

~ Our Spiritual Safari has been examining the wars King David fought during his reign over the nation Israel; and, in our previous report, we considered the Biblical background along with James' explanation of why we have war today. God says war comes naturally in the human heart. War is in the heart of every individual because *sin* is in the heart. As long as there is sin and evil in this world, there will be war. As long as there is light and darkness, they will oppose each other. We saw that illustrated in the life of David; and we see it again in this very brief chapter twenty of first Chronicles.

There were two nations that seemed to be the eternal enemies of David and constantly plagued Israel. They are the Ammonites and the Philistines. Well, David fought them both, and he fought to win. David didn't compromise. See, there's no such thing as compromise in the life of the genuine believer; there are certain things that are just going to have to be withstood. The child of God must *stand* against spiritual wickedness in high places at every juncture of their life. That's why we have the instructions to put on the whole armor of God. Now, as we have said before, we don't march against anything – we simply *stand* for the Lord Jesus by furthering the cause of Christ and bear fruit by the power of the Holy Spirit. The believer is in a battle of war whether we like it, recognize it, acknowledge it – or not. Even if physical war in the world were to cease tonight, there will be spiritual war against evil on this earth until Christ returns to establish His Kingdom....

XX

¹ And it came to pass, that after the year was expired, at the time that kings go out to battle, Joab led forth the power of the army, and wasted

the country of the children of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried at Jerusalem. And Joab smote Rabbah, and destroyed it.

~ It seems Joab was the aggressor in this case; and that would certainly be strange. However, if you read our last report, you'll know that David had made a gesture of peace to Hanun, king of Ammon. David had sent the new king condolences and sympathy because Hanun's father, the previous king, had just died. Well, Hanun insulted David and made an attempt to come against Israel in war. So, all we have here is a continuation of that same war. David and Joab didn't compromise with evil.

See, right and wrong simply don't "*agree to disagree*" my beloved readers – it cannot happen. How can two walk together except they be agreed? If you "*agree to disagree*" with evil and falseness, then you are complicit with said evil and falseness. This is something the world has totally lost the truth of in this modern age. It would be amusing to me – if it weren't so tragic – that people act horrified about a war that is across the ocean; but when lawlessness is in the streets of our neighborhood, then we must learn to understand their point of view. My friends, that's just plain stupid with a capital "S!" If you think I am going to learn to appreciate the criminals view of evil in the name of freedom, you are woefully mistaken.

The hypocrisy that permeates our modern-day society is the reason these United States are finished – *FINISHED* – and I mean that; you can just write it down. Our contemporary culture, actually, makes me sickened and ashamed to have to participate in it; or even be alive and associated with this society. To say it is the best in the world — and it is — should be an extremely rude revelation. Now, save the criticism, because my dad fought voluntarily for nine years in Viet Nam for this country. I was born at Fort Bragg. My family is as American as American's get. If things are wrong across the ocean, those things are wrong here, too, friends. Let's keep this real. See, evil and lawlessness must be opposed; you *CANNOT* love righteousness until you learn what the unrighteousness is; and resolve to hate that which God hates. And He hates unrighteousness.

I know my teaching is not popular today because the Word of God isn't popular. The Bible is strung together to form a pretty picture for a totally and completely unlearned and ignorant man and woman in the church today. They want to use it to feel better about themselves and philosophize the acceptance of unreality. That unreality is that they are going to continue to live in their sins. Many people are praising Jesus one day and totally defeated the next – it happens ALL the time with weak Christians....

² And David took the crown of their king from off his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there were precious stones in it; and it was set upon David's head: and he brought also exceeding much spoil out of the city.

³ And he brought out the people that were in it, and cut them with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes. Even so dealt David with all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

⁴ And it came to pass after this, that there arose war at Gezer with the Philistines; at which time Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Sippai, that was of the children of the giant: and they were subdued.

⁵ And there was war again with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear staff was like a weaver's beam.

⁶ And yet again there was war at Gath, where was a man of great stature, whose fingers and toes were four and twenty, six on each hand, and six on each foot: and he also was the son of the giant.

⁷ But when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea David's brother slew him.

⁸ These were born unto the giant in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

XXI

¹ And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

~ Well, the subject sure changed abruptly. In Chronicles, we are seeing God's estimate from a spiritual perspective – not man's views – which is one more reason this safari teaching is not popular in this section of Scripture. In Samuel and Kings, we saw man's political viewpoint regarding this history of the nation Israel. Samuel chapter twenty-four only vaguely mentioned David's sin in numbering the people. Frankly, there may have appeared to be some confusion in a few reports from Samuel, as we completely ignored the fact that numbering the people was a sin; and I did that intentionally. I made a suggestion or two but didn't develop this specific sin at all at that time. Here, we're going to discover all the details in this explanation of why this was David's most grievous sin.

In this same account in second Samuel, we saw David acting independently of the Lord; and God just allowed it to happen. However, there's something more to it. Verse one reveals David did *NOT* act on his own; the culprit has been identified. This is Satanic, my friends. It throws a whole new light on David's biggest sin of numbering the people. Here, we don't see David asking God to blot out his sins and transgressions as he did in the Uriah and Bathsheba affair. Here, this is purely proud Satanic iniquity – and there just happens to be all the difference in the world between the two. Well, we need to examine very closely why numbering the people was the more grievous sin. So, let's continue....

² And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.

³ And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?

~ You may recall Moses took *TWO* census counts – one at the beginning of the wilderness march – and one at the end of the wilderness march, immediately preceding the entering of the Promised Land. Well, God didn't find fault with Moses at that time – so, what's the difference? Some people say David did this out of pure pride. However, pride doesn't quite define the problem. The problem is David was not trusting God.

Joab was the first man in the nation to oppose David. David wanted statistics; and there is a very real sin of statistics today. A "convert count" is the biggest of all sins." My estimation is that a convert count is numbering the people from God's perspective. It's Satanic. Of course, everything and everyone are computerized today. Very few people understand that unmitigated hateful pride is *THE* primary driver of this plague we call a technical information society; but, pride isn't the *WHOLE* explanation, not by any means. Perhaps Jeremiah can help us along at this point:

Jeremiah 9: ²³ *Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: ²⁴ But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD ~*

Make no mistake; God was not pleased with David's willful disobedience in numbering the people. David was trusting the Lord at this time. David was trusting in the might of the nation fighting for him — not God. It boils down to *UNBELIEF*, my beloved – any way you cut it. David was trusting in numbers rather than trusting God. With God, David would have been sufficient *alone* — just as he had been against Goliath....

4 Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.

5 And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword.

~ So, David had one million one hundred thousand men prepared to fight immediately. In Judah, there were another half million. You will recall from our study in Numbers that Israel had around six hundred three thousand when Moses took the census; which means David had over a million more than Moses led. This reveals a stark contrast between David the king and David the shepherd boy. When David saw Goliath defying Israel, he didn't look around for the number in Saul's army. He took a sling and five rocks and went out after Goliath personally by *TRUSTING THE LORD!*

See, it's easy to begin believing we don't need God when we have a million and a half men ready to fight our battle for us. When all you have is a slingshot and a few rocks to face a giant, then you'll know very definitely you absolutely *DO* need God. America thinks we are the greatest nation today – and I'm sick and tired of hearing that cliché bantered around – I'm sure the people in the Roman Empire also got a little tired of hearing the same thing; as they did in Babylon, Egypt, Persia and Greece – and in all of those kingdoms that are now long gone. They're gone because they trusted in their army – not in God.

Any credible nation needs a capable army. A good system of defence is critical to national security, of course. However, when our confidence is totally and completely in those things, we are promised defeat. Joab told David that all the people were his. David couldn't have had any more anyways – so, why count them? Counting them only provided a way to know how many were lost in any particular battle! The number of people

God gave to David was more than adequate, because God was with David. Well, David made the census anyways.

In our modern day of atomic and nuclear warfare, we have mistakenly developed a disturbing philosophy that we don't need God, either. My personal opinion is that we *DO* need God. What do you think? Do *YOU* need God? We are so woefully misguided and trusting in all the wrong things today. David's great and terrible sin was *UNBELIEF!* I know this report will not register in the minds of many readers. The reason is because the church doesn't even recognize this as sin. Now, if you walked into church next Sunday drunk, then you would be absolutely ostracized. However, if you go to church every single day in unbelief it is likely that no one would even know it; the ones who did know wouldn't consider it very serious! God says, *"it's serious!"*

Friends, it is *ALWAYS* Satan who stands up and deceives our hearts and minds to not trust and believe God. This is the sin of statistics; trusting in mathematics and men; we trust the computer and not Christ today. Men seek the number; but not the Name of the Lord. Well, we know David learned this lesson the hardest way possible because he says in the Psalms, *"... it is better to trust the Lord than to trust men!"*

Psalm 71: ¹ *In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion ~*

Do you really trust God, friends? Do you really believe His Word? Without faith it is impossible to please God! Jesus said, *"the Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin...."* – that means conviction for not believing Him. The apostle says, *"... that which is not of faith is sin!"* So, this is the sin of David, and it was very real. As we read on, David now begins to see that he has made a grievous mistake....

⁶ ***But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab.***

7 And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel.

8 And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

9 And the LORD spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying,

10 Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.

11 So Gad came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Choose thee

12 Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.

13 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man.

~ Our Spiritual Safari breaks off of this leg of our expedition with David in a great strait. His enemies surround him at this time. Even so, King David was truly a great man — after God's own heart. David was just as human as you and I are, too. He had his faults, and he committed his sins; but, even so, he believed God — and never lost his salvation — and never lost his zeal for truth and the desire for fellowship with God. Further, David *knew* the True and Living God.

David lost his faith in men real fast in verse thirteen. He didn't want to fall into their hands. David realizes now that taking the census was not only wrong — it was meaningless. I think David suddenly remembered the day he went out against a giant with a slingshot and five stones. I think he remembered how he had trusted the Lord so long ago — but had lost that trust. I know David doubted whether his army was big enough. I'm sure he thought there would have been *many* more men. He also realizes now that God alone *is* big enough. Most of us trust God for salvation, but we *DON'T* trust God with the problems in our life; we place our trust in something else. How many times have you taken a spiritual census? Most of us do it every day.

Well, David now knows God is exceedingly merciful; something many of us know *nothing* about — but desperately need to learn. God hath not dealt with us according to our iniquities, friends. God has not rewarded us according to our sin. If God dealt with us according to what we deserve, you wouldn't be reading this report. God is so merciful in holding out salvation to a lost world. We'll never fully understand the depths of this truth.

1 John 2:² *And he is the propitiation — mercy seat — for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world ~*

The only way we can win with God is to surrender completely! Go into His court, plead guilty and be saved. When we do that, we discover God has plenty of mercy for all of us. I know I use up a whole bunch of it. I look back over my life and I can see how good God has been to me. The only reason judgment hasn't broken forth upon me yet is because God is merciful. God is longsuffering, patient and kind. God looks upon us and He pities us. There is a pardon for you, too; all you have to do is claim it. There are mercies from God in our future when we are His children. Let's give thanks unto the Lord for He is good; and His goodness will never cease. We're not talking about some happy disposition or some development of character, either; God isn't trying to win friends and influence people. His *NATURE* is

merciful! So, we'll leave off here in this report as David throws himself on the mercy of God's court. May God be merciful to both you and me today ~

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<<< And Satan Stood Up
1 Chronicles 20:1 – 21:13 >>>