

## **FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON**

**May 9, 2010**

### **The Senselessness of Sin**

#### **Focal Passage: 1Chronicles 21**

Cross References: 2 Samuel 24; Romans 5:8;  
1 John 1:9

**Central Idea:** King David, incited by Satan, sins by commanding a census to be taken. He and his nation suffer the consequences of God's displeasure with the act. Grace comes when God accepts David's prayer of repentance.

**Lesson Idea:** .When we seek our own desires instead of obeying God, we sin and suffer devastating consequences. We need to seek the Lord's forgiveness through repentant prayer.

**Historical Context:** The story of David's decision to take a census of his army is found in 1 Chronicles 21 and in 2 Samuel 24. This incident takes place in the latter years of David's reign (after his successful war campaigns, his sin with Bathsheba, and the rebellion of Absalom). With his kingdom now secure, instead of praising God for His protection, David desired to find out how large an army he possessed.

#### **1 Chronicles 21:1-7**

##### ***A Senseless Census***

*1 Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel. 2 So David said to Joab and the commanders of the troops, "Go and count the Israelites from Beersheba to Dan. Then report back to me so that I may know how many there are."*

*3 But Joab replied, "May the LORD multiply his troops a hundred times over. My lord the king, are they not all my lord's subjects? Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring guilt on Israel?"*

*4 The king's word, however, overruled Joab; so Joab left and went throughout Israel and then came back to Jerusalem. 5 Joab reported the number of the fighting men to David: In all Israel there were one million one hundred thousand men who could handle a sword, including four hundred and seventy thousand in Judah.*

*6 But Joab did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, because the king's command was repulsive to him. 7 This command was also evil in the sight of God; so he punished Israel.*

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Vs 1 says Satan "incited" David to take the census. Other versions translate that word as "provoked," "persuaded," or "moved." What was Satan's purpose and who was he trying to hurt?

NOTE: The word "satan" means "accuser." This is the first time in the Bible that the word was used as a proper noun or as a name for the devil, rather than just a description of what he does (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*). He tries to tempt us to evil and then accuses us before God.

How does Satan try to "incite" you to sin?

What was David's sin?

NOTE: The Bible is not specific about what David's actual sin was; although the passage gives some clues

- He was following Satan's leading instead of God's (vs 1)
- He was doing it for himself (vs 2)
- David wanted to see how large his army was (vs 3, 5)
- Even Joab recognized something "repulsive" about it, but David would not listen to him (vs 3, 6)
- It was evil in God's sight (vs 7)

Most commentators see pride as one of the main sins of David. Instead of trusting the LORD's protection, he wanted to see how large his army was and took pride in his own power. Other sins include disobedience, stubbornness, unwillingness to listen to counsel, and giving in to Satan's temptations.

Ultimately all sin comes down to what is "evil in the sight of God" (vs 7). What are some things today that people would say are okay, but God would call evil?

What kinds of things are you tempted to accept or condone in your life or thoughts that God would call sin?

### **1 Chronicles 21:8-17** ***Serious Consequences***

*8 Then David said to God, "I have sinned greatly by doing this. Now, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."*

*9 The LORD said to Gad, David's seer, 10 "Go and tell David, 'This is what the LORD says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.' "*

*11 So Gad went to David and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Take your choice: 12 three years of famine, three months of being swept away before your enemies, with their swords overtaking you, or three days of the sword of the LORD--days of plague in the land, with the angel of the LORD ravaging every part of Israel.' Now then, decide how I should answer the one who sent me."*

*13 David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let me fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is very great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men."*

*14 So the LORD sent a plague on Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell dead. 15 And God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But as the angel was doing so, the LORD saw it and was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "Enough! Withdraw your hand." The angel of the LORD was then standing at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.*

*16 David looked up and saw the angel of the LORD standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand extended over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell facedown.*

*17 David said to God, "Was it not I who ordered the fighting men to be counted? I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? O LORD my God, let your hand fall upon me and my family, but do not let this plague remain on your people."*

#### **DISCUSSION:**

What did David do when he realized his sin (vs 8)?

How can you tell David was sincere in his confession (vs 8,16,-17)

When you realize there is sin in your life, how are your prayers similar or different from David's prayer?

Why did the LORD still send punishment after David confessed?

God gave David a choice of punishments. Since each punishment also involved the people of Israel, most commentators believe that God used this situation also to discipline the entire nation for their disobedience and unfaithfulness.

Why did David choose to "fall into the hands of the LORD" (vs 13)?

In vs 14-15 God's power is seen in the quick devastation that comes at the hand of just one angel. God's love is seen as He "grieves" over the calamity in Jerusalem. God's judgment comes because of His righteousness and justice, but it never comes without His love as well. How is God's love demonstrated in vs 15?

Read Romans 5:8. How is God's love demonstrated to us? Thank Jesus Christ for taking the punishment for your sins on the cross of Calvary.

Read 1 John 1:8. Even though our sins are forgiven in Christ, why is it still necessary and important for us to confess our sins?

### **1 Chronicles 21:18-30** ***A Sacrifice Commanded***

18 Then the angel of the LORD ordered Gad to tell David to go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. 19 So David went up in obedience to the word that Gad had spoken in the name of the LORD.

20 While Araunah was threshing wheat, he turned and saw the angel; his four sons who were with him hid themselves. 21 Then David approached, and when Araunah looked and saw him, he left the threshing floor and bowed down before David with his face to the ground.

22 David said to him, "Let me have the site of your threshing floor so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped. Sell it to me at the full price."

23 Araunah said to David, "Take it! Let my lord the king do whatever pleases him. Look, I will give the oxen for the burnt offerings, the threshing sledges for the wood, and the wheat for the grain offering. I will give all this."

24 But King David replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing."

25 So David paid Araunah six hundred shekels of gold for the site. 26 David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. He called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering.

27 Then the LORD spoke to the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath. 28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, he offered sacrifices there. 29 The tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the desert, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time on the high place at Gibeon. 30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God, because he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

In vs 18-19 what was David told to do and how did he respond?

How do you respond when you hear or read the Word of the LORD? Why should we respond with obedience and worship after we have been forgiven?

David paid around \$100,000 in gold for Araunah's property. Why wouldn't David accept it for free?

How did David know that the LORD accepted his offerings?

How do we know that we are forgiven? (Read again Romans 5:8 and 1 John 1:9)

#### **APPLICATION**

1 Chronicles 22:1 Then David said, "The house of the LORD God is to be here, and also the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

2 Chronicles 3:1 tells us that the Temple was later built at this very spot. In spite of David's sin and the terrible consequences it brought, the relationship between God and His people grew, and their worship of Him became sweeter. Thank the Lord that with repentance comes forgiveness and grace that leads us to a closer walk with our Lord. If there is unconfessed sin in your life, repent of it today and cry out for God's mercy. You may still have to face the consequences of your sin, but you will grow in your walk with the Lord and be able to share in the fullness of His blessings again.

## **Bible in a Year Daily Readings**

**May 2-9, 2010**

May 2 1st Chronicles 10 - 12

May 3 1st Chronicles 13 - 16

May 4 1st Chronicles 17 - 19

May 5 1st Chronicles 20 - 23

May 6 1st Chronicles 24 - 26

May 7 1st Chronicles 27 - 29

May 8 2nd Chronicles 1 - 4

May 9 2nd Chronicles 5 - 7

### Highlights of the Week:

- 1 Chron 10: Death of Saul
- 1 Chron 11: David and his mighty men
- 1 Chron 13: Moving the Ark wrong
- 1 Chron 15: The Ark to Jerusalem
- 1 Chron 16: Psalm of Thanksgiving
- 1 Chron 17: God's covenant with  
David (A prophecy about Jesus)
- 1 Chron 20: War with Philistine giants
- 1 Chron 21: A sinful census
- 1 Chron 22: Preparing for the Temple
- 1 Chron 23: King Solomon/the Levites
- 1 Chron 24-26: Worship duties
- 1 Chron 28: Temple instructions
- 1 Chron 29: Offerings and Prayers
- 2 Chron 1: Solomon worships & prays
- 2 Chron 2: Solomon to build Temple