

2 SAMUEL 24:1-16

With everyday seemingly bringing us new , dark, and gloomy news regarding the *Coronavirus pandemic* and the domino effect its having on everyday life and our economy, I asked God last night for a special text that would encourage us and help us see at least some of what is happening now in Scripture and how God responded to it. God led me to 2 Samuel 24. In a nutshell this chapter highlights what happens when someone who claims to be a “saved” leader of a nation – state – city – or the church start feeling proud and begin boasting about *who they are* – or what they have done – or *act like it is “their” military or their economy* that is the reason they are successful without giving God credit. This chapter has a lot of parallels to our present day nation and this pandemic situation we are in. *I believe it also offers what the primary response the Christian must engage in to avoid the full fury of what the Coronavirus pandemic could produce.*

Vs. 1 – The word *“again”* is so key to this text. (Why) *It reflects God is gracious and merciful.* Again means this is not the first time Israel has sinned. And even though David is described by God as a man after His own heart yet, the text says, *“again.”* God’s righteous anger was against Israel and because David was not seeking God in prayer and His will for the people – David is

now *“devil bait.”* Throughout much of Scripture regarding David the phrase *“And David inquired of the Lord”* is attributed to David. But this chapter does not reflect David inquired of the Lord when he instructed this census to be taken. In the *King James Version* the *“he”* in vs. 1 is lower case but in the *New King James Version* the *he* is capitalized. The best way to get a better understanding is to allow Scripture to explain Scripture. *1 Chronicles 21:1* it tells us, *Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.* So the best explanation of who the *“he”* is in vs. 1 is that *Satan prompted or tempted King David* to go number the people and God expressly allowed it to happen as chastisement against David. Just like with Job, God can even use Satan for His ultimate purposes.

Vs. 2-9 – these verses tell us *“without telling us”* why this action will lead to chastisement. (*volunteer read Exodus 30:11-12*). In the near eastern culture *a man only had the right to count or number what belonged to him. Israel didn’t belong to David; Israel belonged to God.* It was up to the Lord to command a counting (census) and if David conducted a census he should only do it at God’s command AND he was to collect a ransom offering (half shekel tax) to “atone” for the counting. And by not doing this, David opened up the chastisement for his egotistic effort – a plague for the people. If you look at the leadership in China where the *Coronavirus plague* originated – they are

outlawing church meetings in many areas – they have stated the supreme authority of China is the Communist government – the Bible does not have authority in China – and then look at America boasting of its military prowess and now even war vessels are reporting Coronavirus victims... The number one thing on God’s list of things He hates is a *proud look (Proverbs 6:16-19)*. Notice in *vs. 3-4* Joab objects to the census – this indicates David had shared the word of God with Joab for he knew that to go number the people for the purpose David is instructing him to do it is wrong – its sinful. But since David was the king, he had the final say so Joab goes off in *vs. 5-9* to conduct the census that takes *9 months* and *20 days* according to *vs. 8*. Joab then gives David the count – Israel the (Northern kingdom) had *800,000* male soldiers and Judah (Southern kingdom) had *500,000*. It’s amazing so late in his reign, David *was tempted* to take *some of the glory of God for himself*. He looked at how Israel had grown and prospered during his reign – it was remarkable indeed. The count was a way to take credit for himself. *(Does anyone know how God feels about His glory being shared? Isaiah 42:8 says, I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images)*. Also, place *Deuteronomy 8:18* in your *mental rolodex* before you boast – it says, *“It is God who gives us the ability to acquire wealth.”*

Vs. 10 – highlights the remedy for sin – and that is the necessity of confession of sin and repentance. The text says, “*David’s heart condemned him*” - the *man after God’s heart was not sinless, but he had a heart sensitive to sin when it was committed*. He then says, “*Take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly*” – (*David is not talking like he did in the 51st Psalm*) - David now saw the pride and vainglory that prompted him to do such a foolish thing. As I pray and fast about our present day conditions, the overwhelming thing God highlights for me to share with His people is “confess and repent of your sins.” God is saying don’t place Him in a box and think you have figured Him out. God is shaking up the world but maybe He is *shaking up the church first* (you do know according to 1 Peter 4:17 judgment begins at the house of God first). Now not all judgment is to kill – or to destroy. The church at large seemingly is more concerned with people coming to the church house than fulfilling the great commission of “going and making” disciples and “casting the net of the Gospel” to the unsaved...God may be saying *come out of our lethargy – come out of our routine* – God may be *stirring up the spiritual gift inside us through this pandemic*. **And when He releases us from the grips of this pandemic we better be ready to worship – praise – go make disciples – cast the net of the Gospel!**

Vs. 11-13 – David is allowed the opportunity to choose His punishment. (*How many of you remember growing up when you got in trouble momma or grandma would say, go outside and get me a switch*)? God used David's sin and the resulting chastisement to reveal David's heart and wisdom. **David's 3 choices really was a test from God to David:**

Door #1 - 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.

Door #2 - *Flee three months before your enemies:* This would be the death of some in Israel, but mostly only of soldiers. Israel would have to contend with enemies among neighboring nations.

Door #3 - *Three days' plague in your land:* This would be the death of some in Israel, but anyone could be struck by this plague – rich or poor, influential or anonymous, royalty or common. *But the plague was totally in God's hand.*

Vs. 14 – based on this text which door or which punishment did David choose? David choose **Door #3** – 3 days plague because in the other two options the people fates would be in the hands of evil man. The plague would place them I God's hand and David knew even in chastisement God can extend grace and mercy. Well, that plague like the present day Coronavirus does not

discriminate by political party – socio-economic status – race – nor age.

David knew that God was far more merciful and gracious than man.

Remember in the book of Jonah – God said He was going to destroy Nineveh – and when Jonah finally fulfilled his mission to go preach to the Ninevites he preached, *“Yet in 40 days Nineveh shall be destroyed.”* But what happened – read Jonah 3:10 says, *“Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.*

Vs. 15 – Here is a great parallel to our present day *Coronavirus pandemic* – vs. 15 says, *“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.* So God allowed only so many to be killed, He did not destroy all of Israel, God may have a set number who will be both affected and killed by the Coronavirus. But that in the text that caused God to relent – to act in accordance to His character of showing great mercy and grace was the fact the leader led by example in confessing and repenting of sin. The one thing missing from our commander in chief in America is his call personally and his call for the nation to confess and repent of sin. That is why the church leaders must lead their congregations to prayer of *Daniel 9:3-19:*

(3) *Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. (4) And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, (5) we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. (6) Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. (7) O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You. (8) “O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. (9) To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. (10) We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. (11) Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. (12) And He has confirmed His words, which He*

spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. (13) “As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. (14) Therefore the Lord has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. (15) And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly! (16) “O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us. (17) Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. (18) O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. (19) O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your

people are called by Your name.” My brothers and sisters this is how we need to be praying during the next 2-3 weeks like never before. The medical experts are saying their models reflect 100K – 240K could die in the next 2-3 weeks. This pandemic is a plague – God, in the Scriptures has responded mercifully and graciously to His people when they engaged in confession of sin, fasting, and repentance. Since He did it before, we know He can do it again. So right “now” is the time for the church to confess and repent of sin and rededicate ourselves to serving God wholeheartedly!

Vs. 16 – this is the good news verse (read it aloud).