

## **Lecture #14A – Exposition of II Samuel 22 – I Samuel 24**

### **Chapter 22 – David’s Song of Thanksgiving**

#### **vs. 1-51 – David’s Song**

This chapter is essentially identical in content to Psalm 18. The differences between the two are almost all minor wording changes that practically never affect the meaning of the phrases.

The appearance of this Psalm does not appear to be chronological. Reese places the writing of this Psalm to when David sought refuge in Gath in I Samuel 27:2-4.<sup>1</sup> Spurgeon writes that the two appearances of this Psalm “suggests the idea that it was sung by David at different times when he reviewed his own remarkable history, and observed the gracious hand of God in it all.”<sup>2</sup>

Why is this psalm included here? We are coming into the final few years of David’s life and chapters 22 and 23 are largely retrospective. Of all the psalms to include, this one must have had special meaning to David. I think we can assume it was something of a “theme song” to his life, written in his youth while running from Saul and repeated many times over the course of his reign.

### **Chapter 23 – David’s Final Words**

#### **vs. 1-7 – David’s Final Psalm**

These “last words” are generally accepted to not be the last words he spoke, but instead the last psalm that he wrote in his final years.<sup>3</sup> This psalm is not found in the book of Psalms.

Gaebelein summarizes:

“The righteous ruler over men, a ruler in the fear of God is our Lord. Thus He will yet rule over the earth in righteousness. And when He comes to rule, there cometh the morning without clouds when the earth will be refreshed, through the clear shining, the brightness of His glory, after the rain; after judgment is passed. Then David confesseth that his house is not so with God. His hope, his salvation, all his delight is in the covenant made with him; it centers in the fulfilment of the Davidic covenant. And the wicked will suffer the fire of His wrath.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Reese Chronological Study Bible, p. 417-420

<sup>2</sup> <https://archive.spurgeon.org/treasury/ps018.php> - accessed 10-7-22

<sup>3</sup> So says Barnes, Clarke, Gill, and Poole.

<sup>4</sup> Annotated Bible by A.C. Gaebelein. E-Sword module.

## vs. 8-39 – David’s Mighty Men

☪ I Chronicles 11:10-47, 14:8-17

There is some confusion as what role the thirty-seven “mighty men” played in David’s army. I think B.H. Carroll describes the military organization under David very well and is likely correct:

“His army roll showed 288,000 men.<sup>5</sup> It would have been a great burden to a small kingdom like this to keep up a standing army of 288,000 men; so he divided his army into twelve great corps. Only one corps would serve a month; in the course of the entire year the 288,000 men would have served each one of them one month. In that way the spirit of military drill and organization was kept up. In case of war he could call out the whole 288,000 and have a vast army of drilled men. So his army organization, we will say, consisted of 288,000 men, twelve army corps of 24,000 each, each corps serving one month in the year, coming on in succession. Each corps was subdivided into, say, twenty-four regiments of 1,000 men each, and each regiment into ten companies of 100 men each, something like the ‘century’ of the Roman Legion, a centurion commanding 100 men. These were the subdivisions of the main army. There was a bodyguard always kept near the king's person. I do not recall that anywhere the number of this bodyguard is given. Sometimes they are called ‘Cherethites’ and ‘Pelethites.’<sup>6</sup> Whatever their name, it was a permanent bodyguard of which Benaiah was the commander.

“Then there was an order of men sometimes compared to the knighthood, the 600; the original organization of this 600 was in the Cave of Adullam, when David was an outlaw, and it was perpetuated all through his life. This 600, every one a hero and champion, was divided into two bands of 300 each. These bands were divided into companies of 100 each, and the one hundreds were divided into twenties. The six captains over the hundreds and the chief captain over all make the famous seven. The captains over the twenties make the famous thirty.<sup>7</sup> Every man of this band of 600 was an experienced warrior and had signalized himself on many eventful occasions, and every one of the thirty and every one of the seven, that is, the thirty-seven officers, were especially famous.

“Let us see if we have this army organization clear: 288,000 divided into twelve corps of 24,000 each; each corps commanded by its own general, with Joab as general-in-chief; each 24,000 serving one month and no more unless there was a war. In addition to that, a bodyguard, the famous 600; the three captains of the first 300 were the most worthy; the three captains of the other 300 were somewhat less worthy. Each 100 was divided into twenties; the captains over the twenties make the thirty worthies; then the six captains over the one hundreds, and a chief captain of the 600 make the thirty-seven worthies. That is David's military organization.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I Chronicles 27:1

<sup>6</sup> II Samuel 8:18, etc.

<sup>7</sup> These thirty added to the previously mentioned seven are the thirty-seven “mighty men”.

<sup>8</sup> [https://sgblibrary.homestead.com/files/BHCarroll/Volume\\_5.htm#xxiv](https://sgblibrary.homestead.com/files/BHCarroll/Volume_5.htm#xxiv) – accessed 10-7-22

## **Chapter 24 – David Numbers the People**

### **vs. 1-9 – Joab Numbers the People**

☪ I Chronicles 24:1-14

Why did this happen? II Samuel 24:1 says the Lord was angry at Israel for an unspecified reason and that He moved David to number the people. I Chronicles 21:1 says it was Satan that stood up against Israel and provoked David to sin. Yet we also cannot discount that David himself did the act of his own freewill. The solution is simple: it is a combination of the three. There was sin in Israel and David that God must address. God allowed Satan to move against David just as He allowed him to move against Job, and David willingly fell to temptation.

What occurs here is a military census. David is attempting to see how many men can be mustered in the day of battle so that the strength of the nation can be measured. Until these days the Israelites simply blew the call to arms and whoever was willing and able gathered for battle. That plan required faith that God would provide the necessary forces for war. But if you knew how many men you could expect or force to muster, then you begin to trust in your army and not in God.

Why was this census a sin? The taking of a census was not in itself sinful, as God commanded two in Numbers 1 and 26. Josephus wrote that it was because David forgot to have the people pay the half-shekel tax associated with taking a census in Exodus 30:11-16,<sup>9</sup> but the sin does appear to be in *how* the numbering took place but rather in that it took place at all. The best explanation is that it was an expression of David's pride and lack of faith in God.

But how does this census show David's pride and unbelief? Pride is easy to picture, since David could very well just want to see how large his kingdom was. I suspect David felt guilty initially but did not fully repent until he witnessed the judgment because he made no effort to pay a personal price (sacrifice) until then.

For unbelief, we may need to consider the broader setting. This may have a connection to the three-year's famine in 21:1<sup>10</sup> and David is trying to show himself strong in a weak time. Since it is a military census, perhaps it is connected to the battles against the Philistines in 21:15 and David is seeking confidence in knowing the size of his own forces. As stated before, before this time when an army was needed the signal was blown and you did not know who would muster.

It must also be noted that this was not something done in a moment of insanity or passion. It took almost *ten months* to complete the task (24:8). Joab even tried to warn David against the plan. This sin was calculated and premeditated.

To summarize: David gave into the weakness of his fallen nature in two areas he has shown to struggle in before: pride and unbelief. While we cannot say exactly the setting or motivation is for the census, his pride and unbelief fueled the decision. He was seeking strength and comfort outside of the Lord,

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<sup>9</sup> [https://biblehub.com/library/josephus/the\\_antiquities\\_of\\_the\\_jews/chapter\\_13\\_that\\_when\\_david.htm#1](https://biblehub.com/library/josephus/the_antiquities_of_the_jews/chapter_13_that_when_david.htm#1) – accessed 10-7-22

<sup>10</sup> In the judgments offered to David, II Samuel 24:13 says 7 years of famine and I Chronicles 21:12 says 3 years. The 7 years could be the total after 3 additional years.

as Carroll observes: “The sin was in the motive which prompted David to number Israel on this occasion.”<sup>11</sup> It was not the census or how it was done is the sin. It is not *what* happened but *why* it happened.

There is a slight difference between the totals given here and in I Chronicles 21. The totals in the two accounts appear to have come from different sources and were not calculated in the same way. For instance, II Samuel excludes the tribe of Benjamin (vs. 6) which might be counted with Judah in I Chronicles 21:6, accounting for the difference of 30,000, or the number could possibly be rounded.<sup>12</sup> Some think II Samuel includes 300,000 additional reservists for Israel.

### vs. 10-14 – David’s Choice of Punishment

I admittedly have a different opinion on this section than most others. I do not think that David truly repents in vs. 10. I think he knows he has sinned and carries a guilty conscience. Yet he does not place himself at God’s mercy, he only asks that his iniquity be removed.

There are echoes in here of when the prophet Nathan confronted David over his sin with Bathsheba. Then and now, David does not seek the prophet, instead the prophet seeks him. Then and now, David makes a choice that affects the judgment he will face. Then and now, it takes judgment to come before he fully turns back to God.

David’s choice of punishment is to subject his nation – his people – to three days of deadly pestilence. Note that all the punishments affect the nation and not just David. David is not the only one that needs correction.

### vs. 15-25 – David Repents

☪ I Chronicles 21:15-25

David finally repents fully after 70,000 people are dead and the judgment is on his doorstep.

David purchases the threshing floor and implements thereof from Araunah (“ark”)<sup>13</sup>. Verse 24 is a tremendous principle: we do not truly offer anything to God except that which costs us something.

That threshing floor was on Mt. Moriah. It will become the future site of the Temple. God is working even in judgment.

🎵 Psalm 31

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<sup>11</sup> An Interpretation of the English Bible: The Hebrew Monarchy, by B.H. Carroll. p. 224

<sup>12</sup> John Gill, for example, gives both of these possibilities. There are too many plausible solutions to suggest a discrepancy.

<sup>13</sup> Smith’s Bible Dictionary