

Numbering the People

5-18-2025



Previous lesson

- The list of David's faithful warriors
- We also need to be faithful servants of the Lord Jesus.

The Census

- **2 Samuel 24:1-2 (KJV) moved to number**

¹ And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

² For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which *was* with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

- **1 Chronicles 21:1-4 (KJV) provoked to number**

¹ And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

² And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know *it*.

Timing

- Some commentators feel that the events recorded here took place sometime after David captured Jerusalem (2 Sam 5) but before he brought the ark into the holy city (2 Sam 6). Believer's Bible Commentary
- It is impossible to determine the date of this episode from 2 Samuel alone, but the parallel version in [1 Chronicles 21](#) places it just prior to David's instructions to Solomon about building the temple ([1 Chron. 21:28-22:19](#)). The census must have come late in David's reign, and may have been part of the plan of dynastic succession in anticipation of Solomon's coming to power. The Bible Knowledge Commentary
- This event happened late in David's life; he had been walking with God a long time, which means we will always be in a battle. There will never be a time that our feet go up and we can relax in the Christian life. We are called to put on the whole armour of God, for our war is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

Two accounts

- 2 Sam 24 - It would appear that God in His **anger** told **David** to take a census of **Israel and Judah**. But we learn from [1 Chronicles 21:1](#) that it was *Satan* who moved David to do this. Satan *precipitated* it, David *performed* it (because of the pride of his heart), and God *permitted* it.
- 1 Chron 21 - When this chapter is compared with [2 Samuel 24](#), it is not at first clear who was behind David's sin of numbering the people. Second Samuel says that the Lord moved David to number Israel because His anger was kindled against the nation. Here we are told that Satan incited the action. Both statements are, of course, true. God allowed Satan to tempt David. God is not the author of evil, but He permits it and causes it to serve His appointed ends.
- God is angry with the nation of Israel. We are not told the exact reasons. Possibly it was their indifference to the Lord, rebellion, or even disobedience. Nevertheless, God is angry. The Lord moves David to number the people.

Believer's Bible Commentary

Treasures From the Scriptures

- In [2 Samuel 24:1](#), however, the historian revealed that the Lord was angry with His people and used David's census as an occasion to punish him and them. There is no contradiction between 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21. The Lord simply let Satan tempt David to undertake the census, much as He permitted Satan to attack Job. In His sovereignty God's ultimate authority extends even to the workings of Satan. The Bible Knowledge Commentary
- Sometimes people point out the differences between the way this story is introduced in 2 Samuel to that in 1 Chronicles. Samuel tells us that because God is angry with Israel without the reason being provided. He tells David to take a census. The Chronicler, however, writes that it is Satan who incites David's action ([1 Chronicles 21:1](#)). This is not actually a contradiction. Scripture clearly attests that God does not tempt anyone, **James 1:13-14** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. .
- But God can allow Satan to step in. In this case, David succumbs to temptation. As a result, God is then able to deal with David's pride as well as chasten the nation of Israel. Layman's Bible Commentary

- **1Chronicles 21:1** **Satan moved David**

Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel. Satan's attack was against God's chosen nation of Israel. He used the king to bring offence to God. Satan moved David - the word moved means seduce, entice, persuade, provoke, or stimulate.

- Satan attacks all believers but especially leaders, pastors, and missionaries because if he can effectively attack them then an effect is felt upon the church and those seeking to win their communities for Christ. Satan's attack on David came in the form of a suggestion or thought into his mind about how big and great his army had become. We also see Satan's thoughts and suggestions in the life of Peter.
- **Matthew 16:23** *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offence to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."* Here Jesus was informing His disciples that he came to suffer, be killed, and be raised on the third day. Peter in his own wisdom took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him. This is not for you, we won't let it happen. Jesus looking straight past Peter spoke directly to Satan who had instigated the thought in Peter's mind.

- **Job 1:6-12 (NKJV) incite against**

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has *is* in your power; only do not lay a hand on his *person*." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

- **Job 2:3 (NKJV)** Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."

- **Zechariah 3:1-2 (NKJV) oppose**

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.

And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

- **Matthew 4:1-11 (NKJV) Tempt**

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, '*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*' " Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: '*He shall give His angels charge over you,*' and, '*In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.*' " Jesus said to him, "It is written again, '*You shall not tempt the LORD your God.*' "

- Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, '*You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.*' " Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him. (Luke 4:13 Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.)

Luke 10:17-20 (NKJV) Exalt

Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

- **Luke 22:3-6 (NKJV) Betray**

Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.

- The call of Judas, hidden from our view, also speaks to the equality of all disciples in Jesus' eyes. Whether called from a fishing boat, a tax booth, or an unknown place like Judas, each disciple was equally chosen, equally loved by the Lord. Judas allowed Satan to fill the place in his heart that should have been filled by the Lord's love for him and his love for the Lord.
- Satan intrigued Judas with the desire for money which led him to betray the Lord for a price.

Luke 22:31-34 (NKJV) Sift or test

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren." But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

Acts 5:1-11 (NKJV) Lie

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware *of it*, and brought a certain part and laid *it* at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

- **2 Corinthians 2:10-11 (NKJV) Take advantage**

Now whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

- **2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (NKJV) deceive**

For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

- **Revelation 12:10 (NKJV) accuser**

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

- **2 Corinthians 12:7-9 (NKJV) Buffet**

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- **1 Thessalonians 2:17-20 (NKJV) Hinder**

But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. Therefore we wanted to come to you--even I, Paul, time and again--but Satan hindered us. For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.

- **Revelation 2:24 (NKJV) Depths of Satan (Jezebel to teach and seduce)**

Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.

Our defense against Satan

- **Ephesians 6:11-13 (NKJV) whole armor**

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

- **Romans 13:11-14 (NKJV) armor of light**

And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.

- God sometimes allows Satan to move, provoke, incite, oppose, tempt, exalt, betray, sift, lie, take advantage of, deceive, accuse, buffet, and hinder.

- **1 Peter 5:6-11 (NKJV) a roaring lion**

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*. To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.