

2 Samuel 24

Verse 1

Now the anger of the Lord burned against Israel again, and He incited David against them to say, “Go, count Israel and Judah.”

We are not told why God was angry with Israel but there could have been any number of reasons.

Did God incite David to number Israel? It sure sounds like it! But if God incited David to do it, why would David be guilty of sin?

In verse 10 David says **I have sinned greatly in what I have done.** If David sinned, then why does the text say God incited him to do it?

According to scripture God does not incite people to do wrong but each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

See James 1:13-14

¹³ No one is to say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

Why does the writer of 1 Chronicles say that Satan stood up against Israel, and incited David to number Israel?

See 1 Chronicles 21:1

Then Satan stood up against Israel and incited David to count Israel.

So was it God who incited David or was it Satan? The following may be the best solution to this seeming contradiction.

Satan provoked David to number the people, and God allowed him to do so. God allows those things which serve to advance His will.

The author of 2 Samuel chose to view this whole affair in the ultimate sense of God being in control of all things, while the author of 1 Chronicles wanted to showcase the satanic plot and how God used this as a tool for judgment.

Satan meant it for evil, but God knowing it would benefit David and Israel for good in the long run allowed Satan to provoke David.

Verses 2 – 9

² So the king said to Joab the commander of the army, who was with him, “Roam about now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and conduct a census of the people, so 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 *can still* see; but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?” ⁴ Nevertheless, the king’s order prevailed against Joab and against the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army left the presence of the king to conduct a census of the people of Israel. ⁵ They crossed the Jordan and camped in Aroer, on the right side of the city that is in the middle of the Valley of Gad and toward Jazer. ⁶ Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi, and they came to Dan-jaan and around to Sidon, ⁷ then they came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites, and they went out to the south of Judah, to Beersheba. ⁸ So when they had roamed about through the whole land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. ⁹ And Joab gave the number of the census of the people to the king: in Israel there were eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

² So the king said to Joab the commander of the army, who was with him, “Roam about now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and conduct a census of the people, so that I may know the number of the people.”

David told Joab to count all of Israel but Joab did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering.

See 1 Chronicles 21:6

⁶ But he did not count Levi and Benjamin among them, because the king’s command was abhorrent to Joab.

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 *can still* see; but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?” ⁴ Nevertheless, the king’s order prevailed against Joab and against the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army left the presence of the king to conduct a census of the people of Israel.

We are not told why Joab and the commanders of the army objected to this census but in the end the will of the king prevailed.

One objection to a census could be that it does not provide the kind of rewards that these men would receive from a military campaign.

⁹ **And Joab gave the number of the census of the people to the king: in Israel there were eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.**

See pic 2405

Scripture	Year BC	Event	Troops	Men killed
Joshua 6	1406	Enter Canaan	600,000	
Joshua 6 - 12	1406 to 1400	Takeover of Canaan		- 175,000
Judges 20	1350	Beginning of Judges	425,000	
Judges 20	1350	Civil war with Benjamin		- 65,000
1 Sam 4	1070	War with the Philistines	360,000	
1 Sam 4	1070	Philistines destroy Shiloh		- 34,000
1 Sam 11	1050	Saul is King	330,000	
1 Sam 14	1048 - 1026	War with 6 nations		-120,000
1 Sam 15	1026	War with the Ammonites	210,000	
2 Samuel 24:9	966	Near the end of Davids life	1.3 mil	
1 Chron. 21:5	966	Near the end of Davids life	1.57 mil	

As one can see there is a difference in the number of troops according to this account (2 Samuel 24:9) and that reported in 1 Chron. 21:5.

1 Chron. 21:5

⁵ **Then Joab gave the number of the census of the people to David. Israel was 1,100,000 men in all who drew the sword; and Judah was 470,000 men who drew the sword.**

1.3 million vs. 1.57 million.

David asked for a census which would include all of the people but Joab only tells the king how many “men drew the sword”.

The number of fighting men had decreased in Israel from the time of Joshua until the end of Saul’s reign. But by the end of David’s reign the size of the army had increased greatly. Some of this increase was due to population growth but many men from foreign nations had also joined David prior to and during his reign.

During the 40 years of wandering the number of fighting men remained around 600,000. During that time the population of Israel was around 2.5 million. If the same proportion of fighting men to general population is used for the reign of David then there would have been 5 to 6 million people.

Verses 10 – 14

¹⁰ Now David’s heart troubled him after he had counted the people. So David said to the Lord, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, Lord, please overlook the guilt of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly.” ¹¹ When David got up in the morning, the word of the Lord came to Gad the prophet, David’s seer, saying, ¹² “Go and speak to David, ‘This is what the Lord says: “I am imposing upon you three *choices*; choose for yourself one of them, and I will do *it* to you.”” ¹³ So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, “Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee for three months before your enemies while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days’ of plague in your land? Now consider and see what answer I shall return to Him who sent me.” ¹⁴ Then David said to Gad, “I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into human hands.”

¹⁰ Now David’s heart troubled him after he had counted the people. So David said to the Lord, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, Lord, please overlook the guilt of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly.”

When we consider that David took responsibility for this act and that the Lord punished him for that act we can safely say that Satan incited David to sin and David choose by his own free will to do what was wrong.

One redeeming quality about David is that whenever he sinned he would repent of that sin. In the case of Bathsheba and Uriah his repentance took longer than it should have but when he was confronted by the prophet Nathan he did confess his sin.

¹² “Go and speak to David, ‘this is what the Lord says: “I am imposing upon you three *choices*; choose for yourself one of them, and I will do *it* to you.

David had admitted his sin and asked God to forgive him but even in forgiveness there are still consequences. When he committed adultery and murder God forgave him but his son died and two other sons led rebellions against him.

¹³ So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, “Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee for three months before your enemies while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days’ of plague in your land? Now consider and see what answer I shall return to Him who sent me.”

God gives David a choice of punishments;

1. Seven years of famine
2. Three months of fleeing from their enemies
3. Three days of Pestilence.

David decided to choose the later. The shorter time period may have been an important factor in his decision.

Verses 15 – 17

¹⁵ So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time, and seventy thousand men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.

¹⁶ When the angel extended his hand *toward* Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord relented of the disaster and said to the angel who destroyed the people, “It is enough! Now drop 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 down the people, and said, “Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father’s house!”

¹⁵ So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time, and seventy thousand men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.

This was the most destructive plague on Israel that we know of. 14,700 died following the rebellion of Korah and 24,000 died after the disaster at Baal-Peor.

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God’s grace saved the city of Jerusalem from destruction. If God had not done this it would have been a terrible end to David’s reign and a poor beginning for Solomon.

¹⁷ Then David spoke to the Lord when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, “Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father’s house!”

David asked the Lord if He would punish only David and his father’s house since he was the one that had sinned. However, the three options given to David to choose from were not limited to him and his family. The sins of a political leader often affect others and sometimes the whole nation.

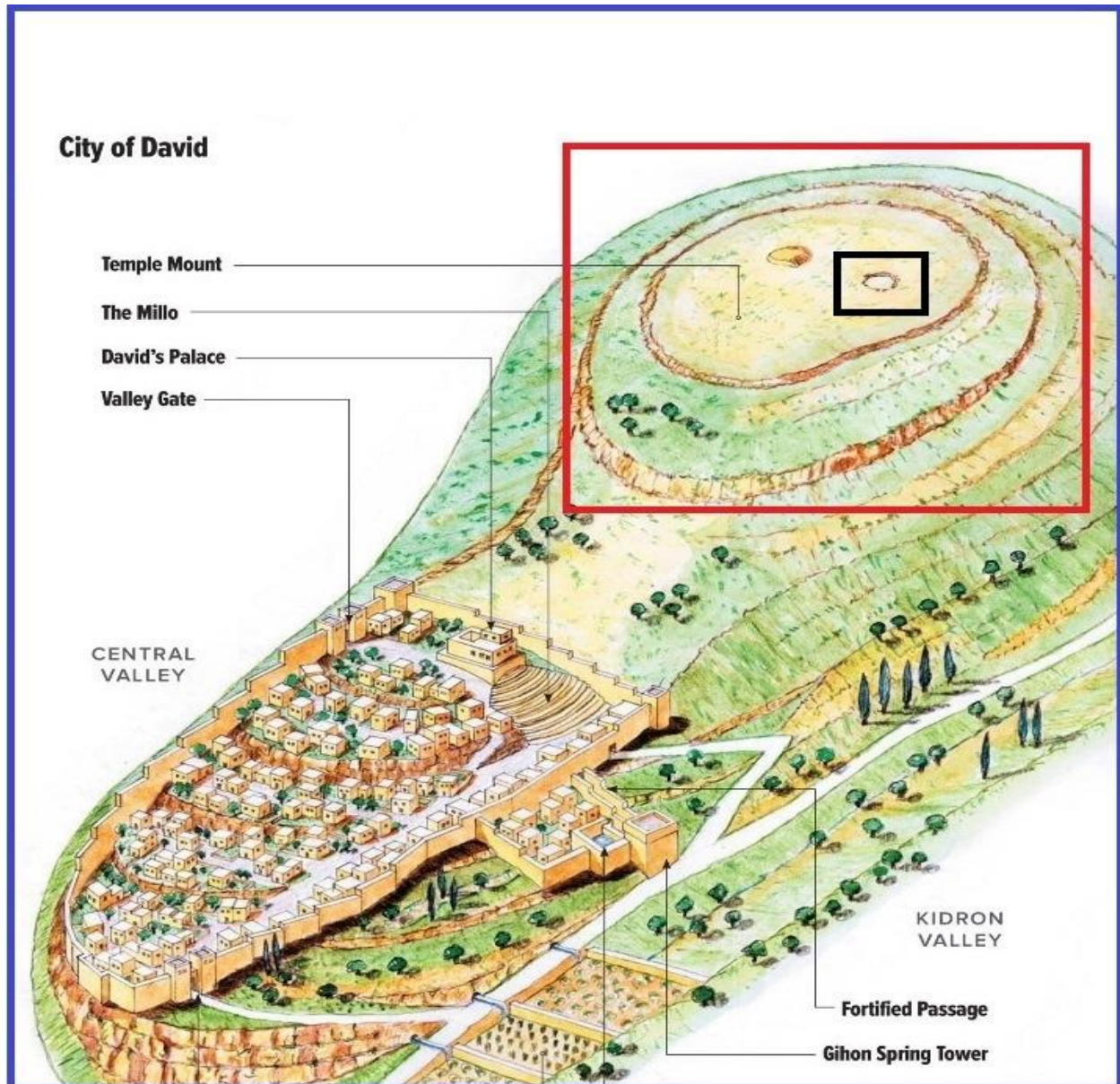
Verses 18 – 25

¹⁸ So Gad came to David that day and said to him, “Go up, erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.” ¹⁹ Then David went up in accordance with the word of Gad, just as the Lord had commanded. ²⁰ And Araunah looked down and saw the king and his servants crossing over toward him; so Araunah went out and bowed his face to the ground before the king. ²¹ Then Araunah said, “Why has my lord the king come to his servant?” And David said, “To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the Lord, so that the plague may be withdrawn from the people.” ²² Araunah then said to David, “Let my lord the king take and offer up what is good in his sight. Look, *here are* the oxen for the burnt offering, the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood. ²³ Everything, O king, Araunah gives to the king.” And Araunah said to the king, “May the Lord your God be favorable to you.” ²⁴ However, the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will certainly buy *it* from you for a price; for 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 Then David built there an altar to the Lord, and he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And the Lord responded to prayer for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.

¹⁸ So Gad came to David that day and said to him, “Go up, erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

David bought the threshing floor (in black) and the oxen for 50 shekels of silver.

See pics 2410



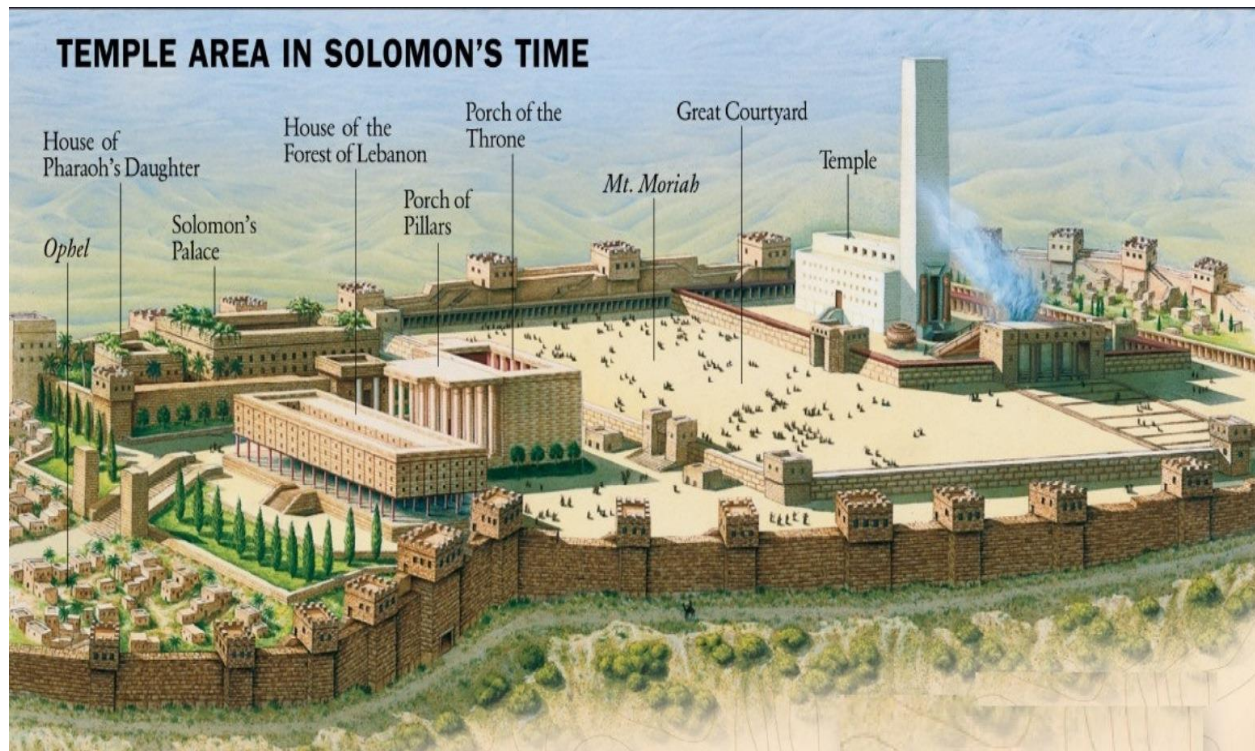
But David gave 600 shekels of gold for the entire site (in red)

See 1 Chronicles 21:25

²⁵ So David gave Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the site.

This site became the home of Solomon's Temple and the adjacent structures.

See pics 2415



The entire site cost 900 times more than the threshing floor.

600 shekels for the entire site vs 50 shekels for the threshing floor is 12 times more.
Gold is 75 times more valuable than silver. $12 \times 75 = 900$.

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Burnt-offerings are a sacrifice and come at a cost.

²⁵ Then David built there an altar to the Lord, and he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And the Lord responded to prayer for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.

This incident secured the site for the future home of Solomon's temple. Good often comes out of negative situations in life.