

2 Samuel 23-24

Good evening and thank you so much for joining us. Would you please turn in your bibles to 2 Samuel chapter 23 please? We're going to study both chapters 23-24 and we'll finish the book of 2nd Samuel tonight and begin 1st Kings next Wednesday.

Tonights verses start out as the last words of David as recorded in the book of 2 Samuel. And in a pretty shocking way, 2nd Samuel ends with a familiar pattern of sin and repentance from David.

The title of tonight's message is Tribulation and triumphs
Let's pray

1 Now these are the last words of David.

Thus says David the son of Jesse;
Thus says the man raised up on high,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel: Look how God's word described David!

2 "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me,
And His word was on my tongue. It's always better to speak what the Lord has for us than our own ideas isn't it?

3 The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spoke to me:
'He who rules over men must be just,
Ruling in the fear of God.

Verse 3 is a great verse for anyone in leadership. Anyone who rules over people should do it in justice and the fear of God. What a different country we would be in the United States today if our leaders were each just, and ruling in the fear of God.

4 And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises,
A morning without clouds,
Like the tender grass springing out of the earth,
By clear shining after rain.' In other words, a ruler's vision and judgments will be clear if they rule in the fear of God. His dealings won't be murky.

Now David recognizes that's how a leader is supposed to rule, look at his confession in verse 5...

5 "Although my house is not so with God,
Yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all things and secure.
For this is all my salvation and all my desire;
Will He not make it increase? David looked at the complete blessedness of a just ruler's reign and he knew that his reign fell short.

But David recognizes the covenant God made with Him was based on God's faithfulness and not his own.

2 Timothy 2:13 If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He cannot deny Himself.

6 But the sons of rebellion shall all be as thorns thrust away,
Because they cannot be taken with hands.

7 But the man who touches them
Must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear,
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place.” David
spent his whole life battling adversaries didn't he? And at the end
of his life, David's conclusion is that the Lord will bring about
victory, because our God is undefeated!

Now starting in verse 8 through the rest of chapter 23 it describes
the brief resume's of David's Mighty Men.

8-10

8 These are the names of the mighty men whom David had:
Josheb-Basshebeth^[fn] the Tachmonite, chief among the
captains.^[fn] He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had
killed eight hundred men at one time. 9 And after him was Eleazar
the son of Dodo,^[fn] the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with
David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there
for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. 10 He arose and
attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand
stuck to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that
day; and the people returned after him only to plunder. Eleazar
was so tenacious in battle his hand froze to the grip of his sword.
He couldn't pry his fingers off the handle. What a picture for us!
We need to remember our chief weapon in the spiritual battle
against Satan, sin, and this world - is the sword of the Spirit,
which is the Word of God.

I pray it could also be said of us that our hand stuck to the sword,
even when we're weary.

11 And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentils. So the people fled from the Philistines. 12 But he stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory. When others fled, Shammah held the ground single-handedly until the LORD brought about a great victory. It's a common thread that we're seeing here-these men showed bravery while those around them fled.

13-15

13 Then three of the thirty chief men went down at harvest time and came to David at the cave of Adullam. And the troop of Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. 14 David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. 15 And David said with longing, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" At that time David was a fugitive on the run from Saul . He's held up at the cave of Adullam. He's reminiscing about better times, and remembers the sweet water drawn from the well of Bethlehem.

And look what these 3 mighty men do for David...

16 So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD. 17 And he said, "Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this! Is this not the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it.

These things were done by the three mighty men.

As a statement of love and loyalty to their leader - Adino, Eleazar, and Shammah go to Bethlehem, and bravely slip behind enemy lines. They dip their canteens into this well and fill their water bottles just for David.

When they return with the water David had been craving, he's stunned. He can't believe such a lavish display of devotion and dedication would be shown to him.

David declares he's not worthy to gulp down water won by such sacrifice, so he poured out the water as an offering to the Lord – or a liquid sacrifice. Why? Because only the Lord deserved that kind of unflinching loyalty and sacrificial love.

I love this story because it proves a vital point - real love is lavish. Love is much more than just words, love even goes to extravagant lengths to express itself.

Verses 18-23 describe two more notable men among the mighty men.

18 Now Abishai the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruah, was chief of another three.[fn] He lifted his spear against three hundred men, killed them, and won a name among these three. 19 Was he not the most honored of three? Therefore he became their captain. However, he did not attain to the first three.

20 Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in

the midst of a pit on a snowy day. This man, Benaiah killed a lion. But not only killed a lion, he did it in the middle of a pit, and on a snowy day. Think about it-it's cold, it's slippery, and he slays this lion.

This is convicting cuz I don't even like to check my mail when it's a little cold out, let alone face a lion!

21-34

21 And he killed an Egyptian, a spectacular man. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand; so he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. 22 These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among three mighty men. 23 He was more honored than the thirty, but he did not attain to the first three. And David appointed him over his guard.

24 Asahel the brother of Joab was one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, 25 Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the Harodite, 26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, 27 Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, 28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, 29 Heleb the son of Baanah (the Netophathite), Ittai the son of Ribai from Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, 30 Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai from the brooks of Gaash, 31 Abi-Albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, 32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite (of the sons of Jashen), Jonathan, 33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite, 34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, EIAM the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, Ahithophel was Absalom's chief counselor, but his son EIAM was one of David's mighty men.

35 Hezrai[fn] the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, 36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, 37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite (armorbearer of Joab the son of Zeruah), 38 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, 39 and Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all. Of course we know what happened with Uriah...Even more shocking David had him murdered when we learn he was 1 of David's mighty men!

The book of 2 Samuel ends with another failing of David.

1 Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah." Ancient kings liked to use the size of their kingdom as a reason to boast. Now, there's nothing wrong with a census per se'... In Numbers 1 and 24 Moses counted the people of Israel. In the New Testament we know 3000 people were saved at Pentecost. Someone had to count them. Counting in and of itself is not evil.

This census was a big deal because of what God told Moses back in Exodus 30:12: When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them.

The principle of Exodus 30 speaks to God's ownership of His people. Israel didn't belong to David; Israel belonged to God. It was up to the LORD to command a counting, and if David counted he should only do it at God's command.

What we'll see later in this chapter that made this census so wrong was David's haughty attitude. Counting implies ownership - and it should always be done cautiously - only for a legitimate purpose.

But there is something more to this story that we're not told all of the details of. Look at verse 1 again, HIS ANGER KINDLED AGAINST ISRAEL, not David. Keep this in mind as this all plays out. We don't know why God's anger was aroused against Israel, all sorts of theories, we don't know for sure...

Now there's a potential problem here with verse 1, because you see the "He" in this sentence applies to God, because it's capitalized. Yet **1 Chronicles 21:1 Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.**

So which is it? Was it God, or Satan? Well it would appear that God opened the door, and allowed Satan to move in and tempt David, as a result of God's anger with Israel.

2-3

2 So the king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, "Now go throughout all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and count the people, that I may know the number of the people."

3 And Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times more than there are, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king desire this thing?" Joab's concerned with David's motivation for this census. Perhaps Joab sensed that pride was David's motivation and Joab reluctantly obeyed.

4 Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the army. Therefore Joab and the captains of the army went out from the presence of the king to count the people of Israel. It wasn't only Joab who tried to tell David not to do this — the captains of the army also warned David not to count the people in Israel. But David goes full steam ahead anyway. 5-8

5 And they crossed over the Jordan and camped in Aroer, on the right side of the town which is in the midst of the ravine of Gad, and toward Jazer. 6 Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim Hodshi; they came to Dan Jaan and around to Sidon; 7 and they came to the stronghold of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and the Canaanites. Then they went out to South Judah as far as Beersheba. 8 So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. That's how long it took to do the census.

9 Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to the king. And there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men. The number of men Moses counted when he led Israel out of Egypt was 603,550. Now, 600 years later the number has swelled to 1.3 million - the population had more than doubled. With women and children... maybe 4 million...

Imagine David's elation when he hears the news. He's king of a country with several million people!

Remember at one time David wrote these words...

Ps 20:7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses;
But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

Yet in the far recesses of his heart, something stirs him.

10 And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, I pray, O LORD, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly." David knew in his heart his motive had been wrong. He had 9 months and 20 days to think of it. Does he daydream of what the number will be? Once he gets the number, does he sit around and ponder the number?

Here in verse 10 he confesses his sin, says I've sinned greatly. Shockingly, David didn't say 'greatly' with Bathsheba. He didn't say very foolishly with Bathsheba which we would think was his greatest sin.

This is conviction, not condemnation. The difference between conviction and condemnation is their origin. The bible tells us condemnation comes from the devil. Conviction comes from the HS. Both feel lousy.

Here's how you tell the difference between conviction and condemnation and it's critically important. Condemnation drives us away from Christ, yet conviction from the HS drives us to Christ.

If we sin and our heart is smiting us and it's causing us to repent and get right with the Lord, that's good. If that bad feeling is causing you to say 'why should I even try, I keep blowing it, I should know better, I'm gonna throw in the towel-that's the enemy.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,[fn] who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

11-13

11 Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, 12 "Go and tell David, 'Thus says the LORD: "I offer you three things; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do it to you." ' "

13 So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, "Shall seven[fn] years of famine come to you in your land? Or shall you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' plague in your land? Now consider and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me."

So God was angry at Israel, and used David's sin as the method for punishing them. And now God gives David the choice of 3 different punishments.

1st option was seven years of famine: This would surely be the death of some in Israel, but the wealthy and resourceful would survive. Israel would have to depend on neighboring nations for food. David and his family would've been fine.

2nd option was to flee three months before their enemies: This means there would be bloody battles, and soldiers and

perhaps families would perish. They would have to fight and contend with enemies among their neighbors. David and his family would once again be fine since he had a mighty army to fight

The 3rd and final option was three days' plague in the land: Here, David and his whole household could be affected in ways the other 2 judgments wouldn't have!

David may've thought... Famine? Been there, done that for 3 years. On the run from my enemies? Wo, been there, done that... for 15 years. Had enough of that... Three days of plague – Well, it's the only option I haven't already tried.

Now in **deuteronomy 28:15 But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:** and it lists each of these things. Again not against individuals, but the nation. There's more to the story here of what Israel did, something it's when they went with Absalom, but again we can't say for sure.

14 And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man."David chooses the plague.

15 So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel from the morning till the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of the people died. 16 And when the angel^[fn] stretched out His hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from

the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "It is enough; now restrain your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah[fn] the Jebusite. This is shocking, but even more shocking is verse 17

17 Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, Pause here. When we think of David, we think of many things. What was he like when he saw Goliath? What was it like when he rescued his sheep from the lion and the bear. What was it like when he saw his son betray him, or when saul threw spears at him. But this-this is different. His sin caused this!! Imagine the horror!

...17 and said, "Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house." Again go back to verse 1. God was angry at Israel...

Here we see the man after God's own heart. The shepherds heart-calling his people the sheep, willing to take on their punishment.

18 And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." 19 So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. 2 Chronicles 3 tells us that the threshing floor of Araunah was on Mount Moriah. And why is mount Moriah important? That was the hill where Abraham offered Isaac (Genesis 22:2), and the same set of hills where Jesus died on the cross.

20 Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground.

21 Then Araunah said, “Why has my lord the king come to his servant?”

And David said, “To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people.” David wanted to transform this place where chaff was separated from wheat into a place of sacrifice and worship.

22 Now Araunah said to David, “Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever seems good to him. Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood. 23 All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king.”

And Araunah said to the king, “May the LORD your God accept you.” Araunah is like yeah i want the plague to stop too-just take the land and all the supplies free of charge!

24 Then the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. Araunah offers to donate the plot of ground to the king – and even animals needed for sacrifice - but David refuses to offer a cheap sacrifice... As he puts it, “that which costs me nothing.”

I wonder how often we've served the Lord with our scraps and leftovers - rather than reserving for Him our best, and most costly... We give Him leftovers of our time, our money, our energy.

25 And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel. Remember this plot of land. It was on the mountain just north of the city of David - outside the walls of Jerusalem - on Mount Moriah. This was near the spot Abraham had offered Isaac as a sacrifice – and it will become the location on which God chooses to build His Temple in Jerusalem.

David paid just 50 shekels for Araunah's threshing floor. I'm sure he didn't realize the land he'd bought would one day become the planet's most expensive piece of real estate. This is where Solomon constructs the Temple – where God's glory resides for the next 500 years. It becomes the focus of heaven and earth. Even today Araunah's threshing floor is Jerusalem's centerpiece. We call it the Temple Mount. One day Jesus will rule the universe from this exact spot.

J. Oswald Sanders in his wonderful book *Spiritual Leadership* said "No one need aspire to leadership in the work of God who is not prepared to pay a price greater than his contemporaries and colleagues are willing to pay. True leadership always exacts a heavy toll on the whole man, and the more effective the leadership is, the higher the price to be paid.