

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

2 Samuel 24

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 eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

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."

1 Chronicles 21

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.

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."

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

16 When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who destroyed the people, "It is enough! Now relax your hand!" And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

17 Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking down the people,

and said,

"Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father's house."

18 So Gad came to David that day and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite."

19 David went up according to the word of Gad, just as the LORD had commanded.

20 Araunah looked down and saw the king and his servants crossing over toward him; and Araunah went out and bowed his face to the ground before the king.

21 Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD,

that the plague may be held back from the people."

22 Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what is good in his sight.

Look, the oxen for the burnt offering, the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood.

23 Everything, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you."

24 However, the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy *it* from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing."

So David bought the threshing floor

and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

25 David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

Thus the LORD was moved by prayer for the land,

14 So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel;

70,000 men of Israel fell.

15 And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; but as he was about to destroy *it*, the LORD saw and was sorry over the calamity, and said to the destroying angel, "It is enough; now relax your hand." And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

16 Then David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, covered with sackcloth, fell on their faces.

17 David said to God,

"Is it not I who commanded to count the people? Indeed, I am the one who has sinned and done very wickedly, but these sheep, what have they done?"

O LORD my God, please let Your hand be against me and my father's household,

but not against Your people that they should be plagued."

18 Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

19 So David went up at the word of Gad, which he spoke in the name of the LORD.

20 Now Ornan turned back and saw the angel, and his four sons *who were* with him hid themselves. And Ornan was threshing wheat.

21 As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David,

and went out from the threshing floor and prostrated himself before David with his face to the ground.

22 Then David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of *this* threshing floor, that I may build on it an altar to the LORD; for the full price you shall give it to me, that the plague may be restrained from the people."

23 Ornan said to David, "Take *it* for yourself; and let my lord the king do what is good in his sight.

See, I will give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for wood

and the wheat for the grain offering;

I will give *it* all."

24 But King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will surely buy *it* for the full price; for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, or offer a burnt offering which costs me nothing."

25 So David gave Ornan

600 shekels of gold by weight for the site.

26 Then David built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

And he called to the LORD and He answered him with fire from

and the plague was held back from Israel.

heaven on the altar of burnt offering.

27 The LORD commanded the angel,
and he put his sword back in its sheath.

28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered
him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he offered
sacrifice there.

29 For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the
wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering *were* in the high place
at Gibeon at that time.

30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was
terrified by the sword of the angel of the LORD.

David Makes Preparations for the Construction of the Temple (c. 972 – c. 969t BC)

1 Chronicles 22

Materials Needed for the Construction of the Temple

1 Then David said, "This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

2 So David gave orders to gather the foreigners who were in the land of Israel, and he set stonecutters to hew out stones to build the house of God.

3 David prepared large quantities of iron to make the nails for the doors of the gates and for the clamps, and more bronze than could be weighed;

4 and timbers of cedar logs beyond number, for the Sidonians and Tyrians brought large quantities of cedar timber to David.

5 David said, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the LORD shall be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all lands. *Therefore* now I will make preparation for it." So David made ample preparations before his death.

David's Private Charge to Solomon

6 Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel.

7 David said to Solomon, "My son, I had intended to build a house to the name of the LORD my God.

8 But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to My name, because you have shed so much blood on the earth before Me.

9 Behold, a son will be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days.

10 He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.'

11 Now, my son, the LORD be with you that you may be successful, and build the house of the LORD your God just as He has spoken concerning you.

12 Only the LORD give you discretion and understanding, and give you charge over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God.

13 Then you will prosper, if you are careful to observe the statutes and the ordinances which the LORD commanded Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and courageous, do not fear nor be dismayed.

14 Now behold, with great pains I have prepared for the house of the LORD 100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond weight, for they are in great quantity; also timber and stone I have prepared, and you may add to them.

15 Moreover, there are many workmen with you, stonecutters and masons of stone and carpenters, and all men who are skillful in every kind of work.

16 Of the gold, the silver and the bronze and the iron there is no limit. Arise and work, and may the LORD be with you."

David's Charge to the Leaders of Israel

17 David also commanded all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon, *saying*,

18 "Is not the LORD your God with you? And has He not given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before the LORD and before His people.

19 Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise, therefore, and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, so that you may bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy vessels of God into the house that is to be built for the name of the LORD."

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.