

Dr. Robert Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 28, 2 Sam. 24 – David Brings a Plague on Israel Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 28, 2 Sam. 24 – David Brings a Plague on Israel, Biblicalearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Chisholm's Session 28 focuses on 2 Samuel 24, detailing David's census and the subsequent plague upon Israel. The lecture explores God's anger towards Israel, David's role in inciting the census, and the consequences that followed. **Chisholm investigates the complexities of divine justice and mercy as seen in God's actions and David's response.** He examines the parallel account in 1 Chronicles, discussing whether "Satan" was the inciting force. **The lecture emphasizes God's hatred of sin, his compassion, and the importance of recognizing our sinfulness to appreciate Christ's redemption.** Ultimately, Chisholm aims to provide insights into God's character and how believers can relate to him.

**2. 11 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Chisholm, Session 28 – Double click icon to play in
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalearning.org [BeL]
Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament →
Historical Books → 1 Samuel).**



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3. Briefing Document: Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 28, 2 Sam. 24 – David Brings a Plague on Israel

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from Dr. Chisholm's lecture on 2 Samuel 24:

Briefing Document: Dr. Robert Chisholm on 2 Samuel 24 - David Brings a Plague Upon Israel

Overview:

Dr. Chisholm's lecture focuses on the final chapter of 2 Samuel, exploring the disturbing account of David taking a census and the resulting plague upon Israel. The lecture delves into the theological complexities of divine anger, judgment, repentance, and compassion. Chisholm grapples with difficult questions about God's actions and highlights the importance of understanding God's holiness and justice alongside His mercy. He also connects the themes of 2 Samuel 24 to the broader narrative of the Old Testament and ultimately to the Gospel message.

Main Themes and Ideas:

1. Divine Anger and Israel's Sin:

- The chapter opens with the Lord's anger burning against Israel. While the specific reason for this anger is not explicitly stated, Chisholm argues that it is implicitly due to Israel's sin, drawing parallels with other Old Testament passages where divine anger is linked to rebellion and idolatry. "When we read that kind of language, usually, always really, elsewhere when it's used, there is a good reason for the Lord to be angry, and it's human sin."

1. God Inciting David:

- A central problematic point is God's role in inciting David to take a census, which David later recognizes as sinful. This raises questions about God tempting people to sin, a concept that seems to contradict James's teaching.
- Chisholm examines the Hebrew word translated as "incited," noting its varied uses, sometimes positive and sometimes negative, even used of Satan inciting God to test Job (Job 2:3). This is a difficult point: "So, he's going to incite David to do something that in turn is going to bring judgment upon the nation. And he incites David to go and take a census, to go around and count how many warriors

he has. By David's own admission later in the chapter, David is going to recognize that this was a sinful thing to do."

1. **The 1 Chronicles Parallel:**

- Chisholm addresses the parallel account in 1 Chronicles 21, which attributes the incitement to "Satan." He argues that in this context, "Satan" likely refers to a human adversary rather than the proper name. He stresses that even if it *is* referring to Satan as a proper name, God is still ultimately orchestrating the events: "Even if you insist on Chronicles, while Chronicles is relatively late, maybe by that time Satan is being used as a proper name. And so, we could translate Satan. It would be the only place in the Old Testament where that would be the case. Even then, I don't think God's off the hook on this because Satan would simply be his instrument in inciting David."
- He emphasizes the need to reconcile the two accounts without dismissing 2 Samuel's explicit statement that the Lord incited David.

1. **David's Sin and Lack of Faith:**

- David's decision to take a census is portrayed as an act of pride and a lack of faith in God's provision and protection. Joab's initial resistance highlights this point. David is described as acting "Saul-like" in relying on visible strength rather than trusting in God.

1. **Judgment and the Three Options:**

- Despite David's confession, the Lord presents him with three options for punishment: famine, fleeing from enemies, or plague. This demonstrates that forgiveness does not always mean the absence of consequences. "It doesn't look to me as if the Lord answers David's prayer for forgiveness here. He comes with a message, well, judgment is coming. You get to pick your poison."

1. **David's Choice and God's Mercy:**

- David chooses to fall into the hands of the Lord, recognizing God's great mercy ("*for his mercy is great*"). Chisholm suggests David hoped for a reduced sentence. While the plague is ultimately sent, the Lord relents before it fully destroys Jerusalem, demonstrating compassion.

1. **David as Royal Priest and Intercessor:**

- David, through Gad the prophet, is instructed to build an altar on the threshing floor of Arunah the Jebusite to stop the plague. David serves as an intercessor for the people, performing a priestly role.
- David insists on paying for the threshing floor and the offerings, emphasizing the need for sacrifice and genuine repentance. "I insist on paying for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord, my God, burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

1. **Lessons and Implications:**

- **Severity of God's Punishment:** God's punishment for sin can be severe, even when sinners repent. This episode mirrors the Bathsheba incident, where David confessed but still faced painful consequences.
- **God Hates Sin:** This passage is a stark reminder that God hates sin and will not tolerate it. We must come to grips with the reality of divine justice.
- **God's Compassion:** Despite the severity of the judgment, the Lord demonstrates compassion by relenting and stopping the plague. David's choice to fall into God's hands reflects an understanding of God's merciful nature.
- **Connection to the Gospel:** The lecture concludes by connecting the themes of divine wrath and judgment to the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus took the penalty for our sins, and understanding the gravity of sin is essential for appreciating the Gospel.

Key Quotes:

- "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."
- "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 human hands."
- "I insist on paying for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord, my God, burnt offerings that cost me nothing."
- "God hates sin and he hates sin and he is not going to tolerate it. And we need to come to grips with that. And he's perfectly justified in punishing sinners."
- "Jesus took the penalty, the punishment for sin upon himself so that we can be redeemed."

- "And until you come to grips with that, until you humble yourself and see yourself as a sinner who deserves nothing, you're not going to appreciate what Jesus did."

Conclusion:

Dr. Chisholm's lecture provides a detailed exploration of the complex themes in 2 Samuel 24. The lecture encourages a deeper understanding of God's character, balancing justice with mercy, and recognizing the importance of repentance and sacrifice.

Ultimately, the passage serves as a reminder of the gravity of sin and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

4. Study Guide: Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 28, 2 Sam. 24 – David Brings a Plague on Israel

2 Samuel 24: David's Census and the Plague - A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. Why was the Lord angry with Israel at the beginning of 2 Samuel 24?
2. How does Dr. Chisholm interpret the passage in 1 Chronicles 21:1, where it says Satan incited David to take a census?
3. What were the three options of punishment that God presented to David through the prophet Gad?
4. Which punishment did David choose and why?
5. What was the role of Arunah the Jebusite in this narrative?
6. How did David intercede on behalf of the people of Israel?
7. How did David's actions in 2 Samuel 24 mirror the story of Saul?
8. What is the significance of David purchasing the threshing floor from Arunah instead of accepting it as a gift?
9. What does Dr. Chisholm say about the gravity of sin, divine punishment and its relation to the crucifixion of Christ?
10. What two important principles emerge from the passage in 2 Samuel 24 according to Dr. Chisholm?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The Lord's anger burned against Israel because they had sinned in some way, although the specific sin is not explicitly stated in the text. Dr. Chisholm suggests that based on similar instances in the Old Testament, this was likely due to blatant rebellion, often in the form of idolatry.
2. Dr. Chisholm believes that the term "Satan" in 1 Chronicles 21:1 likely refers to a human adversary or enemy of Israel rather than the figure of Satan. He bases this interpretation on the fact that the Hebrew text uses the word "Satan" without the

definite article, which is typically used when referring to the specific figure of Satan.

3. The three options were: seven years of famine in the land, three months of fleeing from enemies while being pursued, or three days of plague in the land. These options represented different forms of divine judgment for the sin committed.
4. David chose to fall into the hands of the Lord, opting for the three days of plague. He reasoned that the Lord's mercy was great and he would rather deal directly with God than with human enemies.
5. Arunah was the owner of the threshing floor where the angel of the Lord was poised to destroy Jerusalem. His willingness to offer the threshing floor and oxen as a gift played a key role in David's intercession and the eventual cessation of the plague.
6. David interceded by building an altar on Arunah's threshing floor, offering burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and praying to the Lord on behalf of the land. This act of sacrifice and supplication led to the Lord answering his prayer and stopping the plague.
7. David's actions in taking a census without faith in God mirror Saul's lack of trust in the Lord for security. Like Saul, David was later conscience-stricken and realized he had done a very foolish thing.
8. By paying for the threshing floor and oxen, David demonstrated his sincerity and commitment to the Lord. He insisted on making a sacrifice that cost him something, rather than offering a burnt offering that cost him nothing, believing it would be more acceptable to God.
9. Dr. Chisholm asserts that God hates sin, is justified in punishing sinners, and that the crucifixion was just the tip of the iceberg. Jesus took our sin upon himself, so that we can be redeemed.
10. The two main principles are: God's punishment of sin is sometimes very severe and the Lord is compassionate and willing to soften punishment when sinners approach him properly. These principles highlight God's justice and mercy in dealing with sin.

Essay Questions

1. Explore the theological implications of God inciting David to take a census, considering the tension with the idea that God does not tempt people to sin. How does Dr. Chisholm attempt to resolve this tension?
2. Analyze David's character in 2 Samuel 24. How does he demonstrate both flawed judgment and genuine repentance?
3. Discuss the significance of David's purchase of the threshing floor from Arunah. What does this act reveal about David's understanding of sacrifice and atonement?
4. Compare and contrast the portrayal of God in 2 Samuel 24 with other depictions of God's character in the Old Testament. How does this chapter contribute to a broader understanding of God's justice and mercy?
5. Discuss how the story of David's census and the resulting plague as a reminder of what we've been delivered from through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Census:** An official count or enumeration of a population, often for the purpose of taxation or military conscription.
- **Incited:** Persuaded or encouraged someone to take a particular course of action, sometimes with negative connotations.
- **Adversary:** An enemy or opponent; in the Old Testament, it can refer to a human enemy or, in some cases, a supernatural being like Satan.
- **Threshing Floor:** A level area where grain is separated from the straw by trampling or beating. It was often a significant place in ancient Near Eastern communities.
- **Jebusite:** A member of the pre-Israelite people who inhabited Jerusalem.
- **Intercessor:** A person who intervenes on behalf of others, especially in prayer or negotiation.
- **Burnt Offering:** A sacrificial offering in which an animal is completely consumed by fire as an act of worship and atonement.

- **Fellowship Offering:** A sacrificial offering in which part of the offering is burned, part is eaten by the priests, and part is shared with the offerer and their family and friends as a communal meal.
- **Plague:** A contagious disease that spreads rapidly and causes widespread illness and death.
- **Compassion:** A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.
- **Redemption:** The action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil.
- **Sovereign:** Possessing supreme or ultimate power.
- **Idolatry:** The worship of idols or false gods.
- **Divine Wrath:** God's anger or displeasure at sin and disobedience.
- **Mediator:** One who reconciles opposing groups.
- **Lamentations:** Expressions of sorrow or grief; songs or poems expressing mourning or regret.
- **Prodigal:** Wastefully extravagant.
- **The Septuagint:** A Greek version of the Hebrew Bible (or Old Testament), including several Apocryphal books, made in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC and used in the Eastern Orthodox Church.
- **Deber:** Hebrew term referring to the plague that tormented the Philistines and draws attention to the mass destruction of human life.

5. FAQs on Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 28, 2 Sam. 24 – David Brings a Plague on Israel, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about 2 Samuel 24: David's Census and the Plague

- **Why was God angry with Israel in 2 Samuel 24?**
- The text states that "the anger of the Lord burned against Israel" (2 Samuel 24:1), but it doesn't explicitly say *why*. Based on similar passages in the Old Testament, it's highly probable that Israel had sinned, perhaps through idolatry or blatant rebellion against God. God's anger is consistently portrayed as a response to human sin.
- **Why did God incite David to take a census, and why was that wrong?**
- God incited David to take a census as part of His judgment against Israel. While the action itself seems straightforward, David recognized it as sinful. It likely stemmed from a lack of faith and trust in God for security, relying instead on the visible strength of his army, which parallels Saul's behavior. David realized that trusting in the number of soldiers rather than God's power was a form of pride and disobedience.
- **How does 1 Chronicles 21 relate to 2 Samuel 24, especially concerning the role of "Satan?"**
- 1 Chronicles 21:1 states that "Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census." However, the Hebrew word "Satan" in this context may not refer to the proper name we associate with Satan. It could simply mean "an adversary" or "enemy," potentially a human adversary inciting David. Even if it does refer to Satan as an instrument, it doesn't absolve God, as Satan would still be acting as God's instrument of judgment. The overall orchestration remains with God.
- **What were the consequences of David's census?**
- After taking the census, David was conscience-stricken and confessed his sin. However, the Lord, through the prophet Gad, presented David with three choices of punishment: seven years of famine, three months of fleeing from enemies, or three days of plague (although some translations say 3 years of famine instead of 7). David chose the plague, which resulted in the death of 70,000 people in Israel.

- **Why did David choose to "fall into the hands of the Lord" rather than face human enemies?**
- David recognized that God, despite His anger, is ultimately merciful. He believed that even in punishment, God's compassion would be greater than the cruelty of human enemies. He hoped for a reduced sentence or a tempering of the judgment.
- **How did the plague stop?**
- As the angel of the Lord was about to destroy Jerusalem, God relented. David, witnessing the destruction, confessed his sin and interceded on behalf of the people, acknowledging his guilt and pleading for God to spare Israel. God instructed David to build an altar on the threshing floor of Arunah the Jebusite. David purchased the threshing floor and oxen, sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and the Lord answered his prayer and stopped the plague.
- **What does this passage reveal about God's character, particularly His justice and mercy?**
- The passage portrays God as a holy God who hates sin and will punish it severely. The massive loss of life is a stark reminder of the consequences of sin. However, the passage also reveals God's compassion and willingness to soften His punishment when sinners repent and approach Him properly. David's intercession and God's subsequent relenting demonstrate God's mercy, highlighting the balance between divine justice and compassion.
- **What are the broader implications of this passage for understanding the Gospel and God's relationship with humanity?**
- 2 Samuel 24 underscores the gravity of sin and the divine judgment it deserves. It provides a backdrop for understanding the significance of Jesus Christ's sacrifice, where He took the penalty for our sins upon Himself. The passage also demonstrates that even in the midst of judgment, God's compassion is evident. Recognizing the consequences of sin allows us to truly appreciate the redemption offered through Jesus Christ and the depth of God's love and mercy.