

Unfolding Unveiling: Studies of Christ Revealed in the Types of Joshua, David, and Solomon

Part Seven: Solomon

Chapter Twenty-three: The Temple

The Numbering of Israel: What was the Sin?

II Samuel 24 and I Chronicles 21 speak of another of David's failures. As we can see, David was not a perfect man. But because he had a heart after God, even David's sins are used to bring him into a greater view of the Lord. The account of David's numbering Israel is no exception.

II Samuel's account of the census says that the Lord incited David to number Israel. I Chronicles 21 says that Satan enticed David to number Israel, and in so doing, was standing up against Israel. What was so wrong with numbering Israel that Satan would actually want David to do it?

The Lord was very upset about the census because He looks at the heart and the motivation. Joab says in I Chron. 21:3, "The Lord make his people an hundred times as many more as they are; but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? Why, then, doth my lord required this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?" Joab perceived that there was something working in the heart of David that was not right. David was crediting the strength of Israel to himself. He wanted to know the strength and the extent of his kingdom. But with the Lord, quantity and natural strength do not count in His kingdom. The Lord does not need a whole lot of strong people, physically, or otherwise, to accomplish His purposes in the earth. The Lord's purposes are accomplished by His life. He does not require human talent or ability. But David wanted to measure the natural resources at his disposal.

The church has been in existence 2000 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. It took one Man giving his life one time. The Father raised him up, and from that came all life that is in the earth today. One man, who did not feel the need to buy a television network to get the gospel sent around the world, who had no financial resources and had no vision for a particular ministry, who had no connections with people who could get him what he needed. Jesus did not have any of it. The only thing that Jesus did that was successful was to give his life. God does not measure His people's resources by human effort. He measures them by the eternal life within.

We begin to realize how serious an offense this is when we understand that Israel has been gathered into one spiritual body for the first time, and now the head of it is judging after the flesh. Seeing Israel as individuals puts them in the position of being vulnerable to weakness, corruption, and lack because the accuser of the brethren is attracted to these things. The only place that we are not prone to corruption is in Christ. And so when David identified Israel as earthly individuals, he opened a door to the devil.

All through Israel's history, we are dealing not with many individuals, but with the one new man in type. All the way through their history, Israel was the type of the corporate new man. When David numbered Israel, he was viewing each person individually instead of as One. To see many is a pre-Cross viewpoint. To see many is to know people after the flesh, which is in direct contradiction to the Cross (cf. II Cor. 5:16). It is to be impressed with natural strength instead of being known only by the Lord's name, and drawing from Him as our strength. This view was rejected by God as a system of measurement and was judged at the Cross. When Israel is seen individually instead of as One, they were under that judgment of the Cross. No wonder Satan wanted David to number Israel!

The Lord had promised Abraham that his seed would be as the dust of the earth (cf. Gen. 13:16) – innumerable, and as the stars of the heavens (cf. Gen. 15:5) – immeasurable. Paul said in Galatians 3:16 that there was only one seed that came forth from the loins of Abraham. The seed can only be measured by One, and David violated that principle. The innumerability of the seed that is spoken of in Genesis speaks of the fullness of Him who fills all in all. The seed is immeasurable because the fullness of the Godhead dwells in it bodily (cf. Col. 2:9) and because God does not give the Spirit by measure unto this one (cf. Jn. 3:34).

David was supposed to be judging Israel by the measure of Christ, that the Lord was their fullness and their measure, but David was measuring them. But Israel is not supposed to be the measure. The Lord is always the measure for His people. The Lord does not want to see His people as individuals because then all He will see is failure and lack. He wants to see Israel in light of the seed: that which is full and complete. The Lord saw His people one way, and David rebelled against the Lord and saw His people another way. David was Israel's head; when he is wrong, the entire nation will be wrong.

This is why taking the census is displeasing to the Lord, and this is why Satan, Israel's adversary and accuser, wanted David to do it. Satan always wants us to take a fleshly viewpoint. He wants us to view ourselves and take account of ourselves based on our strengths and weaknesses apart from Christ. If we judge ourselves based on what we can and cannot do, we will not draw upon all of the treasure and resources that are ours in Christ, and His life will not be released in the earth. The life of Christ is not based on human strengths and weaknesses.

The life of Christ in us does more than just not sin; it propagates life, which means that it goes beyond us and our human efforts. It has nothing to do with our human efforts at all; we simply yield to it. That life will touch, heal, and bring light and correction, or whatever is needed at that moment without the bearer of it having to exert any effort at

all. But if we inventory ourselves based on strength and weakness, then we have removed ourselves from the place where life is released and have looked to the arm of the flesh and what it can accomplish. The arm of the flesh can accomplish a lot, but it cannot yield life.

The Pharisees of Jesus' day had a superstructure of a culture, organized right down to how much they should tithe out of their herb gardens. Not one bit of their superstructure is standing today. But there is a church that spans the globe because one person gave His life, and that is the difference between measuring after the flesh, and measuring by life.

David committed a grave sin because earthly Israel is a picture of spiritual Israel, who is supposed to bring life into the earth, but David was viewing his people as though they were a natural instrument. This is why there had to be judgment in Israel.

The Judgment

Note that the Lord allowed David to choose from three options as to how judgment was to be executed in Israel. I believe the Lord did this to test David's heart, to see how David will relate to the Lord. That David has truly repented of his sin can be seen by his choice: he chooses the three-day judgment, which is a type of the Cross – death, burial, and resurrection. To be accurate, David did not actually pick this judgment. He asked the Lord that He might pick the judgment because David knew the Lord was merciful, and that whatever the Lord chose would be far better than anything he could choose for himself. He had truly seen how abominable his sin was; he no longer trusted falling into the hands of man – even his own hands – to decide anything for Israel again!

First and foremost the three-day judgment represents the Cross, but there is something else to notice here. The Lord picked the shortest judgment. He did not pick the three-year judgment, or even the three-month judgment. This shows the Lord's heart to us in that He does not want us to live for years with our failure hanging over our head. He does not need us to be sorry for a certain amount of time, and He will accept us when we have been sorry long enough. He does not relate to us this way. And when we sin, He picks the three-day judgment for us! It is the will of the Lord.

The angel of death was going through the Land, and Israelites were dying everywhere. But when he comes to Jerusalem, he cannot continue. I Chronicles 21:15 says, "And as the Lord beheld, he repented of the evil, and said to the angel who destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand." There is something in Israel that cannot be destroyed by God, and that is Jerusalem. There are a lot of things in Israel that are lacking, but Jerusalem is not one of them. There is no condemnation there.

Why God Chose a Threshing Floor for the Temple Site

The angel of death stopped at the edge of Jerusalem, and David saw him standing over a threshing floor while a man was threshing his wheat. The last time a threshing floor was mentioned was when Israel brought the ark of the covenant up to Jerusalem. It is significant here, just as it was there.

A threshing floor is the place of separation, where the life-giving element, which could be eaten and sown (the germ), is separated from the useless material (the chaff) that encases it. The grain was beaten until the germ and the hull were separated, and then all of it was tossed into the air. The chaff was blown away by the wind, and the germ would drop back to the ground.

There was impurity in Israel, and the Lord was angered by it, so He sought opportunity to rid His people of all that would keep the seed from being sown. The Lord had His people on the threshing floor and was separating the germ from the chaff. He was trying to remove what was encasing the life-giving element, so that the seed would be productive.

In us, the hull is that which encases Christ and hinders Him from being released. There must be a separation between the hull and the germ. As long as the outer shell is intact, no life will come out. As long as that human strength is intact, it restrains the life of Christ in us, and it cannot go beyond us.

The Scripture gives us a picture right in the center of this chapter, of the flesh under judgment on the one side, and the spiritual, life-giving element on the other, and the threshing going on right between the two. The place that the Lord ceased judgment was at the place where God's corporate people were dwelling in the heavenlies – Jerusalem. This place is totally free of condemnation. She is the heavenly city who is joined to the Lord.

When the angel was about to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord decided that the judgment upon Israel was complete. This in and of itself points to the Lord's heart and mind concerning Jerusalem. The judgment on Israel was fulfilled in three days, and Jerusalem was left untouched. The Holy City is a type of the many membered body of Christ, which came forth at the resurrection. If this is so, then there is no spot or blemish in her that would make her worthy of judgment. Once again, then, we see the twofold type of the Cross: we see the many brought to an end in one three day judgment on the one hand, we see the one city made up of many who are brought forth in a realm where sin is no longer a factor, and all that is there is close to the Lord's heart.

David did not understand what he saw, and Gad had to speak on behalf of the Lord so that the king might know how to proceed. What is it that will stop the judgment? The Lord instructed David to build an altar on the threshing floor and offer sacrifices on it that the Lord might show Himself to David. No sacrifice had been offered in Jerusalem since Israel had taken the Land. Remember that Gibeon was the place Israel went to sacrifice to

the Lord because the tabernacle still resided there, and the ark of the covenant was in Jerusalem.

The Lord was instructing David to build another altar, which had never happened in Israel before. Why? Because David needed to see the Lord and his cross in a new way, and that was what that altar represented. When David offered on that altar, fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice. The only other time such an instance was recorded in the Scripture was at the dedication of the tabernacle during the administration of Moses, which makes this instance extremely significant. Seeing Israel as individuals and to count the arm of the flesh as strength was put to an end.

It is significant that David did not offer sin offerings on this altar, since the occasion for building the altar was his sin. But this new altar was in Jerusalem, and in the New Jerusalem, the temple of the Lord is perfection and completion. There is no sin there, and so it is not necessary to offer those things. The only ways that the altar of burnt offering can be used in the New Jerusalem is to be wholly consumed (the burnt offering) – or to be wholly identified in Christ (the peace or fellowship offering). David recognized Jerusalem to be that which the Lord recognized it to be, and he offered the sacrifices accordingly. He knew his sin and that a sacrifice needed to be offered for it. But sin is not a factor in the New Jerusalem. We can sin on the earth, but in Christ we cannot sin. The New Jerusalem is perfect, and we who are there are a part of it, and so the Lord sees no sin when He looks there.

This points to a work the Lord was accomplishing in David's heart that related to removing oneself from the sin that is judged and seeing oneself in the place of the Lord's favor and blessing. When we are living in Jerusalem, the question is whether we have been fully consumed and entered into this new identity, not whether our sin has been forgiven. David has rejected the natural strength that he drew from in the first half of the chapter, and he has identified with the nature of the New Jerusalem. He no longer measured by the arm the flesh; it had been threshed away. He identified with the life-giving element within.

The End of the Tabernacle

I Chronicles 21:28-30 then goes on to say that the only safe place for David to offer any sacrifice at all was at that very altar in Jerusalem. He dared not leave the city to sacrifice at Gibeon because everything outside of Jerusalem was under judgment – even the tabernacle! He dared not go to the tabernacle at Gibeon lest he die. For the first time in their history, Israel could no longer go there to offer sacrifices for their sins; that way of relating was under judgment. The only truly safe place that measured up to all that the Lord desired was Jerusalem. David properly judged this and chose not to leave the city.

This situation hearkens back to the prophecy in I Samuel 3:12, which says, “Where I begin, I will also make an end.” Before the temple could be constructed in Jerusalem, the way of worship embodied in the tabernacle had to be brought to an end. What could it be about the tabernacle that would have to be brought to an end? It had been the central

focus for Israel for all of their history. And yet, to relate to the Lord by the tabernacle meant death, and the place of life did not permit him to go back through the threshing floor to the other side. The tabernacle and Jerusalem are on two opposite sides of the threshing floor! Remember, there is an element of human mixture that the Lord is threshing out of Israel, and this element is found even in how Israel related to the Lord by the tabernacle.

This is true in us. The Cross is a completed work, and yet it is ever working in us in new ways, over and over. The Cross will bring us to an end of ourselves, and we are raised up in life. But we will come to a place again where we see corruption in us that has not been dealt with. We must see the Lord in a new way. And when we do, we cannot go back to what we were because we are changed into His image when the Cross is revealed. When the stones were placed in the bottom of the Jordan, Israel could not go back to the wilderness; they were in the Land. When David is the king and comes up out of the land of the Philistines, Saul will never reign again because he died. And even after David has reigned for a long time, there is still something of the arm of the flesh that had to be addressed by the Cross. But when the Lord addresses it and He is revealed, David's rule is changed forever. Even under David, there were impurities in Israel that had to be purged before Israel could be built into the temple. When God judges these impurities, no man can stand before Him, not even His own people. Our only hope for mercy is the Cross, and it is the only sacrifice that God accepts.

And so with the passing of the tabernacle, the Lord is not dealing with good and evil. After all, the tabernacle was from God. He is taking Israel from glory to glory, and in so doing, some things must pass away. The tabernacle was called a high place, and the Lord permitted high places in Israel, up to a certain point. But with the construction of the temple, they will no longer be permitted.

“This Is the House of the Lord God”

We have seen how the Lord's heart toward Jerusalem is revealed in verse 16. David's actions in verse 25 of the same chapter indicate that he saw that very reality when he obeyed the Lord and went up to the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. That the Lord revealed Himself to David in a new way at this time is developed more fully in I Chronicles 21:28-22:1. David said, “This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel,” (I Chron. 22:1). He did not say, “This is the site for the temple;” he said, “This is the house.” What did David see? He saw the Lord accept the offering somewhere other than the tabernacle. David recognized Jerusalem to be the temple. In essence, God was saying, “I accept the sacrifice that is offered in Jerusalem.” Jerusalem was the house of the Lord; it is where He would dwell! He saw the heart of the Lord, and what the Lord desired to reveal. This was a significant step in the progression of the Lord realizing His plan.

Up to this time, the people who lived in Jerusalem would have to leave Jerusalem to relate to the Lord! When David says, “This is the house of the Lord,” he realized that there was no judgment in Jerusalem. God communes directly with Jerusalem. From that

point on, a person could remain in Jerusalem and commune with the Lord. This speaks of the mind being washed of its sin-consciousness, for the way to commune with the Lord in Jerusalem is by burnt offerings and peace offerings. Sin no longer factors into how a “Jerusalem-dweller” relates to the Lord. This one understands that God only speaks to Jerusalem; he does not relate by the tabernacle any longer.

From now on, Israel’s history has changed from God doing things for them – going to Gibeon to get forgiven and washed – to God doing something in them. It is not a cleaning up or a fixing up that is taking place; it is a relationship where all of this is absent. We must come to the place where we perceive that we are the house and that we are being built together for an holy habitation.

Perhaps the Lord incited David to number Israel, not so that He could extinguish His own people (That would contradict everything His has been doing up to this point. Why would He want to put an end to His only expression in the earth?), but so that He could reveal His Cross in a new way. David never would have offered sacrifices anywhere but Gibeon for the rest of his life had this event not happened, and no one would every have known any different.

He knew that Solomon was supposed to build the house, but with spiritual reality, God does not just tell us what to do, and we do it. His plan unfolds in the earth first by the Cross and secondly by those who perceive the Cross. Solomon’s birth was a type of resurrection, and now the site of the temple was based on David seeing the true house after the threshing of Israel. If God gives you a vision to do something and you carry it out exactly, you still have not succeeded if it has not been done by the Cross. But if the plans of God are carried out by death and resurrection, life will come forth. If you simply do what you are told, then you are an obedient child, but permitting God’s judgment to work in you so that threshing takes place, and then perceiving by the Spirit what has just happened, will accomplish far more in the realm of life.

David had originally planned on building the temple, and the Lord told him not to because there had to be a death and resurrection. Likewise, David could not tell Solomon to build the house on a certain plot of ground. There had to be an end of one thing before the beginning of another, and David perceived it, and where David perceived it was where the temple was to be built.

The order of the Scriptures in I Chronicles after this point is significant for our purposes. From I Chronicles 22:2 until the end of the book and the time of David’s death, all of his energies were focused on gathering the material needed to build the temple. His relationships with other nations were based on this, his battles were simply the means of acquiring more spoil that could be dedicated to the Lord, and his Psalms begin to mention and describe Jerusalem to be the temple, the habitation of God, David was good for nothing other than this.

David's Sins

David committed two major sins during His rule: killing Uriah the Hittite for Bathsheba, and numbering Israel. But the greatest blessings and spiritual realities for Israel came out of David's sins:

- Solomon came from David's relationship with Bathsheba
- The temple came from David numbering the people

In both cases, the Lord chose. The Lord chose Solomon to be the king, and the Lord chose the site for the temple by fire falling from heaven to consume the sacrifice.

In both situations, David was totally at fault, but in both situations, how He related to the Lord permitted the Lord to be the fullness in David's lack. The Lord chose Solomon, the Son of grace, to rule His people. The Lord chose the site of the temple when His grace did not permit Him to destroy the hiding place and high place of His people. He chose that place as the site for the temple.

If there is failure on our part, and yet our heart condition is such that the Lord can deal, then He can work all things together for good, not just for you, but for others. There can still be an increase of the Son.

When David sinned, He was not just sorry for his sins. He related to the Lord in such a way that the Lord was able to show David Himself in new ways that affected all those around him.