

Read Through the Bible

Week 17: April 26-May 1, 2010

Reading: 2 Samuel 10 – 24; Luke 19:26-22:53

Introductory Remarks:

By Doc Schroeder

The central theme is God's great love for His chosen people, Israel. He is the one true God whom they are to worship, trust and obey. He performs many miracles to demonstrate His great power, love and concern for them. They respond by doubting His presence and concern by their frequent grumbling and complaining. They even create the golden calf to worship while Moses is on the mountain speaking with God. The three major characters in the book are King Saul, who now is dead but his followers remain loyal to him, Nathan, a prophet and priest to King David. He was a very important King in the history of Israel because of his great courage in battle and remarkable trust in God. However, he often also showed his human side by committing grievous sins. I will refer to two events in this section of 2 Samuel to support my claims. In chapter 11 we find an event that most Christians know about. Late one afternoon as David was on the balcony of the palace, he saw a very beautiful woman bathing. He asked about her and was told that was Bathsheba the wife of Uriah. He sent his servants to bring her to the palace and David lay with her and soon thereafter she informed him she was pregnant. To cover up his sin of adultery he sent for Joab, his nephew who commanded the army to place Uriah in the front lines of battle then to fall back so that Uriah might be killed. Soon Bathsheba learned that her husband was dead, and when the allotted time for mourning had passed, David sends for her and she becomes his wife and bears him a son, who dies when seven days old.

The second event we want to look at carefully is recorded in 2 Samuel Chapter 24. David is an older man now. As he looks back over his life, he remembers the many enemies of Israel that he and his armies defeated and Israel has become a great nation. He now orders Joab and the other army commanders to take a census of all of Israel and Judah. Joab questioned King David's order asking "Why does my lord the king delight in this thing?" Having questioned the order, Joab and others set about taking the census. Nearly ten months later, Joab reported to the king that in Israel there were eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword and five hundred thousand more in Judah. Why do you think this census angered the Lord as stated in verse one of Chapter 24? It soon dawned on David why God was angry with him. In 24:10 David said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, I pray thee, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly". The next morning God sent the prophet Gad to David to choose 1 of 3 forms of punishment for his sin. David chose the third option. So God sent a pestilence upon Israel for three days from Dan to Beersheba and seventy thousand men died. The next morning Gad, the prophet told David to go and build an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah and Araunah saw the king and his servants coming he ask, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" David replied, "to buy his threshing floor to build an altar to the Lord so that the plague may be ended."

Araunah offered to give David not only the threshing floor but also the oxen for sacrifice and the threshing sledges and yokes for fire wood. David, however paid him fifty shekels of silver saying, "I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing. David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord and the plague was over. What lessons can we learn from these two events in David's life? List the sins committed in these two events. How often do we fall for the devil's temptations? Are there consequences? When you, as God's child fall, what deeds and actions should follow?

Observations:

Sin is very serious in God's sight and we must deal with it daily and with great concern, otherwise it grows. David let Bethsheba's beauty turn into lust for her. This led to adultery which in turn led to murder. If we do not take sin seriously it will grow and consume us.

Why was God so offended when David took a census in Chapter 24? David was so proud of his great army and the victories he won over Israel's enemies. "Pride goes before the fall!" He wanted to know just how big his army was and how powerful he had become so he could pat himself on the back for his great success. He forgot it was God who gave him this power and success and he was robbing God of the honor and thanks due Him for so richly blessing His chosen people. David saw the light and confessed his sins freely and God forgave him. Sin often has consequences, however, and 70,000 of David's men died of the pestilence God sent upon his land for three days. God does not take sin lightly, even though forgiven, we sometimes suffer for it.

In Luke Chapter 19 thru 22 we see the same lessons. The proud disciples are arguing about who is the greatest. Soon after proud Peter boasts about his great faith and that he would never deny his Lord. But only hours later he denies knowing Him three times. And Judas, who kept the treasury of the 12, let his love for money grow until he betrayed his Lord for 30 pieces of silver. The sin of greed led to his suicide.