

January 19

Scriptures: Read 1 Chronicles 21 & 22

Key Verse: “Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God. Therefore arise and build the sanctuary of the Lord God...” (1 Chronicles 22:19)

Overview

The chronicler's purpose in teaching Israel's history, as it relates to the worship of God and His Holy House, is clearly seen by his perspective on the story of David's sin in taking the census of Israel, as recorded in chapter 21. This is actually the background information of chapter 22, about David's preparations for his son Solomon to build the Temple. The book of 2 Samuel closes with this same story, but nothing is said about David's choice of the threshing floor of Ornan (a variant spelling of “Araunah”, 2 Samuel 24:18) to be the future site of God's Temple; yet this very thing is emphasized in the Chronicles account. (For more detailed information see “Day Unto Day” commentary on 2 Samuel 24).

From these two accounts, we can derive that Satan tempted David and God allowed it. Yielding to temptation, David made up his mind to take the census, but God had previously resolved to punish Israel (2 Samuel 24:1). The census was to be a channel for God's punishment of purging the land that was full of sin and spilt blood, due to the many revolts. Satan is a created being and thus subject to the authority of God. He can be used as an agent or instrument to see God's plan and purpose carried out, as he was in this incident with David; but he cannot overstep the boundaries God has set (cf. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; Zechariah 3:1-5).

Satan must have appealed to David's pride concerning his military strength, for the purpose of the census was to number all the fighting men in Israel, from Beersheba to Dan. David's self-glorification, not the glorification of God, would be the outcome. The strength of Israel was to be found in God alone and by faith in His promises, not in their numbers, as Joab understood (21:3). David was deceived by the great deceiver himself, Satan (c.f. James 1:13-16).

David's guilty conscience prompted his repentance, even before the divine punishment was executed. He confessed that he had sinned and admitted his foolishness (21:8). This action was exemplary, but even so, David was to bear the consequences of his sin, and God sent out His death angel. The shepherd's failure always causes the sheep to suffer. David's decision to throw himself upon the mercy of God was the right choice (21:13). He understood the mercy of God because he had experienced it several times before. David's willingness to obey God's instructions, given through the prophet Gad, concerning building the altar on the threshing floor of Oman and making sacrifices, led to God's orders that the death angel return his sword to its sheath. Thus the plague was stopped (21:27). David's obedience also led to God's revelation of that place being hallowed and designated as the site for His House.

David now put all his strength and wisdom into making extensive preparations for his son Solomon to build the Temple (chapter 22). All the required materials were gathered in abundance and even the craftsmen and workers were provided. David was old and wanted to establish his son as his successor before he died. He exhorted Solomon to fulfill his desire and

thus glorify God by building and dedicating to Him the most beautiful structure on the face of the earth. David not only gave kingly advice to his successor, but spoke with the heart of a father concerned to see his son follow God. After this, David charged all the leaders of Israel to help Solomon. No one can stand alone to do a great work for God. They were all charged to seek God with their whole being and build the sanctuary of the Lord for the glory of His name. We are likewise charged to build the kingdom of God with our whole being.

Prayer

By the working of Your Spirit and Your Word, O Lord, grant that we may set our hearts fully on You, seeking to know You more every day, that we may truly be labourers together with You in building Your Kingdom.