

DAVID NUMBERS ISRAEL

BIBLE TEXT : II Samuel 24:1-25

LESSON 247 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing" (II Samuel 24:24).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

2 Samuel 24:1-25 (KJV)

¹ And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

² For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which *was* with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

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?

⁴ Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel.

⁵ And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that *lieth* in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer:

⁶ Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtimhodshi; and they came to Danjaan, and about to Zidon,

⁷ And came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, *even* to Beersheba.

⁸ So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Tempted to Sin

There came a time, during the days of David, when the Children of Israel had to suffer punishment for a sin which was committed. "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel" (I Chronicles 21:1). David yielded to this temptation. He gave orders that the Children of Israel should be counted that he might know the number. Once before the Children of Israel had been counted, but that time God had given the order (**Exodus 30:11-14** ¹¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ¹² When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when *thou* numberest them. ¹³ This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs;) an half shekel *shall be* the offering of the LORD. ¹⁴ Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD).

David did not give any reason for wanting the people numbered. We do not know if it was because of pride that David wanted to know how many people he ruled. We do not know if David was depending on the number of people rather than trusting in the power of the Lord to fight the battles. Whatever reason there was in David's heart for wanting to know the number of the Children of Israel, it was sin.

Warning

David was warned not to do this thing. David gave the command to Joab, the captain of the host. Joab tried to persuade David not to have this counting done, for there was no need of it. Joab said, "Why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?" Joab tried to check David before the trespass was committed, just as the Spirit of God is faithful to warn us, and just as one's conscience lets him know that which is wrong

David did not take heed to the warning of his faithful friends, Joab and the captains of the host. David sent these men to count the Children of Israel. They went throughout all Israel (**1 Chronicles 21:4** ⁴ Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.), They crossed the Jordan river to the land where Reuben and Gad had settled (**Numbers 32:1-5** ¹ Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place *was* a place for cattle; ² The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying, ³ Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon, ⁴ *Even* the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have

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.

¹⁰ And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

¹¹ For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

¹² Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three *things*; choose thee one of them, that I may *do it* unto thee.

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.

¹⁴ And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies *are* great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

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.

¹⁶ And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the

cattle: ⁵ Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, *and bring us not over Jordan*). They traveled north and to the coast to Dan-jaan, Zidon, and *Tyre* — then south to Beer-sheba and Judah, counting the people as they went.

No Pleasure

For more than nine months, David's men were busy taking a census. The work was not pleasant, because they knew that it was wrong. Finally Joab brought the number to David. We are not told that David was pleased, nor that he was satisfied, nor that the number of people was as large as he had hoped.

No doubt the knowledge of guilt took away any pleasure for David. When one sets his heart to do a certain thing, wanting his own way and stubbornly refusing to heed a warning, God sometimes permits him to have his own way. But never does one find the pleasure and satisfaction that he had expected in doing that thing.

Sin and Repentance

David knew that he had sinned. His own heart condemned him. David prayed and confessed his sin. David said unto the Lord: "I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly." David did the right thing by going to God for forgiveness. If one yields to Satan's temptations, and sins, he loses the blessing of God. Only by repentance can he be restored to God's favor. By confessing and forsaking his sin, and asking for forgiveness, he can receive a pardon from God. It is a good thing to seek God immediately rather than to postpone praying.

Punishment

In the morning, in answer to David's prayer, the Lord sent the Prophet Gad to David. This was the word of the Lord: "I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee." It is most unusual for a person to be given choice of punishment, but God did that for David. There was no easy way out of this. David had sinned and had to suffer the punishment even though he had asked forgiveness.

David had his choice of seven years of famine, three months of defeat in warfare, or three days of pestilence. Any one of these three punishments would cut down the number of the Children of Israel, and perhaps, after all, David would not know the exact number of the Children of Israel. By the sin of this one man, all the Children of Israel would suffer.

Had David chosen the seven years' famine, no doubt he would have been spared because he was wealthy and the people would have rallied to help their king. Had David chosen three months' warfare, it is doubtful that he would have been permitted to go to battle, because the Children of Israel had told David: "Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel" (II Samuel 21:17). In either one of these choices, undoubtedly David's life would have been spared, but many of the people would have died.

A Just God

David made a wise choice when he said: "Let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man." David knew that the ways of the Lord are just and true (**Revelation 15:3** ³ And they sing the song

threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.

¹⁷ And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

¹⁸ And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite.

¹⁹ And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.

²⁰ And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

²¹ And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

²² And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him: behold, *here be* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood.

²³ All these *things* did Araunah, *as* a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.

²⁴ And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

²⁵ And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt

of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.). By choosing the pestilence, David would be subject to death along with the other Israelites. David preferred to put himself in the hands of the Lord, and if God saw fit to permit it, David would be smitten by the pestilence.

The judgment of God was swift. It had taken Joab and his men more than nine months to cover the land in taking the census, but in a few hours the pestilence had swept from Dan to Beer-sheba — from the north to the south of Canaan. The pestilence began that morning, and 70 thousand of the Children of Israel died, in all parts of the land except in Jerusalem. The Lord spared David and all the elders of Israel (**1 Chronicles 21:16** ¹⁶ And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders *of Israel, who were* clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.).

David realized that all those Children of Israel had died because he had sinned. David was sorrowful, and suffered greatly. He said to the Lord: "I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me."

An Altar

The Prophet Gad told David to build an altar unto God in the threshingfloor of Araunah, the Jebusite. David obeyed. He went to Araunah to buy the threshingfloor to build an altar to God. Araunah wanted to give the property to the king. Araunah wanted to furnish the sacrifice and the wood for the offering along with the site. He wanted to give them to the king.

The Full Price

David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen. He said that he would not offer to God that which cost him nothing. David paid the full price. How differently some people act today. They would like to have the blessing of the Gospel but they offer the Lord little in return for eternal life. Spiritual death awaits each one who does not make a proper offering to God — the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart (**Psalms 51:17** ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise). Many people today are not willing to pay "the full price" (**1 Chronicles 21:24** ²⁴ And king David said to Ornan, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take *that* which *is* thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings without cost.). They do not want to give to God the things that are dear to their heart. They do not want to give to God that which costs them something. The blessing of the Lord comes to those who are willing to get rid of their sins and to give God their best — their lives, their time, and their talent.

God accepted David's offering; David was forgiven; and the plague did not take any more lives. God will accept our offerings and answer our prayer when we, like David, tell Him that we will pay the full price, that we will not offer to Him the things that belong to another, that we will not offer the things which cost us nothing. One cannot bargain with God. There are no cut rates and no bargain sales with the Lord. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is worth every consecration we must make and every effort we put forth. The benefits we receive far outnumber our efforts. (**Mark 10:28-30** ²⁸ Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we

offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

have left all, and have followed thee. ²⁹ And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, ³⁰ But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.)

In the Same Place

Many years before this, God had told Abraham to give his son, Isaac, as a burnt offering (**Genesis 22:1-2** ¹ And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here I am.* ² And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.). According to instructions, they went to Moriah, the same land where David now sacrificed on the threshingfloor of Araunah. We remember that God called Abraham as he was about to complete the sacrifice. Everything was in order and ready. Abraham had followed the instructions of the Lord and was about to offer his son. God proved Abraham but did not require him actually to offer his son. Abraham was willing to do what God had asked. In his heart Abraham had obeyed God. The Lord did "provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." In a thicket a ram was caught by his horns. Abraham offered the ram "for a burnt offering In the stead of his son" (Genesis 22:13).

Sometime after this, during the reign of David's son Solomon, the house of the Lord was built in this same place (**2 Chronicles 3:1** ¹ Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where *the LORD* appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.). These three events took place on Mount Moriah.

Spiritual Experiences

These three events are like the spiritual experiences one can receive. Abraham's offering on the mount in Moriah is like salvation. As it was the first altar built there, so salvation is the first step in these spiritual experiences. Our own lives cannot atone for our sins. We must accept God's Sacrifice, the Innocent One who was willing to be a substitute for us. God has provided a Sacrifice — His own Son, whose Blood was shed that our sins might be forgiven.

The altar built on Mount Moriah by David is like sanctification, the second work of grace. This experience comes after salvation, and by it one's life is purged from inbred sin. The third event on the mount in Moriah, the dedication at the time of the building of the Temple, is a type of the baptism of the Holy Ghost which comes after one is saved and sanctified. When the Temple was dedicated to the Lord, there were offerings and sacrifices, along with Solomon's prayer (**2 Chronicles 7:5** ⁵ And king Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep: so the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.). God answered, and a fire from Heaven consumed the sacrifices (**2 Chronicles 7:1** ¹ Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.). The presence of the Lord so filled the place that the priests could not perform their duties.

As we study the Bible, we find that these experiences are

taught in the New Testament and also are typified in the Old Testament. They are not received all at one time but are three separate experiences, like the three different events in the Bible. They are given by God as one prays, consecrating his life to God and making an offering unto the Lord. Have you received all three of these spiritual experiences?

QUESTIONS

- 1 How did David know that he had sinned?
 - 2 From what three things could David choose his punishment?
 - 3 Why did David choose a pestilence?
 - 4 Why did David choose to fall into the hands of God?
 - 5 How many of the Children of Israel died?
 - 6 Who was among those spared?
 - 7 Why did David want Araunah's threshingfloor?
 - 8 How did David get the threshingfloor?
 - 9 Why did David pay for it?
- Tell two other events that happened at this place.