

Sin, Consequence, Atonement

2 Samuel 24

I. Intro

- A. Story: Eden's foot
 - 1. We put our trust in all kinds of things besides God
- B. Now is it wrong to have health insurance? Of course not
 - 1. There's nothing wrong with health insurance, a retirement account, a buffer in your bank, or any other "safety" net
 - 2. BUT, at the end of the day, those things can't really give you true security
- C. "Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever." (Psalm 125:1).
 - 1. When we trust in God, we are truly stable
 - 2. When we trust in anything lesser? It's shifting sand...
- D. The story from David's life today, the final chapter in 2 Samuel, is a story of misplaced trust
 - 1. David places his trust in the things of the world, which leads to sin and death
 - 2. Only God can rectify the damage that David's sin causes
- E. But it's our life too
 - 1. We trust in the flesh, all the time (e.g. health insurance)
 - 2. It doesn't always turn into catastrophic sin, but it is symptomatic of a deeper problem → ever trusting in self over God
- F. But God provides a way
 - 1. He provides a way to deal with David's sin and ours
 - 2. He takes our feeble trust, our weak efforts, and he replaces it with the finished work of the cross
 - 3. But we have to trust him, surrender to him, let him do what we can't do
- G. Let's see...

- II. *2 Samuel 24:1–10, [1] Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah." [2] So the king said to Joab, the commander of the army, who was with him, "Go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and number the people, that I may know the number of the people." [3] But Joab said to the king, "May the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see it, but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?" [4] But the king's word prevailed against Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel. [5] They crossed the Jordan and began from Aroer, and from the city that is in the middle of the valley, toward Gad and on to Jazer. [6] Then they came to Gilead, and to Kadesh in the land of the Hittites; and they came to Dan, and from Dan they went around to Sidon, [7] and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and Canaanites; and they went out to the Negeb of Judah at Beersheba. [8] So when they had gone through all the land,*

they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. [9] And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: in Israel there were 800,000 valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were 500,000. [10] But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done.

- A. This chapter is broken into three sections: David's sin, the consequence of his sin, and the solution to his sin. This first section describes David's sin
- B. V1 is also paralleled in *1 Chronicles 21:1, Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.*
- C. So God incited, or Satan incited? Which is it?
 - 1. I don't want to spend too much time here, but this is one of the best passages to explain how evil works within God's sovereign plan.
 - 2. Just like in Job's story, we have an enemy of god's people who wants to work evil against them... and God allows it!
 - 3. Even with the evil, God still works through it and despite it to bring about our God and his glory.
 - 4. Remember: God is not the author of evil, but – in his sovereignty – can turn evil into good
 - a) Ex: Joseph and being sold into slavery
- 5. This shows how God can work despite evil to bring about good**
- D. David commands Joab and the commanders to take a census of Israel and Judah (this is a sin)
 - 1. Even Joab disagrees (!) – If Joab disagrees, you know it's wrong
- E. Why was it wrong?
 - 1. Censuses are not inherently wrong. We see a census in Numbers 1.
 - 2. The problem goes back to WHY David wanted a census
 - a) Will you trust in God or your military strength?
 - b) Will you take pride in the Lord or in your national power?
 - c) Does Israel belong to David or to God?
 - d) Who is ultimately responsible for the nation?
 - 3. The issue is that David is focusing on the number instead of focusing on God.
 - a) You typically take a census before war so, perhaps, David wants to get ready for the next Philistine attack
 - b) He is tempted to trust in self (human wisdom) instead of God
 - 4. What does this look like for you? Trusting in self > God, \$ > God, etc
- F. After 9 months plus of resistance, despite warnings, David's conscience strikes him: "I have sinned greatly in what I have done."
- G. This proves to us that the census was for the wrong motive
 - 1. Important b/c it isn't always about the action. It might be more about the reason BEHIND the action, which only God can truly see.
- H. This shows the pattern of sin we see in the Bible: Pride → Self-Reliance → Sin
 - 1. When we think about sin in our own lives, it tends to be the same canisters over and over again (But what about pride? Self reliance?)

2. The root of sin is shifting from dependence on God to dependence on self & human resources

- a) This is what we see in the Garden of Eden!
- b) Will we trust in God? Will we trust in human wisdom?

III. *2 Samuel 24:10–17, [10] But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly." [11] And when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, [12] "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you. Choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'" [13] So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me." [14] Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man."*

[15] So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning until the appointed time. And there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba 70,000 men. [16] And when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, "It is enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. [17] Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house." (ESV)

- A. God sends the prophet Gad to David with three possible judgments.
 1. Three years of famine
 2. Three months of fleeing enemies
 3. Three days of plague
- B. David chooses to fall into God's hands (good choice - get it over with), and a plague strikes Israel. → "Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great."
 1. 70,000 men die across Israel (!) → lower the ranks of that census
 2. The consequence of sin...
 - a) Sin costs something. It always does. The Bible says when it is full-grown it gives birth to DEATH
 - (1) Relationally, spiritually, physically, financially
 - b) The consequences of sin on the people around us is GREAT
 - (1) You NEVER sin in a vacuum
- C. As the angel approaches Jerusalem, "The LORD relented from the calamity."
 1. When David sees the angel of Death, he cries out to God
 - a) Gives us a good picture of repentance
 - b) He doesn't blame God. He doesn't blame Satan.
 - c) He doesn't blame Joab. He takes the credit.

- d) He steps in as a mediator, asking God to punish him instead
- 2. "I have sinned... but these sheep, what have they done?"
 - a) This is what David has always done well → owns his sin well
- 3. He offers himself as the one who should bear the punishment (foreshadowing of Jesus)
- D. We learn a few big realities about sin (harmatology):
 - 1. Sin is real
 - 2. Sin brings judgment
 - 3. Sin harms us and the people around us
 - 4. We need God to relent
 - 5. We need a mediator
- E. David's repentance (v10, v17) is genuine. You can see in the way he changes
 - 1. Definition of repentance → change in mind, change in direction
 - 2. David goes from selfish king to selfless shepherd
 - 3. He goes from "What military services can these people offer me" to "I will offer myself for these people"

IV. *2 Samuel 24:17–25, [17] Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house." [18] And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, raise an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." [19] So David went up at Gad's word, as the LORD commanded. [20] And when Araunah looked down, he saw the king and his servants coming on toward him. And Araunah went out and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground. [21] And Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be averted from the people." [22] Then Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him. Here are the oxen for the burnt offering and the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood. [23] All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you." [24] But the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. [25] And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel. (ESV)*

- A. Now, David offers to pay for the sin of the census, but something interesting happens. Instead, God tells him to build an altar (e.g. prepare for sacrifice) on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.
- B. Now, Araunah was a Jebusite - the people who lived in Jerusalem before David conquered it (he's a remnant)
 - 1. When your conquering king shows up, you offer him the land, which is what he does
- C. Araunah offers the land and animals for free, but David refuses: "I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing." So he buys it.

- a) <Pause> What does this teach us?
 - (1) This chapter is about the atonement for David's sin
 - (a) Define atonement → cover, and the cover costs
 - (b) Define the cost → blood
 - (2) The cost of atonement is always blood
 - (a) Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)
 - (b) Sacrificial System
 - 2. The cost of YOUR salvation was great, your atonement → you cost a lot
- D. Atonement wasn't a new concept, but you were only allowed to offer burnt offerings at the tabernacle, (@ Gibeon), but God told him to offer it HERE.
- E. David buys the site, builds an altar, and offers and God receives it gladly, marked by the Lord's response, which includes the averting of the pestilence as well as consuming the offerings with divine fire
 - 1. Summarizing so far... David sinned... Sin wreaks havoc on the nation... Sin needs to be atoned for... It is paid for with an atoning sacrifice
 - a) David offers himself, but God provides another alternative
- V. But there's something else going on here, which is missed by us as modern readers without a real context of the geography and history of Israel
 - A. Now, conservatively, around 1900ish BC, in this exact location, Abraham was told by God to sacrifice his son, his only son, Isaac
 - 1. Right before that happens, God stills Abraham's hand and provides a substitute → God provided a sacrifice so the son of faith could live
 - B. About 1,000 years after that event, David finds himself face to face with a pestilence that is about to wipe out Jerusalem b/c of his sin
 - 1. He offers himself, but God (once again) provides a sacrifice, another way so that David, his chosen king, can live and sin can be atoned for
 - C. Now, David's son, Solomon, builds the Holy Temple, which would become the permanent location for the Jewish sacrificial system on this exact location
 - D. About 1,000 years after THAT event, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Greater Son of David, the Lamb of God, would die for the sins of the world just a stones throw away on Golgotha and as he did, the curtain in the temple, 5" thick and 90 feet tall, is torn in two as Jesus makes a way for us to boldly enter the presence of God
 - E. So this spot is...
 - 1. Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac
 - 2. David stopped a plague through sacrifice
 - 3. The temple sacrifices were offered for centuries
 - 4. About 1/3 mile from where Jesus would be crucified
 - F. A significant location indeed, and a fitting place to end since the next book begins with David's Son, Solomon, becoming king and building the temple
- VI. PULL IT TOGETHER → What do we do with all of this?
 - A. This chapter shows us three unchanging realities:
 - 1. **We are more like David than we think**
 - a) We may not number armies, but we count other things:

- (1) Our money, success, influence, security, ideas
 - (2) We are constantly tempted to shift our trust from God to ourselves
 - (3) This is exactly what Adam and Eve did and we are all born living out the same story
- b) Sin isn't always obvious rebellion, it's often self-reliance
- 2. Our sin always costs more than we expect**
 - a) 70,000 people died because of one man's pride.
 - b) That should sober us. We like to believe:
 - (1) "This won't affect anyone else"
 - (2) "This is just my thing I struggle with"
 - c) But Scripture is clear: Sin spreads. Sin damages. Sin kills.
 - d) You never sin in isolation. Ever.
- 3. God provides what we cannot**
 - a) David offers himself saying, "Let your hand be against me..."
 - b) But God says, in effect: "No. I will provide a sacrifice."
 - (1) Abraham → God provides a ram
 - (2) David → God provides a sacrifice
 - (3) Israel → God provides a system
 - (4) Us → God provides His Son, the Lamb of God
- 4. Consider Jesus, the Greater David
 - a) David stood and said: "Let me die for the people" but he couldn't.
 - (1) Jesus didn't just offer, he actually did it
 - b) David's sacrifice stopped a plague temporarily
 - (1) Jesus' sacrifice defeats sin permanently (Hebrews)
 - c) David needed atonement, but Jesus is atonement
- B. Let's make this real for you. Where are you placing your trust right now?
 - 1. What are you trusting in to give you peace in life, security, safety?
 - 2. What are you trusting in to save your soul from judgment?
 - a) Being good enough? Church attendance? Performance?
- C. Are you trusting in what YOU can do, or will you trust in the God who provides the alternative, the sacrifice for sin to atone?
- D. The reality is that sin is real, sin has a cost, but God has already made a way in Jesus Christ
 - 1. The cost of atonement has been paid by the only one who could fit the bill
- E. What must we do to be saved? Think about David:
 - 1. He acknowledges his sin
 - 2. He places his faith in the sacrifice God commanded & provided
 - 3. He receives atonement
- F. The same is true for you
 - 1. Acknowledge your sin, Believe in the sacrifice God has provided, receive forgiveness and grace → repent and believe and you too will be saved