

2 SAMUEL 24:17 -- A PRAYER OF DAVID, WHEN BECAUSE OF HIS PRIDE, HE HAD A CENSUS TAKEN OF ISRAEL

2Sa 24:17 Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, 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."

1Ch 21:17 And David said to God, "Was it not I who commanded the people to be numbered? I am the one who has sinned and done evil indeed; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued."

The Biblical Setting:

- What would you consider was David's greatest sin? Murder? Adultery? Here we see the greatest sin, from God's perspective was David's pride.
- We have this account given to us in two places – 2 Samuel chapter 24 and 1 Chronicles chapter 21.
- God was angry with Israel – "Again the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel" (2 Sam. 24:1)
- Satan stood up against Israel – "Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel" (1 Chron. 21:1)
- David's sin was not a hasty thing; he carried it out with cool, calculated precision. He was rebelling against God! Note the contrasts between this sin and his sin with Bathsheba: (1) this was a sin of the spirit (pride) while the other was a sin of the flesh; (2) here he acted with deliberate persistence, while his sin with Bathsheba came as the result of the sudden overwhelming desires of the flesh; (3) this sin involved the nation, and 70,000 people died; his other sin was a family matter, with 4 people dying. (4) Yet in both sins, God gave David time to repent, but he waited too long.
- How many times have you and I taken a census? We didn't really trust God, and we put our faith in something else.
- For example – sufficiency of money for retirement? How much money do I have in investments and property? Will it be enough to last after retirement? Am I trusting in Him or in my own provision?

A Prayer for forgiveness and for God's mercy!

2 Samuel 24:17

Then David spoke to the LORD,.... In prayer; he and the elders of Israel being clothed in sackcloth, and fallen on their faces, he prayed, not unto the angel, but to Jehovah that sent him; see 1Ch 21:16,

when he saw the angel who was striking the people;; in the air over Jerusalem, with a drawn sword in his hand, which made him appear terrible:

and said, "Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly;"; in numbering the people:

but these sheep, what have they done??" he looked upon himself as the only transgressor, and his people as innocent, and as harmless as sheep; he thought of no sins but his own; these were uppermost in his mind, and lay heavy on his conscience; and it grieved him extremely the his people should suffer on his account: but they were not so innocent as he thought and suggests; and it was not only for his, but their sins, this evil came; he was suffered to do what he did, to bring upon them deserved punishment for their

rebellion against him, and other sins; however, this shows the high opinion he had of them, the great affection he had for them, and his sympathy with them in this time of distress:

Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house."; let me and mine die, and not they; a type of Christ, the good Shepherd, willing to lay down His life for the sheep, and suffer in their stead, that they might go free.

SUMMARY: -

Some practical lessons from this chapter:

- **We never outgrow temptation** - David was not an inexperienced youth when he committed this sin! Had he been "watching and praying" he would not have entered into temptation and sin so easily.
- **God graciously gives time to repent** - He gave David more than nine months to deal with his sins and make matters right. "Seek the Lord while He may be found."
- **Sins of the spirit do great damage** - All sin is wicked and should be avoided, to be sure, but we must realize that the Bible repeatedly condemns stubborn pride. Once David got on his evil course, he was too proud to turn around. His predecessor, King Saul, made the same mistake. We may not be guilty of adultery and murder, but a hard heart and a proud look will lead to perhaps greater evils.
- **Our sins involve others** - Seventy thousand people died because David disobeyed the Lord.
- **True confession is a costly thing** - Do we realize the high cost of sinning? A true confession is more than a quick prayer and a quoting of *1Jn 1:9*! True confession involves facing sin honestly and obeying God's Word regardless of the price we must pay.
- **God will forgive and bring blessing** - Let us put ourselves into the hands of the Lord, for great are His mercies toward us!
- **Watch out for pride! The ugliness of pride! It always manifests itself in prayerlessness.** - There is no sin that has in it more of contradiction and therefore more of offence to God than pride. Nor is anything more humbling, and grieving, and mortifying to a gracious soul, than to see itself under God's displeasure.
- **But God is merciful!**

THE LOVE OF GOD! – Phelps, Penrod & Gardner

The love of God is greater far Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell;
The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled, And pardoned from his sin.

Refrain

*O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure The saints' and angels' song.*

When years of time shall pass away, And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,
When men, who here refuse to pray, On rocks and hills and mountains call,
God's love so sure, shall still endure, All measureless and strong;
Redeeming grace to Adam's race— The saints' and angels' song.

Refrain

Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill, And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above, Would drain the ocean dry.
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Though stretched from sky to sky.

Refrain