

## Study #23

### 2 Samuel 23:1-24:25

#### Text:

- v. 1 These are the last words of David: “The oracles of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, Israel’s singer of songs:
- v. 2 “The spirit of the Lord spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.
- v. 3 The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me: ‘When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God,
- v. 4 he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth.’
- v. 5 “Is not my house right with God? Has he not made with me an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part? Will he not bring to fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire?
- v. 6 But evil men are all to be cast aside like thorns, which are not gathered with the hand.
- v. 7 Whoever touches thorns uses a tool of iron or the shaft of a spear; they are burned up where they lie.”
- v. 8 These are the names of David’s mighty men: Josheb-Basshebeth, a Tahkemonite, was chief of the Three; he raised his spear against eight hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter.
- v. 9 Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite. As one of the three mighty men, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered at Pas Dammim for battle. Then the men of Israel retreated,
- v. 10 but he stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The Lord brought about a great victory that day. The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead.
- v. 11 Next to him was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel’s troops fled from them.
- v. 12 But Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field. He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the Lord brought about a great victory.
- v. 13 During the harvest time, three of the thirty chief men came down to David at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim.
- v. 14 At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem.
- v. 15 David longed for water and said, “Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!”

- v. 16 So the three mighty men broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the Lord.
- v. 17 “Far be it from me, O Lord, to do this!” he said. “Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?” And David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty men.
- v. 18 Abishai the brother of Joab son of Zeruiah was chief of the Three. He raised his spear against three hundred men, who he killed, and so he became as famous as the Three.
- v. 19 Was he not held in greater honor than the Three? He became their commander, even though he was not included among them.
- v. 20 Benaiah son of Jehoiada was a valiant fighter from Kabzeel, who performed great exploits. He struck down two of Moab’s best men. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion.
- v. 21 And he struck down a huge Egyptian. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian’s hand and killed him with his own spear.
- v. 22 Such were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada; he too was as famous as the three mighty men.
- v. 23 He was held in greater honor than any of the Thirty, but he was not included among the Three. And David put him in charge of his bodyguard.
- v. 24 Among the thirty were: Asahel the brother of Joab, Ehanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem,
- v. 25 Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite,
- v. 26 Helez the Paltite, Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa,
- v. 27 Abiezer from Anathoth, Mebunnai the Hushathite,
- v. 28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite,
- v. 29 Heled son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah of Benjamin,
- v. 30 Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai from the ravines of Gaash,
- v. 31 Abi-Albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite,
- v. 32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen, Jonathan
- v. 33 son of Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam son of Sharar the Hararite,
- v. 34 Eliphelet son of Ahasbai the Maacathite, Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,
- v. 35 Hezro the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite,
- v. 36 Igal son of Nathan from Zobah, the son of Hagri
- v. 37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, the armor-bearer of Joab son of Zeruiah,
- v. 38 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite
- v. 39 and Uriah the Hittite, there were 37 in all.

- 24:v. 1 Again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go and count Israel and Judah."
- v. 2 So the king said to Joab and the army commanders with him, "Go throughout the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba and enroll the fighting men, so that I may know how many there are."
- v. 3 But Joab replied to the king, "May the Lord your God multiply the troops a hundred times over, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king want o do such a thing?"
- v. 4 The king's word, however, overruled Joab and the army commanders; so they left the presence of the king to enroll the fighting men of Israel.
- v. 5 After crossing the Jordan, they camped near Aroer, south of the town in the gorge, and then went through Gad and on to Jazer.
- v. 6 They went on to Gilead and the region of Tahtim Hodshi and on to Dan Jaan and around toward Sidon.
- v. 7 Then they went toward the fortress of Tyre and all the towns of the Hivites and Canaanites. Finally, they went on to Beersheba in the Negev of Judah.
- v. 8 After they had gone through the entire land, they came back to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.
- v. 9 Joab reported the number of the fighting men to the king: In Israel there were eight hundred thousand able-bodied men who could handle a sword, and in Judah five hundred thousand.
- v. 10 David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O Lord, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."
- v. 11 Before David got up the next morning, the word of the Lord had come to Gad the prophet, David's seer:
- v. 12 "Go and tell David, "This is what the Lord says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you."
- v. 13 So Gad went to David and said to him "Shall there come upon you threes years of famine in your land? Or three months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you? Or three days of plague in your land? Now then, think it over and decide how I should answer the one who sent me."
- v. 14 David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall unto the hands of men."
- v. 15 So the Lord sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.
- v. 16 When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was

- afflicting the people, "Enough! Withdraw your hand." The angel of the Lord was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.
- v. 17 When David saw the angel who was striking down the people, he said to the Lord, "I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Let your hand fall upon me and my family."
  - v. 18 On that day Gad went to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Arunah the Jebusite."
  - v. 19 So David went up, as the Lord had commanded through Gad.
  - v. 20 When Araunah looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.
  - v. 21 Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" "To buy our threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the Lord, that the plague on the people may be stopped."
  - v. 22 Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood.
  - v. 23 O king, Araunah gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the Lord your Goad accept you."
  - v. 24 But the king replied Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them.
  - v. 25 David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

(Psalm 146, living bible!)

### Introduction:

One is reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul as he neared the end of his physical race:

### 2 Timothy 4:6-8

"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."

There will come a time in our lives when, for the last time we will drive the car, we'll play a game of golf, do our last chores, eat our last meal.

(My Dad's fishing poles! Tools! Pickup! Cows!)

These final chapters describe a number of these events in David's life.

In the last episode of David we considered together his "Last Song" in chapter 22.

And now his "Last Psalm" or his "Last Inspired Words" in chapter 23.

v. 1 These are the last words of David; "The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, Israel's singer of songs;

(He sings in 22, he writes in 23.)

Vos points out, "In what sense these are to be considered the last words of David is debated. Almost certainly, they were not the last words he ever uttered. For example, these probably came before his charge to Solomon. Some believe them to be his last utterance as an inspired writer, or possibly they are to be viewed as his last words in the sense of a prophetic utterance or testament, somewhat analogous to the prophetic utterances of Jacob in Genesis 49 and Moses in Deut. 33."

There are three things that are said about David in this first verse:

1. HE IS DAVID SON OF JESSE.
2. HE IS THE MAN EXALTED BY THE MOST HIGH.
3. HE IS THE MAN ANOINTED BY THE GOD OF JACOB.

The last phrase on the verse says, "He is Israel's singer of songs," and we considered his last song in chap. 22.

Because David's last words might be heard beyond Israel, David uses the first verse to introduce himself. First, he is the son of Jesse. Jesse was a peasant, a farmer in Bethlehem. David was a shepherd boy. He was never ashamed of that.

He then tells that God raised him on high and placed him with the great men of the world, the anointed God of Jacob.

The same God who took that clever, conniving man Jacob and made him Israel, a prince with God, also took David the shepherd boy and made him king over all Israel. The same God takes you and me, pitiful as we are, and makes us his children.

David is remembered for many things, but one of the best is that he was the favorite of the song writers. They loved him for the music that came from the depths of his soul. He loved music. He wrote it, played it, and loved to hear it in the worship service.

Ackroyd says, "David, the son of Jesse, was wise, and a light like the light of the sun; skilled in understanding and perfect in all his ways before God and man. The Lord gave him a spirit of understanding and of light. He wrote 3600 psalms and songs to be sung before the altar with the perpetual sacrifices for every day of the year - - 364 - - and for the offering of the Sabbath, 52 songs; and for the offering of the new moons, and of the festal days, and of the Day of Atonement - -30 songs; so all the songs which he spoke amounted to 4, 046, together with songs to be played over those stricken for; so the total was 4,050. All these he spoke in prophecy that was given him by the presence of the Most High."

v. 2 "The spirit of the Lord spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.

David says two things here:

1. It is the Lord who spoke through him, using him as a vehicle.
2. His word was on my tongue.

## 2 Peter 1:20,21

"But you know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men, moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God."

## 2 Timothy 3:16,17

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

v. 3 The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me; 'When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God,

- v. 4 he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth.'

Vos points out, "What follows is to be considered a Messianic passage. Verse 3 teaches that there will be a ruler over mankind or the human race, who will rule in righteousness or with justice, and he will exercise his authority in the spirit or fear of God. Messiah's rule will be like that light of the rising sun on a cloudless morning. He will bring new life, spiritual and natural, as the warm sun on a Palestinian hillside in a very brief time stimulates the growth of flowers and grasses after a spring rain."

### Isaiah 9:6,7

"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on his shoulders. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of his government or of peace on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this."

- v. 5 "Is not my house right with God? Has he not made with me an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part? Will he not bring to fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire?"

David calls to mind here the everlasting covenant that was instituted and arranged by God in 2 Samuel 7, arranged and secured in every part.

There are three questions in this 5th verse:

1. "Is not my house right with God?" Yes, it is.
2. "Has he not made with me an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part?" Yes, he has.
3. "Will he not bring to fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire?" Yes, he will

(2 Samuel 7:16 – "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.")

(Psalm 37:4 – "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.")

Numbers 23:19

“God is not a man that he should lie, nor a son of man that he should repent. Has he said and will he not do it? Or has he spoken and will he not make it good?”

Psalms 89:8

“O Lord God of Hosts, who is like thee, O mighty Lord? Thy faithfulness also surrounds Thee.”

Psalms 89:20-24

“I have found David my servant;  
With my holy oil I have anointed him,  
With whom my hand will be established;  
My arm also will strengthen him.  
The enemy will not deceive him,  
Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.  
But I shall crush his adversaries before him,  
And strike those who hate him.  
And my faithfulness and My lovingkindness will be with him,  
And in my name his horn will be exalted.”

Psalms 119:89,90

“Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness continues throughout all generations. Thou didst establish the earth and it stands.”

Psalms 126:3

“The Lord has done great things for us. We are glad.”

Eccles. 3:11,14

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. I know that made everything God does will remain forever. There is nothing to add to it, and there's nothing to take away from it; for God, has so worked that men should fear him.”

Will he not bring fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire.



### Psalm 37:3-5

“Trust in the Lord and do good. Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord. Trust also in him and he will do it.”

- v. 6 But evil men are all to be cast aside like thorns, which are not gathered with the hand.
- v. 7 Whoever touches thorns, uses a tool of iron or the shaft of a spear; they are burned up where they lie.”

Vos points out, “The righteous or spiritual aspect of Messiah’s rule is highlighted in verses 6 and 7. The ungodly are compared to thorns that men root out and burn to clear the ground of them. As they do so, they must be well-armed or protected for the task. Just so, Messiah will exercise judgment and will root out evil ones from his kingdom and will cast them into the fire at the final judgment of the ungodly.”

### Matt. 13:30

“Allow both to grow together until the harvest, and in time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather up the tares and bind them into bundles to burn them up, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

### Malachi 4:1

“For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze, says the Lord of Hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.”

### Rev. 14:14-16

“And I looked and behold, A white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a Son of Man, having a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple crying out with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, ‘Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap is come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe,’ and he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth and the earth was reaped.”

The focus of David's last words have to do with the faithful fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. Jesus Christ, David's greater Son, will come in the flaming fire of judgment to take vengeance on those who do not wish to know our God, and will faithfully fulfill the promises in the setting up of the Davidic kingdom.

(The king is coming, he is trampling out the vintage...)

The hymnwriter says it well:

“We’ve a story to tell to the nations,  
That shall turn their hearts to the right.  
A story of truth and mercy,  
A story of peace and light,  
A story of peace and light.

For the darkness shall turn to the dawning,  
And the dawning to noonday bright.  
And Christ's great kingdom shall come to earth,  
The kingdom of love and light.”

We turn in our passage from PROMISES TO PEOPLE.

(David is thinking of all this now that he's through with war!)

The rest of this chapter is the listing of David's HALL OF FAME. It's the record holders that are listed first, the super stars who did themselves proud on the field of battle for the glory of the Lord.

In these next verses there are five of these men who are singled out for very special mention because of the heroic acts that they performed on the fields of conflict.

These are the men who helped David win the throne and capture the city of Jerusalem.

These men that are listed now in the remainder of chap. 23 are the men who came to David during the time that he was in exile in the Cave of Adullam after his return from the land of the Philistines. He was being chased by Saul, and he was an outcast and hunted like an animal.

(50 yrs ago!)

It was during this time that God sent these men. They were persecuted and oppressed by Saul. Some had gotten into debt and could not pay. Some came who were discontent and bitter of soul.

David took them, trained them, organized them, loved them, and made them into an army - - God's army - - David's mighty men.

This chapter, like Hebrews 11, is dedicated to their greatness; and it is important for us to see their names and what they have done.

There are five of these men who come up for special mention of what they have done. The remainder are just listed by name.

(Heisman Trophy winners!)

- v. 8 These are the names of David's mighty men: Josheb-Basshebeth, a Tahkemonite, was chief of the Three; he raised his spear against eight hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter..
  - 1. The man is listed and the place he comes from, and he was the chief of the three mighty men, because he holds an incredible record of killing 800 men in one encounter.
- v. 9 Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite. As one of the three mighty men, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered at Pas Dammim for battle. Then the men of Israel retreated,
- v. 10 but he stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The Lord brought about a great victory that day. The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead.
  - 2. Eleazar was one of those men who stood his ground when everybody else around him was fleeing.

One is reminded of Ephesians 6, "having done all, to stand." The Christian warrior must face his foe and take the offensive because there is no armor designed for the back.

Eleazar hung in there.

## 1 Cor. 15:58

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Stan Cotterell in his book No Mountain Too High says, “It was a newspaper column entitled ‘Never Give Up’ by Dr. Charles Haygood, formerly the president of La Grange College in Georgia. It said in part, ‘Remember how a victorious military group was described, not as being braver than its defeated adversary, but as being brave 5 minutes longer.’ In those moments of weary despair, when life is falling apart, we discover the stuff of which we are really made, by our ability to go on. That strength we did not know we possessed, is the bit of God’s divine spirited planted in every human personality. None of us has a superior supply, but the difference comes in our willingness to hold on until power is released. If you are just now hovering near the brink of collapse, take heart.”

His hand grew tired and froze to the sword, but he stayed with it; and because of that, the Lord brought about a great victory that day. The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead because the battle had been fought and the victory won.

(Contract instead of commitment! | Seem to be restructuring our whole society to do away with endurance. Hebrews 10:36 12:1,2)

- v. 11 Next to him was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel’s troops fled from them.
- v. 12 But Shammah took his stand in the idle of the field. He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the Lord brought about a great victory.

Eleazar is characterized as standing his ground, and Shammah is pictured as taking his stand.

Once again, Ephesians 6 comes to the foreground, “having done all, to stand.”

Defending a bean patch might not seem like something very important, but Israel needed the food. It was the custom of the Philistines and many of the other groups that attacked Israel to wait until the Israelites crops were ready to harvest, and then they would come, killing and robbing the fields and taking the food and harvest for themselves.

Shammah was one of those guys who took his stand in the middle of the field. He was outstanding in his field. and he defended it and struck the Philistines down. And the Lord brought about a great victory.

It is interesting to note that Eleazar had that same experience - - as he stood his ground, he was in a position for the Lord to bring about a great victory. He didn't turn and run away, so the Lord was able to use him. The same thing is true of Shammah. He just hung in there and stayed there, and the Lord brought about a great victory. I'm afraid many times as believers we miss some of the great acts of the Lord's victory and deliverance in our lives simply because we turn tail and flee in difficult situations, rather than face them with the grace and strength of our Lord and triumph in the midst of them.

(We just quit too soon!)

## 2 Car. 2:14

“Now thanks be unto God, who is always leading us in a constant pageant of triumph.”

Verses 13-17 are somewhat of a PARENTHESIS in the passage. It is one of the great war stories that came from harvest time. I believe the fact that the writer is recalling Shammah's heroic act in the bean patch he is reminded of this great story from David's reign to demonstrate how loyal and how supportive these men were who served in David's army. This story comes from the very beginning of his reign over all the land of Israel.

Shortly after, David becomes king at 37(1/2) years of age over Israel and Judah. He moves the capital city to Jerusalem, and there Hiram the king of Tyre builds him a beautiful palace. But then immediately the Philistines mobilize to defeat David's new expanded realm of authority and bring destruction to his kingdom. It is at this time that David goes to the Cave of Adullam and prepares his military strategy and seeks the face of the Lord as to what is to be done and how it is to be done in fighting the Philistines.

- v. 13 During harvest time, three of the thirty chief men came down to David at the Cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim.
- v. 14 At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem.

David had slipped south from the city of Jerusalem to the cave of Adullam to work out all of the strategy for this first major conflict with the Philistines.

- v. 15 David longed for water and said, “Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!”

David grew up in Bethlehem. Bethlehem lay between the cave of Adullam and the city of Jerusalem.

David is working away in the cave. Sweat is running down from his sweatband into his eyes, and he can feel it running down under his arms and soaking his shirt, down his legs and into his socks. Since they didn't have Gatorade or Perriere in those days, he goes back to his childhood memories when he used to go to the well at Bethlehem on occasions like this and get himself a real good cold drink of water from the well.

(Boy! What I would give for a big tall cold glass of water from the Bethlehem well!!)

- v. 16 So the three mighty men broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the Lord.

These three mighty men demonstrated to David that his slightest wish was their supreme desire, that nothing was too good for their leader, that they were willing to risk their lives for any request that he might make. How good of the Lord to provide this visible demonstration to David that he has a group of men who would die with him in the trenches.

You can just see these guys coming back with such enthusiasm and excitement to surprise David with their gift. They came into the cave and they said, “David! Look what we've got! Here is some water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem. Look right here! It says 'bottled in Bethlehem' on it. It's all yours. We brought it for you!”

Our text says, “He refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out before the Lord.”

- v. 17 “Far be it from me, O Lord, to do this!” he said. “Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?” And David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty men.

Vos points out, “Since drinking this water was almost like drinking the blood of the men who had risked their lives to get it, David refused to drink it, and poured it out on the ground as a thank offering to God for the safe return of the three.”

Ackroyd says, “He poured it out to the Lord’ id to be understood as a libation comparable to the pouring of wine alluded to in Hosea 9:4. As the comment in verse 17 explains, water purchased at the risk of men’s lives, the blood of these men, could not be used properly for secular purpose but belongs to God, as does the blood of the sacrificial victim. The story gives a vivid picture of a heroic exploit but also draws out the themes of David’s piety and of the loyalty existed between him and his men.”

After this little story, our text now returns to the exploits of the superstars. We have considered three of them:

1. Josheb-Basshebeth
2. Eleazar
3. Shammah

Now we look at two more before we get the final honor roll that is listed.

- v. 18 Abishai the brother of Joab son of Zeruah was chief of the Three. He raised his spear against three hundred men, whom he killed, and so he became as famous as the Three.
- v. 19 Was he not held in greater honor than the Three? He became their commander, even though he was not included among them.
4. Abishai is seen many times in the life of David. He, along with Joab and Asahel, are nephews of David and sons of David’s sister Zeruah.

Abishai was made one of the three military commanders in the battle with Absalom.

He distinguished himself for special honor here in that he raised his spear against 300 men, whom he killed.

He distinguished himself on numerous occasions as being at David’s side at critical times:

1. He was willing to go down into the camp of Saul on a daring night raid, taking his spear and water jug.

2. He was also at David's side when Shimei was throwing stones, cursing the king on his departure from Jerusalem into exile.
3. Saved David's life in last military encounter with Philistine giant – David was exhausted!

ABISHAI is the CLINT EASTWOOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. With his 357 magnum pointed straight at you, he would say, "Make a move, and you make my day."

The 5th man in this cavalcade of superstars is listed in the following verses:

- v. 20 Benaiah son of Jehoiada was a valiant fighter from Kabzeel, who performed great exploits. He struck down two of Moab's best men. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion.
- v. 21 And he struck down a huge Egyptian. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear.
- v. 22 Such were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada; he too was as famous as the three might men.
- v. 23 He was held in greater honor than any of the Thirty, but was not included among the Three. And David put him in charge of his bodyguard.
5. There are three outstanding acts that are credited to Benaiah that qualify him for special mention here in these military records:
  1. He struck down two of Moab's best men. He was truly a champion, and he took on Moab's best and beat them both.
  2. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion.

You can imagine what that would have been like, to have faced a lion on slippery footing, and who was probably hungry because of the inclement weather. With all odds against him because of poor footing and a hungry beast, Benaiah still comes out on top and kills the lion.

This had to be impressive to David because he had a similar experience recorded in 1 Samuel 17:37



“And David said, ‘The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, he will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.’ And Saul said to David, ‘Go, and may the Lord be with you.’”

Gehrke points out, “These were not African lions. Nevertheless, tracking a rapacious Palestinian lion into a cistern at snowfall, and the grappling with it successfully was no mean achievement.”

I am sure DANIEL probably can have a real sympathetic understanding of God’s sovereign intervention in this situation, even as God closed the mouths of the beasts when Daniel was cast into the den with the lions in his experience.

One thing about old Benaiah - - he is not a fair-weather fighter. He is out there no matter what kind of weather it is, defending the interests of his people.

(Even does his thing in off season!)

3. The third thing that distinguishes him is recorded in verses 21 and 22:

v. 21 And he struck down a huge Egyptian. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian’s hand and killed him with his own spear.

This too had to remind David of his own exploits against Goliath as he took his sling and five smooth stones to move forth in a courageous act, realizing the battle was the Lord’s.

(Never mentions Joab directly! Only in relation!)

Such were the exploits of Benaiah, son of Jehoiada. He too was as famous as the three might men. He was held in greater honor than any of the Thirty, but he was not included among the Three. Just like the Lord chose Twelve, but three of them formed the Executive Committee: Peter, James, and John; so Benaiah wasn’t among the Three, but David put him in charge of his bodyguard because of his courageous acts –on the field of battle.

(It’s all together fitting at the time of David’s retirement to mention all of these!!)

This is like introducing the All-American team on the Bob Hope Show. These men made it in the military.

This is the honor roll of men who fought courageously and were responsible on the human plane for great victories brought to David's armies.

I am reminded of the story of the little boy and his father walking through the church, and in the back foyer there was a huge bronze plaque with the names of service men from that congregation who had served in America's conflicts. When the boy saw the plaque, he asked his father what that plaque represented. The father said, "The plaque is remembering all those who died in the service." And the little boy's innocent reply was, "In the morning service or the evening service?"

- (6/7) v. 24 Among the thirty were: Asahel the brother of Joab, Ehanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem,
- (8/9) v. 25 Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite,
- (10/11)v. 26 Helez the Paltite, Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa,
- (12/13)v. 27 Abiezer from Anathoth, Mebunnai the Hushathite,
- (14/15)v. 28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite,
- (16/17)v. 29 Heled son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah of Benjamin,
- (18/19)v. 30 Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai from the ravines of Gaash,
- (20/21)v. 31 Abi-Albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite,
- (22) v. 32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen, Jonathan

Evidently, there were three of these sons that do not have their names listed here in order to bring out the number to 37 in all.

- (23) Jonathan
- (24) v. 33 son of Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam son of Sharar the Hararite,
- (25/26)v. 34 Eliphelet son of Ahasbai the Maacathite, Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,
- (27/28)v. 35 Hezro the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite,
- (29) v. 36 Igal son of Nathan from Zobah, the son of Hagri
- (30/31)v. 37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, the armor-bearer of Joab son of Zeruiah,
- (32/33)v. 38 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite
- (34) v. 39 and Uriah the Hittite, there were 37 in all.

(1. David's last inspired words speak of God's faithfulness. 2. Take your stand. You never flee into the will... 3. Name in the lamb's book of life.)

Having considered:

David's last MESSAGE,  
and the MILITARY in chap. 23,  
we come to his last MESS in chap. 24.

(Slowly David is letting go of life – Last battle, last song, last message. 50 yrs in military.)

Whereas we can write over chap. 23 – VICTORY,  
We have to write over chap. 24 – DEFEAT.

In chap. 23 he's SAVORING HIS SECCESSES,  
In chap. 24 he's EXPERIENCING FAILURE.

In chap. 23 he's READING HIS CLIPPINGS,  
In chap. 24 he really wants to know how big is big, and starts KEEPING STATISTICS.

Swindoll titles this chapter "When the Godly Are Foolish."

### James 3:1

"Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment."

One sad fact of life is that we do not reach perfection by growing older. Age alone is no guarantee of maturity or freedom from error. As Elihu said to Job, "The abundant in years may not be wise" (Job 32:9) is so true. Sometimes the aged and godly saints act downright foolish. When such saints are leaders, the consequences are usually greater. Consider the aged and otherwise godly David - a father of many, a courageous warrior in battle, a king for nearly four decades, a sensitive man of God. In spite of such achievements and experiences, he made a foolish decision based on pride and fell into Satan's trap.

Someone has called this chapter "A SINFUL CENSUS."

This chapter is just another proof of the law of God that sin costs a lot, the principle of sowing and reaping, and the fact that you individual sin affects others.

Winter points out, "Pride goes before destruction' (Proverbs 16:18). There is nothing wrong in numbering people. God commanded his people to be

numbered twice while they were wandering in the wilderness. David, evidently, numbered his people in order to revel in his strength. It is wrong to take pride in one's own physical accomplishments and power. For this reason, he was punished."

Theodore Epp says, "This last attack of Satan upon David took place some 38 years after David had ascended the throne, and about two years before his death. Satan was successful for a brief time in enticing David to sin, which should remind us that at no age are we free from being tested. At the same time, we can have God's victory. Should we fall, we will find forgiveness and restoration, if we are genuine in our repentance."

David wanted to know how strong his nation was militarily. His strength really lay in God, but David laid his emphasis upon his armies. God's position was: You do not need to number the people. I have taken care of this situation. The strength of Israel's army meant nothing if God was not with them to give them the victory. God was displeased with this census, which was rooted in pride and the glorification of man's power.

(If God be for us.... | Old age, reliving exploits and savoring our successes.)

How was it that David was a man after God's own heart? Acts 13:22 holds the key: "which shall fulfill all my will." These three words must be kept before us as we consider what made David a man after the heart of God. Faith was basic to his life. His heart-attitude was that of deep humility, and there was obedience. His humility caused him to realize that in himself he was nothing. Only through God could he perform the will of God. He put himself at God's disposal so that God could work his will through him.

Young points out, "Proverbs 6 lists seven things that God's hates. Six things he hates; the seventh he despises. The list begins with a proud look, literally, a proud eye. David took this census not to testify, Here are God's people. Look what God has done with us, but so he could boast, Ah, these are my people. Look what I have done. Look at the victories I have accomplished. David reviewed the reports and calculated over six million people under my rule. I am their absolute king. Incidentally, the population of Israel at that time was approximately the population of Israel today."

Davis points out, "The book of 2 Samuel, therefore, concludes on a note of sorrow, just as it began. David had enjoined moments of great success, and yet, in spite of his wisdom and political genius, as a father he failed in his own household. David's greatest heartaches came, not from the enemies on the outside, but from his own family. It was not the weak hand of David that failed him, but a weak heart which allowed him to enter into an adulterous

relationship with Bathsheba. The results of David's reign, however, were not all negative. It is very clear from a military and political point of view that David had fully established the kingdom of Israel. He had achieved international respect and recognition for Israel in a very brief period of time. This great kingdom soon was to pass into the hands of Solomon, a young man with equal capabilities and gifts."

Krummacher reminds us that "after trying times of sorrow and humiliation, David again sits on Mount Zion, under his vine and fig tree. How heartily do we grant to him this time of rest. May it not be to him again as it has been before, only a snare."

Vos speaks to the issue when he says, "In what sense David's taking of the census was sinful has to be deduced from the context of 1 Chronicles and 2 Samuel, and especially from Joab's response. That David's attitude was sinful certainly is to be seen in his pride or self-exaltation as he sought to glory in the number of his fighting men and the strength of his military establishment; and perhaps worse, he felt the temptation of measuring his real strength in terms of human and material resources instead of the Rock and Shield of chapter 22."

Gulston says, "As the twilight begins to deepen around David, one might expect to see him enjoying a little of the peace that sometimes comes to those whose task is nearly over. But tranquility eludes him now, as it seems to have done all his life. There were few stretches of still waters beside the paths he trod. This is why he was able to write the way he did about those at which he had been able to linger. But he knew the storms and the pull of the dangerous currents, and still at the end he could say, 'I have been young, and now am old. Yet, have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread' (Psalm 37:25). And now in the gathering dusk he was caught up in the toils of another crisis when Satan stood up against Israel and provoked or enticed David to number Israel (1 Chron. 21:1). While David was FAITHFUL TO THE END, he was still FALLIBLE TO THE END."

24:v. 1            Again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he incited David against them saying, "Go and count Israel and Judah."

1 Chron. 21:1

"Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel."

Vos points out, "Since a census was not wrong in itself the sin that was judged in the present case must have been the attitude of the king's heart,

and punishment for David's sin then became an occasion for the chastisement of the nation for its waywardness. Again, the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, as it had in the days of protracted drought (2 Samuel 21). But the reason is not directly stated in this narrative. In his anger God moved or incited David to take a census, according to this passage. But God cannot tempt anyone to sin (James 1:13). In the parallel passage in 1 Chron. 21:1 it says that God permitted David to fall into temptation by failing to provide restraining grace."

Oh, how easy it is in old age to fall under the PERIL OF PRIDE, to REVEL IN THE RECORDS, to always LIVE IN THE PAST and how great it was in comparison to the present. Satan knows there is a numbing process that goes on when we think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. With the coming of age, there comes this overconfident spirit that we have accomplished many great things, and we keep ourselves afloat by researching just how great these accomplishments are.

God's position in this whole thing is: I have taken care of the situation. No numbers are needed, just trust in Me.

### Galatians 3:1-3

"You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? Before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish, having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"

The tragedy of this chapter before us is it hurts so many people. David's sin in the latter part of his life has a tragic effect upon thousands of lives.

We realize that we are most vulnerable after great victory, and Israel has just experienced a great victory over the Philistines.

v. 2 So the king said to Joab and the army commanders with him, "Go throughout the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba and enroll all the fighting men, so that I may know how many there are."

The king calls together Joab and the other commanders of the army and gives them the command to go from the northern border of Dan to the southern border of Beersheba and enroll all the fighting men. The reason gives this command is "so that I may know how many there are."

- v. 3 But Joab replied to the king, “May the Lord your God multiply the troops a hundred times over, and may they eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king want to do such a thing?”

Joab realizes that David has got his eyes on the troops, rather than on the Lord.

- (1. Retiring, hopes he has enough.      2. Can they handle it!)

to the Lord numbers are meaningless, and “when God is for us, who can be against us?” The Lord will literally multiply the troops a hundred times over.

### 1 Samuel 14:6

“The Jonathan said to the young man who was carrying his armor, ‘Come, and let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. Perhaps the Lord will work for us, for the Lord is not restrained to save by many or by few.’”

Statistics are meaningless, David, when you deal God into the picture. We have seen that on numerous occasions during our military career.

(You are the one in the beginning who said so calmly: “The battle is the Lord’s.”)

Joab’s wish is that the eyes of my lord the king can see it.

This leads him to a question why. “But why does my lord the king want to do such a thing?”

It’s obvious by Joab’s hesitation that this is not something which is pleasing to the Lord.

Joab gives him wise counsel, but he doesn’t listen.

Vos points out, “Joab remonstrated with the king, evidently, because he felt the king was on an ego trip, and probably because he believed that any effort to take a census would unsettle the populace, as it would raise fears of new taxes and military conscription. No amount of remonstrance on the part of Joab and the military council was of any avail, however, and the king had his way.”

How different is David here than he was back in the wilderness just before the battle with Absalom's forces in 2 Samuel 18:4. The king answered, "I will do whatever seems best to you."

Now that the king is back on the throne, and he has naturally resident within him bitter feelings toward Joab, he doesn't even listen to what he has to say.

v. 4 The king's word, however, overruled Joab and the army commanders: so they left the presence of the king to enroll the fighting men of Israel.

David probably just said, "You do as I say because I am the king."

The fact that the text tells us "the king's word overruled" lets us know that there was an argument and that David won out in the end.

David's pride is obvious in the fact that he conducts himself in the way he does here. He wants to know how big it is and how many men he has under his authority. Then when it comes to dealing with his advisors, he is unbendable and unapproachable with counsel from those who serve him. This is so out of character with someone who is in fellowship with the Lord and walking with God. The spirit of gentleness has gone.

(When you have to force something or an issue it is a sure indication that you are walking out of the will of God at that point...)

Young points out, "My wife's father was an invalid for fourteen years, residing in a wheelchair. He lived as a man of God. He had a twisted smile which was the result of many strokes. but when I visited him, I felt as though I had experienced the touch of heaven. His sister Frances came in one day and inquired, 'Bud, how do you maintain your great spirit?' In his faltering speech he haltingly replied, 'Do you remember that song we would sing as children?

"Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.  
Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me,  
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me."

'Look at me. Here I am broken and melted.' 'But also,' he exclaimed, 'molded and filled with Him.'

"Anyone whose life is molded by Christ can rejoice and testify,

"The longer I serve him, the sweeter he grows.  
The longer I serve him, the sweeter he grows.  
The more that I love him, more love he bestows.



Each day is like heaven, my heart overflows.  
The longer I serve him, the sweeter he grows.”

### 1 Chron. 28:9

“And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you. But if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.”

### 1 Chron 28:20

“David also said to Solomon his son, ‘Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished.’”

### 1 Chronicles 27:24

“Joab son of Zeruiah, began to count the men, but did not finish. Wrath came on Israel on account of this numbering, and the number was not entered in the book of the annals of King David.”

- v. 5 After crossing the Jordan, they camped near Aroer, south of the town in the gorge, and then went through Gad and on to Jazer.
- v. 6 They went on to Gilead and the region of Tahtim Hodshi and on to Dan Jaan and around to Sidon.
- v. 7 Then they went toward the fortress of Tyre and all the towns of the Hivites and Canaanites. Finally, they went on to Beersheba in the Negev of Judah.
- v. 8 After they had gone through the entire land, they came back to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

They have traveled full throughout the land in these nine months and twenty days, taking this census commanded by David.

- v. 9 Joab reported the number of the fighting men to the king; In Israel there were eight hundred thousand able-bodied men who could handle a sword, and in Judah five hundred thousand.

The statistical worksheets that Joab and his men turn in come up with the figure of 1,300,000 able-bodied men who can handle a sword in Israel and Judah combined.

- v. 10 David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O Lord, I beg you take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."

(Reveling in the records!)

#### 1 Samuel 24:5

"Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe."

#### 1 Timothy 4:2

"Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron."

Why is David a man after God's own heart? Because even here in his old age he has a conscience tender and sensitive to the directions of the Spirit of God.

Vos says, "Evidently, soon after the census was completed, David realized he had done a foolish thing. Conscience-smitten, he prayed to God for forgiveness."

Ten months after the order was given for the census, the men return, and David examines the reports. Then he becomes conscience-stricken over what he has done.

- v. 11 Before David got up the next morning, the word of the Lord had come to Gad the prophet, David's seer:

Immediately the Lord moves into action with a message from Gad the prophet, this time, rather than from Nathan.

- v. 12 "Go and tell David, 'This is what the Lord says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.'"

It is interesting here that there is no need for a parable or a story to bring about conviction on the part of David of his sin in this case. He already has

acknowledged it, and now it is the consequence of this disobedience that is going to affect the whole nation and is that which David has to deal with.

“Go and tell David, ‘This is what the Lord says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.’”

David, there are going to be three things that are going to be presented to you. You can choose any one of the three plans to be carried out.

One man wrote this about sin: “Sin does not serve well as gardener of the soul. It landscapes the contour of the soul until all the beautiful has been made ugly, until all that is high is made low, until all that is promising is made wasted. Then is life a desert, parched and barren. It is drained of purpose. It is bleached with unhappiness. Sin, then, is not wise but wasteful. It is not a gate, but a grave.

Hercus, “But there was sin in this matter. And in some way, David, before the census was finished, became deeply conscious of his fault. We know not what means God had taken to awake his slumbering conscience. He seems to have seen the folly and iniquity of his conduct certainly without a Nathan’s parable this time. When the results of the census, so far as it had gone, were brought before him, he reflected within himself on the motives which had led to the undertaking and the use which he had thought to make of it. He compared his worldly ambition with the theocratic idea which had hitherto controlled his conduct. He weighed his action in the balance of religion, and his heart smote him. In profound humiliation he confesses his sin.”

Laney says, “It is possible that David had been commanded not to number the people, but did so anyway. Perhaps the sin was David’s own lack of faith in God’s protective care over the nation. He may have been trusting in himself in the military strength he could muster rather than in the Lord. David fell into deep sin on several occasions but his heart was sensitive, and he was always quick to confess his wrong and seek restoration.”

Krummacher says, “See then, David. Thou hast gained thy purpose. What a power is this that is placed at thy disposal. A population of six millions, the inhabitants of the little tribes of Levi and Benjamin not being reckoned. What great things mayest thou now undertake? Who may dare raise his head so loftily as thou mayest, and who is there that may sit on his throne so free from care and so securely as thou doest. The snare of Satan is torn asunder, and the prisoner is again free. With all his faults, into which in unwatchful moments he fell, he yet remains the man after God’s own heart. In his genuine, sorrowful repentance of his plan of numbering the people, what a sweet, fragrant blossom do we see unfolded before us of his hidden life

in God. What a beautiful, child-like feature on the countenance of his inner man.”

- v. 13 So Gad went to David and said to him, “Shall there come upon you three years of famine in your land? Or three months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you? Or three days of plague in your land? Now then, think it over and decide how I should answer the one who sent me.”

(David, God is a disciplinarian and he handles things quickly with his children.)

Gad comes with three plans:

1. One involves three years
2. Another involves three months
3. The other involves three days.

The first has to do with A FAMINE OF THREE YEARS. They have just come through one of these experiences and so that is the least desirable on David's part.

Or THREE MONTHS OF FLEEING FROM YOUR ENEMIES while they pursue you. Not only was the famine unfavorable, but fleeing from his enemies would be an experience he has never had before and certainly would not desire to have in his old age.

The last of the options was THREE DAYS OF PLAGUE in your land.

“Think it over and decide how I should answer the one who sent me.”

- v. 14 David said to Gad, “I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men.”

David unites himself with his people when he says, “Let us fall into the hands of the Lord.”

David is going to choose the last of the three alternatives because he is conscious of his own sin bringing judgment, and he chooses to expose himself with his people to the punishment. In famine he would have resources to guarantee a supply of food, and in warfare he would have had many to protect him. But in this plague, he was equally vulnerable with his people.

### Lamentations 3:31-33

“For men are not cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love for he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men.”

### Lamentations 3:22,23

“Because of the Lord’s great love, we are not consumed; for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. I say to myself, the Lord is my portion. Therefore I will wait for him. The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him; to the one who seeks him. It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.”

- v. 15 So the Lord sent a plague on Israel from the morning until the end of the time designated (three days later) and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.
- v. 16 When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, “Enough! Withdraw your hand.” The angel of the Lord was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.
- v. 17 When David saw the angel who was striking down the people, he said to the Lord, “I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Let your hand fall upon me and my family.”

Wilson in his thesis says, “The depth of David’s character is most graphically portrayed in his actions surrounding the plague in chapter 24. David has made a mistake, and due to his sensitivity toward the Lord, he has an uneasy conscience, which leads him to confess his sin and ask forgiveness. In response to his prayer, the Lord sends the prophet Gad to David. Gad offers David three alternatives, and David surprisingly chooses the most severe. Pestilence was considered in those days a direct manifestation of divine judgment. It is significant that David did not want to be subject to man or the elements, but he wanted to crash through the intervening veil of God’s wrath into the very heart of his love. He wanted to fall into God’s hand. Here the author has graphically pictured the type of devotion God desires from his people. This is the spirit that the author hopes to instill in the people, for if this is accomplished, the people will have understood his theology and his purpose to put it into practice to make them wise in living.”

David, by his past actions, has literally taken himself out of God's hand in considering his resources and the strength of his position militarily when it comes to fighting the enemy; and now, recognize his sin, he places himself back in the hands of God for the consequences of his disobedience.

1 Chron. 21:27

“Then the Lord spoke to the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath.”

Alan Redpath points out, “Here is the peace which David enjoyed. And the Lord commanded the angel and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof. The sword of God's judgment is back in its sheath. Hallelujah! Judgment is now over. Peace is now deep down in David's heart. Oh, that it might happen to you right now. That your controversy with heaven might end, that the sword of God's judgment is in its sheath, you will win them. Until now, perhaps you have been losing many battles with the enemy because God's sword has been against you. What greater thing could happen than that experience the peace of God that passes all understanding; garrisoning your heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

‘Peace perfect peace, in this dark world o sin  
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.  
Peace perfect peace, our future all unknown,  
Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.’”

Now that the plague is over, we are going to see David's LAST ALTAR.

We have seen:

1. DAVID'S LAST SONG

We have considered:

2. His LAST INSPIRED WORDS at the beginning of this study!

And now we are going to see:

3. HIS LAST ALTAR

v. 18 On that day Gad went to David and said to him, “Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”

Gulston points out, “On this same spot, over 800 years before, another knife had been stayed as it was about to end a young life. Here Abraham had come

from Beersheba with Isaac, his only son by Sarah, prepared to offer him as a sacrifice in obedience to the divine command. On a hill on the southern end of Mount Moriah, and outside the city walls, the beloved only begotten Son of God would put away sin by sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 9:26). The temple which would rise on the site of David's purchase, the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, would then be doomed and the blood of animals no longer required. The veil in the Holy of Holies would be rent from top to bottom and a person would come to God through the new and living way, through faith in the sacrificial blood of his Son. The creator would no longer dwell in temples made by hands, but in the hearts of believers."

v. 19 So David went up, as the Lord had commanded through Gad.

David is immediately obedient to the command of the Lord on this occasion.

v. 20 When Araunah looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.

v. 21 Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" "To buy your threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the Lord, that the plague on the people may be stopped."

David tells Araunah that he is being obedient to the Lord in coming there to buy the threshing floor, and he will then build an altar so that the plague on the people may be stopped.

v. 22 Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood.

How generous Araunah is with David the king, and how easy it would have been for David to take advantage of one of his loyal subject's generosity and how often do we err in this in the ministry.

v. 23 O king, Araunah gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the Lord your God accept you."

v. 24 But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them.

- v. 25 David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

How wonderful to see David back at the altar offering the burnt offerings for sin and the fellowship offerings for his own fellowship with the Lord. And now, back in fellowship, the Lord answered the prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped. O glorious words of victory!

Conclusion:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular passage?

- Lesson #1: Jesus Christ is your guarantee of salvation and the assurance of granting your every desire.
- Lesson #2: God has a list of all of those in the Lamb's Book of Life who have received Jesus Christ as Savior.
- Lesson #3: Take your stand and fight, and God will grant the victory.
- Lesson #4: To live an unaccountable life is to flirt with danger.
- Lesson #5: To ignore sin's consequences is to ignore God's truth.
- Lesson #6: Sin brings tremendous devastation upon innocent bystanders.
- Lesson #7: God always has a plan to escape or end the judgment.
- Lesson #8: David has a conscience sensitive toward God.

Psalm 30

“I will exalt you, O Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths,  
And did not let my enemies gloat over me.  
O Lord my God,  
I called you for help, and you healed me.  
O Lord, you brought me up from the grave;  
You spared me from going down into the pit.  
Sing to the Lord, you saints of his.  
Praise his holy name.  
For his anger lasts only a moment,  
But his favor lasts a lifetime;  
Weeping may remain for a night,  
But rejoicing comes in the morning.”