argue that this is a "concluding sacrifice." This derives šelem from the rare Piel meaning "to complete." If this sense is correct, the NT references to Christ our Peace (e.g. Eph 2:14) become more meaningful, as he is the final sacrifice for us (cf. Heb 9:27; Heb 10:12)." ([TWOT](#))