

BIG WORD: 2 Samuel

Homework for Chapters 22—24

Discussion Dates: 12 December 2012 (in house)

And 13 December 2012 (online)

DAY ONE: Overview

PRAY for the Holy Spirit to clear your mind so that you may focus on God's Word without distractions or preconceptions. Ask Him to help you discern only what He wants for you in this reading and for this day.

READ: 2 Samuel 22—24.

If possible, read all three chapters in one sitting. Make notes of any details that stick out to you, questions that rise and/or personal insights God gives you while you read.

DAY TWO: David's Psalm

There is some debate about when this part of Scripture was actually written and whether or not chapter 22 chronologically follows chapter 21. The dispute is over verses 21—27. The assertion is that David could not possibly have written these words after the events with Bathsheba and Uriah.

What do you think about this? Is it possible to, in a clear conscience before God, call oneself "blameless" after such a public offense?

Many scholars believe that the psalm in 2 Samuel 22 is the first draft of Psalm 18. As you read the two in parallel, what differences, if any, do you notice?

A key word in these passages is "deliver." How many times do you see this word or concept? Where?

What other themes do you see evident in this psalm?

What do you learn about David through this psalm?

What do you learn about God through this psalm?

How do these understandings impact your life today, if at all? What difference does it make?

DAY THREE: David's Final Oracle

Chapter 23 begins with another psalm, this one noted as “the final words of David.” As we read through the rest of this and following chapters it is clear these were not actually his “final” words. They weren’t uttered from a deathbed. Rather, this was his last oracle. It was the last message he offered that could be attributed to divine revelation.

We don’t often think of David as a prophet or one who spoke for God. We typically see him as an historical figure, an example to follow, perhaps a worship leader. But this passage (2 Samuel 23:1–7) clearly states that God spoke through David. God used him as a messenger, as an appointed, anointed servant.

How do you define “prophet?”

Can you offer any biblical supports for your definition?

Do prophets still exist today? Why or why not?

For more on this discussion read 1 Corinthians 12-14.

DAY FOUR: David's Warriors

READ 2 Samuel 23:8—38 and 1 Chronicles 11:10—12:41.

These parallel passages present a collection of seemingly random stories about David's men and their loyalty to him. These stories did not occur chronologically after David's oracle; some actually happened before he was crowned king. They are presented here as a sort of bookend to David's reign. We don't see his death until 1 Kings, but here we are assured, in spite of all the trouble he and his family may have caused, that David was a good man revered by his people. He was an honored man, one for whom many would dare to die.

What stands out to you in these stories?

What do we learn of David's leadership or his relationships with his men?

After the vignettes of heroic feats, we read lists of names and ranks. These may not be the big heroes of history, but they were significant enough to warrant mention, not once, but at least twice in Scripture. Do you recognize any of them? Note any connections or family ties you observe.

DAY FIVE: The Census

READ 2 Samuel 24:1—9 and 1 Chronicles 21:1—6.

There exists a contradiction in the first verses of these two accounts. One (2 Samuel 24:1) states that God incited David to perform a census. The other (1 Chronicles 21:1) says that Satan incited David. Which is it?

There are only four instances in the Old Testament in which Satan is specifically named and seen openly at work. The others are:

- Genesis 3
- Job 1—2
- Zechariah 3

Compare those passages to this one. What similarities do you see?

Censuses were not against the Law. The entire book of Numbers proves that. Provisions and procedures were actually laid out for the kings in Exodus 30:11—16 and again in Numbers 3:40—51. According to Exodus 38:25—28, national censuses supported centralized worship. The taxes collected from the censuses went to the priests and the temple. This continued even to Jesus' day, as evidenced in Matthew 17.

If there were clear stipulations for taking a census, why did Joab object to David's initiative?

DAY SIX: God's Judgment

READ 2 Samuel 24:10—17 and 1 Chronicles 21:7—17.

If David followed the God-given rules for taking a census, why was God displeased?

What offer does He make to David?

What choice does David make and why?

Do you agree with his logic? Why or why not?

What other observations do you make from these passages?

DAY SEVEN: David's Sacrifice

READ 2 Samuel 24:18—25 and 1 Chronicles 21:18—28.

In verse 17, which we read yesterday, David finally confesses his sin. When he sees the impact of that sin on the innocents around him, he can bear it no more. Acting upon the wisdom of Gad, David hurries to make an altar and plead for God's mercy.

The two accounts present different names for the owner of the field. 2 Samuel calls him Araunah and 1 Chronicles calls him Ornan. These are the same man, simply different spellings or interpretations of his name. Regardless of what we call him, how did this man respond to David's request?

This passage includes one of my favorite lines in Scripture:

"I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing." – 2 Samuel 24:24 (ESV)

READ Romans 12:1. (*Read all of chapters 11-12, if you have time!*)

What do these two verses mean to you when presented in parallel?

How can we apply this principle to our lives today?