

David's Census of Israel (c. 973 BC)

2 Samuel 24:1–15

1 Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."
 2 The king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, "Go about now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and register the people, that I may know the number of the people."
 3 But Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king *still* see; but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?"
 4 Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to register the people of Israel.
 5 They crossed the Jordan and camped in Aroer, on the right side of the city that is in the middle of the valley of Gad and toward Jazer.
 6 Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi, and they came to Dan-jaan and around to Sidon,
 7 and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites, and they went out to the south of Judah, to Beersheba.
 8 So when they had gone about through the whole land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.
 9 And Joab gave the number of the registration of the people to the king; and there were in Israel 800,000 valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were 500,000 men.

1 Chronicles 21:1–14

1 Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.
 2 So David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring me *word* that I may know their number."
 3 Joab said, "May the LORD add to His people a hundred times as many as they are!
 But, my lord the king, are they not all my LORD's servants? Why does my lord seek this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt to Israel?"
 [cf. [Exod 30:12](#)]
 4 Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab.
 Therefore, Joab departed and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.
 5 Joab gave the number of the census of *all* the people to David. And all Israel were 1,100,000 men who drew the sword; and Judah *was* 470,000 men who drew the sword.
 6 But he did not number Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's command was abhorrent to Joab.
 7 God was displeased with this thing, so He struck Israel.

10 Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

11 When David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

12 "Go and speak to David, 'Thus the LORD says, "I am offering you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I will do to you.'"

13 So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him,

"Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land?
Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you?
Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land?"

Now consider and see what answer I shall return to Him who sent me."

14 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time, and 70,000 men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.

8 David said to God, "I have sinned greatly, in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

9 The LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying,

10 "Go and speak to David, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "I offer you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I will do to you.'"

11 So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Take for yourself 12 either three years of famine, or three months to be swept away before your foes, while the sword of your enemies overtakes *you*, or else three days of the sword of the LORD, even pestilence in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.'

Now, therefore, consider what answer I shall return to Him who sent me."

13 David said to Gad, "I am in great distress; please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are very great. But do not let me fall into the hand of man."

14 So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel; 70,000 men of Israel fell.

O LORD, Deliver My Life (c. 973 BC)

Psalm 6

For the choir director; with stringed instruments, upon an eight-string lyre.

A psalm of David.

- 1 O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger,
Nor chasten me in Your wrath.
- 2 Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I *am* pining away;
Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed.
- 3 And my soul is greatly dismayed;
But You, O LORD—how long?
- 4 Return, O LORD, rescue my soul;
Save me because of Your lovingkindness.
- 5 For there is no mention of You in death;
In Sheol who will give You thanks?

- 6 I am weary with my sighing;
Every night I make my bed swim,
I dissolve my couch with my tears.
- 7 My eye has wasted away with grief;
It has become old because of all my adversaries.
- 8 Depart from me, all you who do iniquity,
For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping.
- 9 The LORD has heard my supplication,
The LORD receives my prayer.
- 10 All my enemies will be ashamed and greatly dismayed;
They shall turn back, they will suddenly be ashamed.

Do Not Forsake Me, O LORD (c. 973 BC)

Psalm 38

A Psalm of David, for a memorial.

- 1 O LORD, rebuke me not in Your wrath,
And chasten me not in Your burning anger.
- 2 For Your arrows have sunk deep into me,
And Your hand has pressed down on me.
- 3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation;
There is no health in my bones because of my sin.
- 4 For my iniquities are gone over my head;
As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me.
- 5 My wounds grow foul *and* fester
Because of my folly.
- 6 I am bent over and greatly bowed down;
I go mourning all day long.
- 7 For my loins are filled with burning,
And there is no soundness in my flesh.
- 8 I am benumbed and badly crushed;
I groan because of the agitation of my heart.
- 9 Lord, all my desire is before You;
And my sighing is not hidden from You.
- 10 My heart throbs, my strength fails me;
And the light of my eyes, even that has gone from me.
- 11 My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague;
And my kinsmen stand afar off.
- 12 Those who seek my life lay snares *for me*;
And those who seek to injure me have threatened destruction,
And they devise treachery all day long.
- 13 But I, like a deaf man, do not hear;
And *I am* like a mute man who does not open his mouth.
- 14 Yes, I am like a man who does not hear,
And in whose mouth are no arguments.
- 15 For I hope in You, O LORD;
You will answer, O Lord my God.
- 16 For I said, "May they not rejoice over me,
Who, when my foot slips, would magnify themselves against me."

- 17 For I am ready to fall,
And my sorrow is continually before me.
- 18 For I confess my iniquity;
I am full of anxiety because of my sin.
- 19 But my enemies are vigorous *and* strong,
And many are those who hate me wrongfully.
- 20 And those who repay evil for good,
They oppose me, because I follow what is good.
- 21 Do not forsake me, O LORD;
O my God, do not be far from me!
- 22 Make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation!

I Cry Out Day and Night Before You (c. 973 BC)

Psalm 88

A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

For the choir director; according to Mahalath Leannoth.

A Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.

- 1 O LORD, the God of my salvation,
I have cried out by day and in the night before You.
- 2 Let my prayer come before You;
Incline Your ear to my cry!
- 3 For my soul has had enough troubles,
And my life has drawn near to Sheol.
- 4 I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit;
I have become like a man without strength,
- 5 Forsaken among the dead,
Like the slain who lie in the grave,
Whom You remember no more,
And they are cut off from Your hand.
- 6 You have put me in the lowest pit,
In dark places, in the depths.
- 7 Your wrath has rested upon me,
And You have afflicted me with all Your waves. *Selah.*
- 8 You have removed my acquaintances far from me;
You have made me an object of loathing to them;
I am shut up and cannot go out.
- 9 My eye has wasted away because of affliction;
I have called upon You every day, O LORD;
I have spread out my hands to You.
- 10 Will You perform wonders for the dead?
Will the departed spirits rise *and* praise You? *Selah.*
- 11 Will Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave,
Your faithfulness in Abaddon?
- 12 Will Your wonders be made known in the darkness?
And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
- 13 But I, O LORD, have cried out to You for help,
And in the morning my prayer comes before You.

- 14 O LORD, why do You reject my soul?
Why do You hide Your face from me?
- 15 I was afflicted and about to die from my youth on;
I suffer Your terrors; I am overcome.
- 16 Your burning anger has passed over me;
Your terrors have destroyed me.
- 17 They have surrounded me like water all day long;
They have encompassed me altogether.
- 18 You have removed lover and friend far from me;
My acquaintances are *in* darkness.

O LORD, Be Gracious to Me [Messianic] (c. 973 BC)

Psalm 41

For the choir director.

A Psalm of David.

- 1 How blessed is he who considers the helpless;
The LORD will deliver him in a day of trouble.
- 2 The LORD will protect him and keep him alive,
And he shall be called blessed upon the earth;
And do not give him over to the desire of his enemies.
- 3 The LORD will sustain him upon his sickbed;
In his illness, You restore him to health.
- 4 As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me;
Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You."
- 5 My enemies speak evil against me,
"When will he die, and his name perish?"
- 6 And when he comes to see *me*, he speaks falsehood;
His heart gathers wickedness to itself;
When he goes outside, he tells it.
- 7 All who hate me whisper together against me;
Against me they devise my hurt, *saying*,
- 8 "A wicked thing is poured out upon him,
That when he lies down, he will not rise up again."
- 9 Even my close friend in whom I trusted,
Who ate my bread,
Has lifted up his heel against me. [[John 13:18](#)]
- 10 But You, O LORD, be gracious to me and raise me up,
That I may repay them.
- 11 By this I know that You are pleased with me,
Because my enemy does not shout in triumph over me.
- 12 As for me, You uphold me in my integrity,
And You set me in Your presence forever.
- 13 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
From everlasting to everlasting.
Amen and Amen.

Chronological Notes

- 1) Merrill argues: “After the revolutions of both Absalom and Sheba it would have been reasonable for David to reassess his military situation against the possibility of similar uprisings or other emergencies.”¹ In support of this hypothesis is the fact that Joab and the army commanders were able to take over nine months to gather the population statistics (v. 8). This suggests a very peaceful condition in Israel that characterized David’s later reign but not his earlier reign.

¹ Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 272.