

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

PART III

STUDY NUMBER TWENTY-THREE

2 Samuel 23:1-24:25

As we approach week twenty-three in our study, 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,
read a book or eat our last meal.**

**This is the time for the life of David to be over.
We are coming down to the end.**

Next week we will say good bye.

Today we are going to see his last message.

Two weeks ago he marched off the field of battle exhausted but he was singing a song.

And we looked at his song last week which He sang to the Lord.

**Today it is my last Psalm.
These are the last inspired words of David.**

Now don't get confused, these are not death bed words.

Next week you will see his last words as he prepares to die.

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

And now his "Last Psalm" are 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;

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.**

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.**

The spirit of the Lord spoke through David.

Now verses 3-7 are what's called a Messianic Prophecy.

Now don't get worried, don't think I just lost you.

Some of the writings of David refer to the Messiah.

For instance, Psalm 22, “My God, my God,
why have you forsaken me.”

David is writing seven hundred years
before crucifixion was ever known and before
Christ was crucified and saying
some of the very words that Christ said on the cross.

So it is a Messianic Psalm, a prophetic psalm.

What might David be thinking about
just as he is getting ready to die?

He would be thinking about that future kingdom
that God promised him.

When you come right down to it and you get ready
to die, you start thinking about the promises of God,
because now you have to cash in on them.

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.’

What is he describing?

He is describing a rule and reign of righteousness when everything is going to be great and all the problems have gone away.

There are a couple of verses that I am sure you have seen on Christmas cards.

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.”

This is what David is saying.

There is going to be a rule of righteousness, it's going to be my greater son.

Of course, twenty-six generations down, Jesus Christ is born, Isaiah spoke of it seven hundred years before Christ actually came, that this was going to happen.

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.**

**2 Samuel 7:16 – “Your house and your kingdom will
endure forever before me; your throne will be
established forever.”**

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.**

**Now he is not only going to come and rule
in righteousness, but the last part
of his prophetic psalm, God is going to
come and judge.**

**God is just not going to come as a king
and just overlook everything, he is going to
deal in real judgment and these
last two verses describe 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.

David talks about what's going to happen when that kingdom comes.

Christ is going to come and rule in righteousness but he is also going to come to judge the ungodly.

We turn in our passage from PROMISES TO PEOPLE.

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.

The men that are listed 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.

Remember he was being chased by Saul,
and he was an outcast and hunted like an animal.

It was during this time that God sent these men.
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.

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.

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 Pass 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.

Eleazar was one of those men who stood his ground when everybody else around him was fleeing.

Eleazar hung in there.

- 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.

Eleazar is characterized as standing his ground, and Shammah is pictured as taking his 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 Israelite's 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.

Verses 13-17 are somewhat of a PARENTHESIS in the passage.

It is one of the great war stories that came from harvest time.

Perhaps the fact that David is recalling Shammah's heroic act in the bean patch, he is reminded of this great story from his 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.

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 wall near the gate of Bethlehem!”

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

David is sweating and working away in the cave. He is thinking, “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.

They were willing to risk their lives for any request that he might make.

You can just see these guys coming back with such enthusiasm and excitement to surprise David with their gift.

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

Why? He made a drink offering out of that.

He was so grateful to have those men back, he literally thought it was the blood of the men for the courageous act that they had performed and he refused to drink it and he made an offering out of it.

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.

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 Zeruiah 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.

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 Zeruiah.

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.

REMEMBER ABISHAI is the CLINT EASTWOOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The 5th man in this lineup 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 mighty 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.

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.

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, realizing the battle was the Lord's.

We are now going to see the bronze plaque with all the names of those who yet remain.

You could number these and you would come out with thirty-four instead of thirty-seven. But there is a clue to it.

(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, Elikah 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.

Do you think there was a tad bit of painful remorse over the affair with Bathsheba, when he begins to write Uriah, the Hittite?

He realizes in this honor roll, he has to mention him because he was a tremendous military man.

He was first, was last and always a military man.

Now David has spoken his last words, he has given credit where credit is due.

Now can David still make a mistake?

What happens when you start thinking back about how successful you have been?

You start thinking about how big is big, don't you?

You really want to read your press clippings.

You really want to replay that ball game.

We talk in such braggadocios terms about the past,
David is going to commit a SINFUL CENSUS.

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

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

In chap. 23 he's SAVORING HIS SUCCESSES,
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

Statistics, that's the flesh, not the spirit.

When we are concerned about statistics
instead of people, we are really in trouble.

It's not wrong to count them,
because they have been told to count before,
but the motivation behind the counting right now,
is just how great have I been as a king
for fifty years.

David wanted to know how strong his nation was militarily.

However his strength really lay in God, but David laid his emphasis upon his armies.

God's position was: You don't 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.

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."

Now when you read that, you say, but the Lord did that! Well the Lord allowed it.

1 Chron. 21:1

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

The evil one is involved in this.

He incited him to do it and the Lord allowed it because of what's going to be taught to David in these circumstances once again.

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."

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 to do such a thing?"

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

This leads him to a question why.

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

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.”**

**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.**

**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.”

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.

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.’”

**That is grace, God is saying,
“You get the choice for the kind of judgment
that is going to come as a result
of what you have done, David.”**

**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.”**

Gad comes with three plans:

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

1. A FAMINE OF THREE YEARS.

**2. THREE MONTHS OF FLEEING
FROM YOUR ENEMIES**

3. THREE DAYS OF PLAGUE in your land.

**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.”**

God is more gracious and better than men are when it comes to dealing with the problem of sin.

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

What a tragedy all because one man is reveling in his record. You are saying, “It ain’t fair.” Seventy thousand died.

We had a clue earlier in the study, it said God was angry against Israel for some other things, things that are not mentioned in the record but something that they had done.

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.”

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.”**

**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.”

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.

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.

When we deal with that which offends the Lord,
and get our hearts right,
then God begins to bless.

Let's look at the threshing floor
of Araunah the Jebusite.
This a very significant spot.

Abraham went here to offer his son Isaac.

On this threshing floor, Solomon, his son
is going to build a temple.

On this threshing floor, just a little bit outside of it,
is where God's only begotten son died on Calvary.

So it is altogether fitting that God
would meet David for his last time at the altar,
the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

David is now, back in fellowship,
with the Lord and He answered the prayer
in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel
was stopped.

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.

For David it was a covenant, but for you and me it's Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is your guarantee of salvation and the assurance of granting your every desire. You honor the Lord, he's going to grant your desires.

When you fail to honor him, fail to give yourself to him, you are going to suffer the consequences.

Lesson #2: God has a list of all of those in the Lamb's Book of Life who have received Jesus Christ as Savior.

These seems to be impersonal names but God has got that list and when you receive Christ the Savior your name is inscribed in the Lamb's Book of Life. That book is going to be open at the time we stand before him.

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.

David makes his big mistake because he is king and his word goes. He is accountable to nobody. His word overruled and those men had to go with no choice and

do that census and brought all these devastating results.

Lesson #5: To ignore sin's consequences is to ignore God's truth.

Remember when I told you way back at the beginning of this series that God forgives instantaneously but the consequences live on for a long, long time. We have seen it, clear up until now and we are going to see it next week in the last study. David isn't through suffering yet. He has one more shot from the family coming in next weeks study.

Lesson #6: Sin brings tremendous devastation upon innocent bystanders.

Seventy thousand people died.

Lesson #7: God always has a plan to escape or end the judgment.

Once he built the alter; had the burnt offering and the fellowship offering, the plague was stopped. Run into his arms and get it right, that's the key.

Lesson #8: David has a conscience sensitive toward God.

Do you have that?

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.”**

Lessons Learned in the Life of David

PART III

STUDY NUMBER TWENTY-THREE - 2 Samuel 23:1-24:25

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,

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.

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v.38 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite

v.39 and Uriah the Hittite. There were thirty-seven in all.

24:v.1 Again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go and take a census of 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 to 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 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 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."

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."

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 Araunah 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 your 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 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.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Read 2 Samuel 23:1-24:25 several times and in your own words outline what is happening in the life of David.**
- 2. How is David described in chapter 23:1?**
- 3. What is David focusing upon in his last words, according to verse 5?**
- 4. Who was Eleazar and what did he do, according to verses 9 & 10?**
- 5. Who was Shammah and what did he do, according to verses 11 & 12?**

6. **What did David do with the water that was brought to him from the well of Bethlehem by three of his courageous men, according to verse 16?**
7. **What did David do wrong, according to chapter 24?**
8. **What judgment did David choose, according to verse 14?**
9. **Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?**
10. **What lesson have you learned from this study?**

LESSONS FROM THE 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.