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**The Purpose of the Census Narrative in Chronicles and Its Impact on David's Legacy**

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## Abbreviations

AYBC	Anchor Yale Bible Commentary
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDB	(Enhanced) Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BOSHNP	Berit Olam Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry
CBC	Cornerstone Biblical Commentary
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ESV	English Standard Version, <i>the Holy Bible</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
<i>HTR</i>	<i>The Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ICSB	Ignatius Catholic Study Bible
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTsup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
KJV	King James Version, <i>the Holy Bible</i>
NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCB	New Century Bible Commentary
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
OTLC	Old Testament Library Commentary
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
RSV-SCE	Revised Standard Version - Second Catholic Edition, <i>The Holy Bible</i>
SAS	Supplements to Aramaic Studies
UBSH	United Bible Societies' Handbooks
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	World Biblical Commentary
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

## Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to answer the questions, what was the Chronicler's (Chr's) purpose for including the illicit census narrative from his source (2 Sam. 24) and what was its impact on David's legacy? The first question has puzzled many scholars since it seemed to detract from King David's overall positive and (in some sense) *idealized* portrayal in Chronicles. For decades, the best possible explanation was that the narrative was included to validate the temple site in Jerusalem. However, this position has since been challenged by the seminal work of Gary N. Knoppers (1995) in his article "Images of David in Early Judaism: David as Repentant Sinner in Chronicles." Here, Knoppers summarizes and evaluates several of the most prevalent theories as to why the Chr would have included a narrative that seems to tarnish David's legacy. Ultimately, he argues that "1 Chronicles 21 is an example of, rather than the exception to, the Chr's idealization of David" because David is portrayed as the model repentant sinner. While this analysis has made a major impact on modern scholarship, Knoppers only considers the Chr's purpose for the inclusion of the illicit census narrative in isolation. Therefore, the second question remains, how does its inclusion affect David's *overall* legacy?

Many scholars have recognized that the Lord's second appearance to Solomon after the dedication and consecration of the temple is a programmatic text for the Chr's theological convictions. However, few have seen the strong connection between the narratives in 2 Chr. 7:11-22 and 1 Chr. 21-22:1. Selman (1994) recognizes that prayer is used as "a plea for repentance," and Kelly (1996) identifies the temple as the place of atonement and forgiveness in both narratives. This latter point is emphasized by the *inclusio* made with the fire-theophanies on the altars of burnt offering at the end and the beginning of the narratives (1 Chr. 21:26b; 2 Chr. 7:1). Tino (2010) comes the closest saying, "David's penitent attitude is used, although not explicitly, in the programmatic text of 2 Chr. 7:12b-15 - the text unique to Chronicles - in which both YHWH's dwelling in the temple and the welfare of the nation are conditioned on repentance." However, none of these scholars exhaust the linguistic and thematic parallels between the two accounts. Therefore, they do not fully demonstrate how the illicit census narrative impacts David's legacy for the Chr's post-exilic audience.

In order to accomplish the task of demonstrating how the illicit census narrative impacts David's legacy in Chronicles, a full comparative, narrative analysis of these passages will take place (2 Sam. 24 & 1 Chr. 21-22:1; 1 Kgs. 9:1-9 & 2 Chr. 7:11-22). Also, various literary and thematic parallels, as well as key words, will be highlighted in each narrative. For example, the key words of David (דוד), the Lord/God (יהוה/אלהים), sin (חטא), pestilence (דבר), sacrifice (עולה), and house/ the Lord's house (בית/בית יהוה) will be analyzed as well as the themes of those who humble themselves (כנע), pray (פלל), seek (בקש) the Lord, and turn (שוב) from sin, and God's response of hearing (שמע), forgiving (סלה), and healing (רפא). After careful consideration, it was concluded that it is highly probable the Chr *intentionally* connected 1 Chr. 21-22:1 and 2 Chr. 7:11-22 for the sake of his purposes. Theologically speaking, now David receives the firstfruits of the Lord's mercy offered at the exact location chosen for the construction of the temple (1 Chr. 22:1; 2 Chr. 3:1). The Chr was trying to portray David as the model repentant sinner who offers sacrifices at the designated temple site in order to be a source of inspiration for his post-exilic audience to do the same.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *Introduction*

#### **Status Quaestionis**

At first glance the inclusion of David's illicit census narrative into the Chronicler's (Chr) account seems puzzling. After all, the Chr proved that he was an adept editor, altering his *Vorlage* whenever he felt it necessary. He deleted many damaging details in David's life including any mention of his adultery with Bathsheba and his subsequent conspiracy against her husband Uriah (2 Sam. 11; cf. 1 Chr. 20:1), the rape of his daughter Tamar by her half-brother Amnon (2 Sam. 13:3-4), and the attempt by his son Absalom to usurp his throne (2 Sam. 15).<sup>1</sup>

As a result of significant editing, the Chr's portrayal of David is unique. David's character is introduced when Saul's failed reign ends with his ignominious death (1 Chr. 10).<sup>2</sup> Then David is unanimously chosen and anointed king by "all Israel" (1 Chr. 11), he captures and establishes Jerusalem as his capital (1 Chr. 11, 14), he is attentive to important liturgical matters of worship (1 Chr. 13, 15-17), and his kingdom is established and extended after several impressive military victories (1 Chr. 18-20). With such an emphasis on the positive, why does

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<sup>1</sup> Boda explains, "The Chronicler retained the note that David remained in Jerusalem, a note that in his source (2 Sam 11-12) introduced the intrigue of the Bathsheba incident. This incident, however, is left out by the Chronicler, who was presenting a pristine portrait of the victorious David...In the transition from 20:3 to 20:4, the Chronicler skipped over a substantial portion of his source in the book of Samuel (2 Sam 13:1-21:14). This section of the book of Samuel recites the aftermath of David's sin with Bathsheba, dire consequences that would involve incest, murder, and treason within the house of David." Mark J. Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, CBC 5 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), 169-170. See also: Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary*, ed. Thomas Krüger, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 387-389. Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10-29: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYBC 12A (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 739. On a related note, the question of why the Chr excluded the Bathsheba narrative will be dealt with later in this study in the preliminary conclusion of Chapter Four.

<sup>2</sup> The Chr increases Saul's humiliation by adding that, after Saul's defeat by the Philistines and after he falls on his sword, his enemies "put his armor in the temple of their gods and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon" (1 Chr. 10:10). According to the Chr's source, Saul's armor was put "in the temple of Ashtaroth; and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan" (1 Sam. 31:10).

the Chr include the illicit census narrative at all? Also, it naturally follows to consider the impact that its inclusion has on David's legacy for the Chr's post-exilic audience.

### **Preliminary Considerations**

In order to begin an investigation into the *status quaestionis*, a few preliminary questions must be considered first; namely, who is the author of Chronicles, what date was it written, and what genre is it best classified in? First, there is the issue of authorship. All references to the Chr are to the implied author of the Book of Chronicles which excludes the author(s) of Ezra-Nehemiah. This issue has been convincingly settled by Sara Japhet.<sup>3</sup>

Second, there is the issue of dating. Selman claims that if Ezra-Nehemiah is regarded as independent of Chronicles and the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1-9 are treated as additions to the original work then Chronicles could be conceived as being authored as early as the end of the sixth century, to as late as the end of the third century.<sup>4</sup> This is certainly a broad spectrum.

Knoppers acknowledges the existence of a wide range of dating, but he narrows the parameters.

He postulates, "Given the limited amount of evidence directly bearing on the composition of Chronicles, this commentary allows a range of dates, from the late fifth century through the mid-

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<sup>3</sup> Sara Japhet, "The Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Investigated Anew," *VT* 18 (1968): 330-371. Cf. H.G.M. Williamson, *1 Chronicles*, NCB (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 5-11. For a summary of the arguments that Chronicles is a unified narrative characterized by continuity in theme and purpose see Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, OTLC (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 3-7 and Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYBC 12 (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2008), 72-100.

<sup>4</sup> Martin J. Selman, *1 Chronicles*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 69-70. Some scholars like Freedman and Hahn would agree with a later dating. For example, Freedman believes Chronicles should be dated "shortly after the completion of the temple, ca. 515 BC." See David Noel Freedman, "The Chronicler's Purpose," *CBQ* 23 (1961): 441. Hahn includes the genealogies in his consideration saying, "With his first word, 'Adam,' he signals his ambition to tell the world's story from the beginning - from the creation of the first man - to the end - his own time in the late sixth or early fifth century BC, possibly within a generation of the decree of King Cyrus of Persia that concludes his work." Scott W. Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire: A Theological Commentary on 1-2 Chronicles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 1.



third century.”<sup>5</sup> He then continues to assert that most scholars date Chronicles in the fourth century, whereas his inclination is toward a date in the late fourth or early third century.<sup>6</sup> With all of these possibilities, it is important to simply acknowledge the various claims while keeping in mind that, whatever the actual date may be, the Book of Chronicles was a post-exilic work.

Third, there is the issue of genre. The book of Chronicles is a multifaceted text containing many genres including genealogies, sacred writings, prophecy, psalmody, and historiography; thus, it has been difficult to classify. This has been clearly shown in the related issue of the different canonical orderings of the Hebrew Bible, specifically the Masoretic Text (MT) and the Greek Septuagint (LXX).<sup>7</sup> The former identifies Chronicles among the sacred writings or *Ketuvim*,<sup>8</sup> the latter places it along with other historical works included in the MT’s “former prophets,” *Nevi'im Rishonim*.<sup>9</sup> It is clear that Chronicles is literature which contains both historical and prophetic elements since it recounts events in the past while interpreting them prophetically in the present for the Chr’s contemporary audience. Therefore, it seems best to

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<sup>5</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1–9*, 116.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. See esp., fn. 155.

<sup>7</sup> John Bergsma and Brant Pitre explain, “The divisions and order of the Christian Old Testament have been considerably more diverse through history and currently differ between Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Bibles. The Jewish division of the canon exerted some influence on the Church’s views especially for Saint Jerome yet was never fully embraced. More often, the canonical ordering has been arranged according to the historical sequence of events and/or the literary genres of the various books. The result is that the Christian Old Testament in its various forms is arranged according to literary genres: the Pentateuch, historical books, wisdom literature, and prophets. See *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: The Old Testament*, Vol. I (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018), 17

<sup>8</sup> The title דברי הימים, which can be translated from Hebrew as “The Events of the Days”, suggests a historical orientation. However, it was not included in the Hebrew Bible with the other historical books (in the category of the former prophets). For example, the Babylonian Talmud, B. Bat. 14b, in the fifth century CE placed the historical books such as Samuel and Kings in the category of “the prophets,” or the *Nevi'im*. In contrast, it placed Chronicles in the category of the *Ketuvim*, or the writings. Therefore, the Hebrew Bible placed Chronicles outside the categories of prophecy, identifying it as something else. Hahn notes that there are wide variations however regarding the placement of Chronicles in the *Ketuvim* both in the Aleppo and the Leningrad Codices. Some Rabbinic traditions placed the work at the beginning of the writings, other traditions placed it at the very end, also making it the conclusion of the TaNaK, the Hebrew Bible. See relevant references in Scott W. Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*, 1, fn. 1.

<sup>9</sup> The Greek tradition was completely different since the Septuagint gives Chronicles the far less flattering title Παραλειπομένων meaning, “Of Things Left Out.” It was placed after Samuel-Kings indicating that the Greek compilers believed that it was merely an addition to these historical works. Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*, 1-3.

identify the work as “prophetic historiography.”<sup>10</sup> This seems to be a much more fitting name for the genre of Chronicles than the rather limiting and anachronistic term “rewritten bible.”<sup>11</sup>

## **Methodology**

When engaging in an investigation focused on narratives, the methodologies of narrative analysis and canonical criticism will be employed. Hahn defines narrative analysis as a method which “studies the features and functions of storytelling in the Bible. Analysis is made of such things as plot, character development, conflict resolution, and the narrator’s point of view.”<sup>12</sup>

This is an important method since biblical accounts occur in narrative form. Those engaging in this type of analysis pay particular attention to the author’s purposes since they are responsible for shaping the narratives which help create a particular worldview.

Canonical criticism is another important approach to the narratives in the biblical text. Bergsma defines the object of this method as “the *canonical form* of the text, not some hypothetical form or putative source from an earlier stage of the text. Thus, the canonical critic... studies the *canonical context* of the biblical passage or book - that is, in its place within the entire body of the biblical literature.”<sup>13</sup> Therefore, canonical criticism is very similar to final-form analysis in that it analyzes the text as it has been received.

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<sup>10</sup> Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*, 3. Hahn points out that Josephus identified all biblical authors of sacred history as prophets as well. Josephus says, “Only prophets have written the original and earliest accounts of things as they learned them from God himself by inspiration.” Josephus, *Against Apion*, Bk. I, 37, in *The Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 776.

<sup>11</sup> For the strengths and weaknesses of this label see Knoppers’ article “Chronicles, A Rewritten Bible?” in *I Chronicles 1–9*, 129-137.

<sup>12</sup> Scott Hahn, ed., *Catholic Bible Dictionary* (New York; London & Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 2009), 115. Cf. Robert Alter’s influential work, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

<sup>13</sup> John Bergsma and Brant Pitre, *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: The Old Testament*, 47. The way I understand it, studying the canonical form is synonymous to conducting a “final-form analysis.”

However, this does not mean that text-criticism will be ignored. It is clear that 1 Chr. 21-22:1 is a reinterpreted, reworked narrative based on 2 Sam. 24.<sup>14</sup> But this does not mean that the Chr's *Vorlage* was identical with 2 Sam. 24 in the Masoretic Text (MT). The history of biblical transmission is probably much more complex. Generally speaking, scholars believe that "Chronicles drew on a text of Samuel closer to 4Q51Sam<sup>a</sup> and the Septuagint than to the Masoretic Text of Samuel, but on a text of Kings closer to the Masoretic Text of Kings."<sup>15</sup> Thus, the Chr's narratives should be evaluated in light of his *Vorlage*, or sources. Readers of Chronicles should be cautious not to attribute a tendentious worldview to the Chr wherever his account minorly diverges from his sources since these differences may be explained by the textual revisions of other scribes.

### **Aim and Objective**

The first major aim of the present study is to make a full narrative analysis of the final form of the Hebrew Bible according to the Masoretic text (2 Sam. 24; 1 Chr. 21-22:1; 1 Kgs. 9:1-9; 2 Chr. 7:11-22). Each investigation will include the narrative background, translation, textual analysis, and commentary of the text. Each will include a preliminary conclusion regarding answers to several questions raised from analyzing the text in order to complete the main objective; namely, to understand why David's illicit census was included in the narratives and to analyze its impact on David's overall legacy.

The second major aim is to compare and contrast all the major similarities and differences in the synoptic narratives. Therefore, a comparative analysis between the illicit

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<sup>14</sup> It is generally accepted that the Deuteronomistic History (DH) is earlier than the Chronistic one. See introduction in Japhet's commentary on "Text and Versions" in *I & II Chronicles*, 28-31.

<sup>15</sup> Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 11. For a detailed summary of "the Nature of the Biblical Texts Used by the Chronicler" see Gary N. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, 69-70. Cf. Ralph W. Klein, "Chronicles, Book of 1-2," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 995.

census narratives in Samuel and Chronicles (2 Sam. 24; 1 Chr. 21-22:1) and between the Lord's second appearance to Solomon in Kings and Chronicles (1 Kgs. 9:1-9; 2 Chr. 7:11-22) will be made. Each analysis of Chronicles will include a preliminary conclusion regarding the similarities and differences in the texts in order to complete the main objective.

Finally, other textual witnesses will be consulted as necessary. In particular, 4QSam<sup>a</sup> will be analyzed in detail since its fragmented remains contain the oldest extant description of David's illicit census. Its contents share a tremendous similarity to 1 Chr. 21. This has created the general scholarly consensus that 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, or a shared common source, was used as the Chr's *Vorlage*. Therefore, the third major aim of the present study will be to include a text critical analysis of the census narrative in 4QSam<sup>a</sup> including an introduction, translation, and commentary. It will also include a comparison between the Qumran text and the relevant passages in MT Chronicles (4QSam<sup>a</sup> = 2 Sam. 24:16b-17a; 1 Chr. 21:15b-16).

Lastly, other texts like the Septuagint (LXX), Josephus's Antiquities, Peshitta, the Latin Vulgate, and the Targum of Chronicles will be used for textual analysis whenever deemed profitable, albeit in much less detail than the MT. The final major aim of the present study is to gather relevant information from various biblical sources and textual witnesses thereof in order to discern the objective and determine the Chr's purpose for including the illicit census narrative and its impact on David's legacy.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Review of Relevant Scholarship*

#### **Introduction**

In order to do a proper review of the relevant scholarship, it is important to summarize four different explanations offered by scholars for the first question in the current investigation: why does the Chr include the illicit census narrative? First, the Chr's purpose for including David's sin is to validate the temple site. Second, the Chr chose to include the narrative to create a balanced perspective of David's reign, just as the Chr did with the other Judean kings (2 Chr. 10-36). Third, the purpose is actually to exonerate David of any wrongdoing and to assist in the Chr's *idealized* portrayal of him. Fourth, the Chr elected to include this account to portray David as "the model repentant sinner." After summarizing these explanations, each of these claims will be briefly evaluated.<sup>16</sup> Later these positions will each be given a full treatment in light of a critical narrative analysis of the text.

#### **Review and Summary**

First, no one would question that the temple is of central significance in Chronicles. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the general consensus among scholars is that the illicit census narrative was included in order to validate the temple site. This position can be seen in Noth,<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> This summary and evaluation will be partly based on Gary Knoppers' seminal work, "Images of David in Early Judaism: David as Repentant Sinner in Chronicles," *Biblica* Vol 76:4 (1995): 449-470; esp. 449-54. This work will be used as a template to easily categorize all the various relevant literature and it will be updated accordingly.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Noth, *The Chronicler's History*, trans. H.G.M. Williamson (JSOTsup, 50; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987, 2001) 34, 55-56. "[The Chr] partly reshapes (ch. 21) the history of the census of the people (2 Sam. 24) in order to arrive at the choice of the site for the future temple. The way is then clear for the preparations for the building of the temple to begin. Jerusalem, ark, and preparations for the building of the temple are the major themes of Chr.'s presentation of the history of David, and for these he makes use of his own free composition in addition to the source he is following."

Williamson,<sup>18</sup> Braun,<sup>19</sup> De Vries,<sup>20</sup> Duke,<sup>21</sup> and Johnstone<sup>22</sup> – among others. Even though the narrative is damaging to David’s reputation (and legacy?), it was included for the sake of the etiology of the temple. Be that as it may, Knoppers observes that it seems strange that if the only purpose of the narrative is to give an etiological defense or a *Hieros Logos* – a sacred account for the temple’s location, David is so deliberately emphasized throughout the narrative.<sup>23</sup> Despite this critique, this position remains popular among contemporary scholars. For example, Kalimi,<sup>24</sup> Ristau,<sup>25</sup> Amit,<sup>26</sup> and Evans<sup>27</sup> assert that the Chr’s purpose for including the illicit census narrative was to highlight the centrality of Jerusalem, the temple, and the cult.

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<sup>18</sup> Williamson, *1 Chronicles*, 142-151. “The Chronicler has based himself on 2 Sam. 24, but he has used the chapter creatively for his own purpose. Whereas 2 Sam. 24 was originally closely linked with 2 Sam. 21, yet even its new position it still does not mention explicitly that the threshing floor of Araunah which David purchased later became the site for the temple. For the Chronicler, however, this is the whole point of the account, as his own addition of 21:28-22:1 (and 2 Chr. 3:1) makes clear” (142).”

<sup>19</sup> Roddy Braun, *1 Chronicles*, WBC 14 (Waco, TX: Zondervan, 1986), 212-218. He concludes, “With the ark in Jerusalem and priests and Levites set apart to minister before it (chap. 16), with Solomon designated as temple builder (17:11-12; cf. 22:5, 8-10), and with the site for the temple declared and approved, our attention will be focused even more sharply upon the temple as the central feature of the Chronicler’s message” (218).

<sup>20</sup> Simon J. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, FOTL (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 177-180. He claims that the Chr’s history “has skillfully adapted another passage from Samuel to articulate his concept of David’s career as a preparation for the erection of the temple under Solomon... [this pericope] articulates ChrH’s ideology that the temple would be the place of atonement par excellence” (177).

<sup>21</sup> Rodney K. Duke, *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler: A Rhetorical Analysis* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1990), 59–60. “The Chronicler’s only negative portrayal of David, and the only break in the paradigm, occurs in ch. 21. Here David committed the sinful act of numbering the people. The Chronicler lacks other traditions known from Samuel-Kings which cast David in a negative light. Why, then, include this account which threatens to weaken the paradigm? As has been generally recognized, in this case the importance of one theme outweighed the risk of weakening another. It was necessary to include this transgression of David in order not to omit an event which was crucial in the founding of the Jerusalem cult, for through this event the location for the altar and temple was obtained” (59).

<sup>22</sup> William Johnstone, *1 Chronicles 1- 2 Chronicles 9, Israel’s Place Among the Nations* (JSOTsup, 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 237.

<sup>23</sup> Knoppers, “Images of David in Early Judaism,” 449-470; esp. 451. *1 Chronicles 10-29*, 410-11.

<sup>24</sup> Isaac Kalimi, “Jerusalem—the Divine City: The Representation of Jerusalem in Chronicles Compared with Earlier and Later Jewish Compositions,” in *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, M. Patrick Graham, Steven L. McKenzie, and Gary N. Knoppers, eds., (London & New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 189-205.

“The small size of Jerusalem in the Chronicler’s era and its poor condition did not affect its spiritual superiority as the only legitimate cult-place of God! He chose unconditionally not only the city of Jerusalem, but also its temple site (1 Chron. 21:26 and 22:1- ‘additions’ to 2 Sam. 24:25), Solomon the temple-builder (1 Chron. 28:6, 10; 29:1) and the temple itself: ‘Now I have chosen (בחרתי) and consecrated this temple that my name should be there forever, my eyes and my heart there for all time’ (2 Chron. 7:16)” (193-94).

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth A. Ristau, “Breaking Down Unity: An Analysis of 1 Chronicles 21-22:1,” *JSOT* 30 (2005): 201-221. He concludes, “The evidence of this study reinforces the proposal that Jerusalem, the temple, the cult, and the absolute sovereignty of Yahweh are central elements in the Chronicler’s ideology” (221).

Japhet posits another option for the reason the narrative was included. She claims that the Chr intended to present a balanced perspective of the negative and positive aspects of the David's reign, just as he did for the other Judean kings (2 Chr. 10-36).<sup>28</sup> Initially this seems reasonable but Knoppers rightly critiques Japhet asking, if this was the case, why didn't the Chr include more negative details about David, and any negative details about Solomon?<sup>29</sup> As previously mentioned, the Chr had a lot of material to choose from in 2 Samuel and 1 Kings: David's Bathsheba affair, his role in the death of her husband, and all the ensuing feuds in the royal family. So, the question remains, why did the Chr specifically choose to include David's illicit census to achieve a balanced perspective of his reign?

Furthermore, Knoppers observes that the Chr's portrayal of David and Solomon are a unity, integrating their reigns into one interlocked narrative unit, unlike the reigns of the other Judean kings.<sup>30</sup> This fact weakens Japhet's claim. For Knoppers, this makes the inclusion of the

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<sup>26</sup> Yairah Amit, "Araunah's Threshing Floor: A Lesson in Shaping Historical Memory" in *What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?* Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana Edelman, Eds. (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 133-144. "As is well known, the story in Samuel lacks the formulaic features and the etiological focus that would tell the reader whether the place was to be, specifically, a temple location or would only indicate the choice of Jerusalem in general. In Chronicles, however, it is an etiological story about the dedication of a cult site—specifically, a plain link between the plot and the temple of Jerusalem."

<sup>27</sup> Paul S. Evans, "Let the Crime Fit the Punishment: The Chronicler's Explication of the 'Sin' in 1 Chronicles 21," in *Chronicling the Chronicler: The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple Historiography*, Paul S. Evans and Tyler F. Williams, eds. (Winona Lake, Indiana: Penn State University Press, 2013), 65-80. He states plainly, "In my opinion, its inclusion likely had something to do with the connection of this narrative with the choosing of the temple site" (66).

<sup>28</sup> Actually, she changes her stance on the Chr's portrayal of David. Initially she held that "any story that might possibly cast some sort of aspersions at David has been deleted from Chronicles, occasionally the most minor of details is omitted for this reason." Sara Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, [English ed.] (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 365 and fn. 63. Then she notices how the Chr's portrayal of David in 1 Chr. 21 does indeed include an "emphasis on David's responsibility... [resulting in] a heavier shadow cast on David's character which should be taken into consideration in evaluating his character in Chronicles" (*1 Chronicles*, 377).

<sup>29</sup> Knoppers, "Images of David in Early Judaism," 452-53.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 452. Cf. Roddy Braun, "Solomonic Apologetic in Chronicles," *JBL* 92 (1973): 503-516. H.G.M. Williamson, "The Accession of Solomon in the Books of Chronicles," *VT* 26 (1976): 351-361. Gary Knoppers, "'Battling against Yahweh': Israel's War against Judah in 2 Chr 13,2-20," *RB* 100 (1993): 516, 532.

illicit census narrative that much more of an anomaly.<sup>31</sup> Overall, Japhet's observations and work on Chronicles have been extremely beneficial to biblical scholarship, even though she may have missed the mark regarding this particular question. However, she is correct when she observes, "[T]he census itself is actually outside the scope of the story. For the Chr, having noted that a census was taken, the decisive factors are its results, and its theological ramifications."<sup>32</sup> This is an important insight that will be revisited later.

Thus far, scholars have claimed that the inclusion of David's sin in the illicit census narrative was necessary for the sake of the temple and for the sake of a balanced perspective of his negative and positive aspects. However, Wright offers a third explanation which is radically different from these views. He claims that the Chr's illicit census narrative should be read on its own merit and not in comparison with its Deuteronomistic counterpart (2 Sam. 24). If this is done, he insists, David's reputation (and legacy) is not damaged at all since he did nothing wrong. He claims, "Rather than a guilty sinner, David is an innocent victim, a heroic king who attempts to save his kingdom from divine wrath provoked by another."<sup>33</sup> If this is the case, then who is to blame for the illicit census? He asserts that Joab is the guilty party for not carrying out the census as instructed. However, this claim is difficult to maintain since David himself confesses his guilt in the narrative *twice* (1 Chr. 21:7,17) and the narrator begins the account by claiming David was incited to perform the census by some sort of adversary. Therefore, Joab is clearly portrayed as the innocent one. Furthermore, there are several examples how the Chr actually heightens David's guilt as a result of his obstinance towards Joab's plea and warning (1 Chr. 21:3, 7-17).

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 453. He concludes his evaluation of Japhet's position saying, "The comparison with a completely sanitized Solomon makes the errant David of 1 Chronicles 21 all the more striking. The census is the only apparent defect in the performance of David or Solomon in the Chronicler's History."

<sup>32</sup> Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 373.

<sup>33</sup> John Wright, "The Innocence of David in 1 Chronicles 21," *JSOT* 60 (1993): 87-105.



Lastly, Knoppers concludes that the Chr chose to include David's sin in the illicit census narrative because he sought to portray David as the model of a repentant sinner. He argues that "this is a constituent element in the Chr's depiction of David... [and] 1 Chr. 21 is an example of, rather than an exception to, the Chr's idealization of David."<sup>34</sup> This point was groundbreaking. Many scholars have since acknowledged its importance and/or followed his lead.<sup>35</sup> Yet this position is also incomplete. If this was the Chr's purpose, why did he decide not to include David's Bathsheba affair that also highlights David's repentance (2 Sam. 12:13)? Furthermore, it does not appear that Knoppers, or the scholars after him, considered the impact of David's illicit census narrative on David's overall legacy in Chronicles.

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<sup>34</sup> Knoppers, "Images of David in Early Judaism," 467-470; *I Chronicles 10-29*, 764.

<sup>35</sup> For example, on the one hand, Boda follows Knoppers' lead by positing that the Chr chose to include the illicit census narrative for the dual purpose of portraying David as a model repentant sinner *and* as an etiological explanation for the temple's location. In his commentary on *1-2 Chronicles* he concludes, "What this account reminds the reader of is the centrality of sacrifice and prayer for the Temple. In addition, even in his failure David is presented as normative for the Chronicler's audience: a repentant sinner who seeks atonement through sacrifice" (179). Cf. Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary*, ed. Thomas Krüger, *Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 429. On the other hand, Ristau acknowledges his mentor's important point, but he does not ultimately agree with it. He explains his reasoning saying, "Yet, even this claim [that David is a paradigmatic penitent], while it takes seriously the image of David as malefactor, only addresses one controversial aspect of the narrative and still aims at reconciling the difficulties of the text to a more characteristically Chronistic *Tendenz* (as that is defined by most scholars). Of course, this does not invalidate the claim; it simply makes the point that recent scholarship tends to ignore the potential of the narrative to function as a counter-testimony to typical constructions of the Chronicler's ideology." Ristau, "Breaking Down Unity," 206, fn. 10.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *David's Illicit Census according to 2 Sam. 24*

#### **Introduction**

In order to make a comparison of David's illicit census narrative found in 2 Sam. 24 and 1 Chr. 21, it is necessary to analyze each narrative in its given context. By doing this exercise, it will help bring to the forefront the similarities and differences between each. Ultimately, analyzing the illicit census narrative in Samuel will assist in discovering the purpose for its inclusion in each text.

#### **Narrative Background of 1 Samuel**

David is introduced in the first book of Samuel after the kingship is "torn away" from Saul due to his disobedience to the Lord (1 Sam. 15). After this event, the Lord instructs the prophet Samuel to go and anoint one of Jesse's sons in Bethlehem. It is here the reader encounters David, the youngest of Jesse's eight sons, for the first time. Surprisingly, the Lord chooses him as second king of Israel. Young, handsome, and rugged, he is an improbable candidate for king, but the Lord speaks to Samuel saying, "the Lord sees not as man sees; man sees the outward appearance, but the Lord sees the heart" (16:7).

This is the beginning of the very positive portrayal of David's early life, he is a man of many talents. After the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, he was tormented by an evil spirit sent from the Lord. Seeking a solution to this problem, one of Saul's servants recommends that they request the musician David to come and play music to calm his soul. Here, David is described as "a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, favored by the Lord" (16:18).

The first war-story of David is the extraordinary tale of his defeat of Goliath, the Philistine war-champion. Goliath is described as roughly nine feet tall, covered in armor of bronze, holding a javelin with an impressive spearhead made of iron, and challenging any Israelite warrior to a duel in order to decide the outcome of their battle. David accepts Goliath's challenge, and he defeats him in the name of the Lord of hosts with a sling and a stone, ultimately doing exactly what he said he would do to Goliath and killing him with his own sword (17). Due to this unlikely turn of events, David's fame and reputation only grows larger.

After David defeats Goliath, Saul becomes jealous of him when they return home because the crowds elevate his praises over Saul's (18:7-8). Saul becomes an even more tragic figure due to his uncontrollable jealousy when he attempts to kill David several times, even after David marries his daughter Michal (18-26). Even when the opportunity presents itself, David refuses to harm Saul out of respect for "the Lord's anointed" (24:10; 26:11). It is only at the hands of the Philistines that Saul and his sons meet their demise (31).

### **Narrative Background of 2 Samuel**

David is devastated by the death of Saul and Jonathan, and he mourns greatly (2 Sam. 1). Then, after Saul's death is confirmed, David accepts the men of Judah's anointing to become their king (2). However, this does not settle the matter so easily. There was a long war between the houses of Saul and David, and while David's house grew stronger, Saul's house grew weaker (3:1). Then David is accepted as king over the now united kingdom of Israel (5:3-5).

Shortly thereafter, David conquers Jerusalem and makes it the new capital of his united kingdom (5:6ff). Then, he decides to turn his attention from military matters to liturgical concerns and he brings the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem (6). With great anticipation, a

crowd of thirty-thousand men decide to accompany the ark as it is carried on a cart to the new capital city. But a fatal mistake is made. Uzzah, the man responsible to drive the cart the ark was upon, died touching the ark. Presumably, he touched the ark in order to keep it steady when the ox stumbled (6:1-7). This made David angry and afraid, causing him to question his mission to transfer the ark to Jerusalem. So, the ark remained temporarily at Obededom's house, and it was greatly blessed. Then David decides to bring up the ark to Jerusalem with men carrying it (presumably on poles). Here, David is unmistakably described as a priest-king, dancing before the ark of the Lord with all his might and dressed in a linen ephod (6:14ff).

At the climax of David's reign as priest-king in Jerusalem with the ark of the covenant, David wonders if he ought to build the Lord a house to dwell in instead of a tent, given that it is unseemly for David's own home to be more lavish than that of God's ark. At first, Nathan the prophet is supportive of the idea saying to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart; for the Lord is with you" (7:3). But that same night the Lord gives Nathan a different message. It was the Lord who took David from pastoring sheep to be prince over Israel, and it is the Lord who will make David's name great. Therefore, the Lord will build David a house and Lord raise up his offspring. He will build a house for the Lord, and he will be established on the throne of his kingdom forever. The Lord's covenant faithfulness will not be taken away from David's offspring like it was taken from Saul (7:15-16). David responds to this message with a heart overflowing with praise, gratitude, and awe (7:18-29).

Consequently, David is remarkably successful in battle. He defeats the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites, a coalition of Aramean city-states, and the Edomites (8-10). Thus far, the portrayal of David has been extremely positive. Then the narrative takes a dramatic shift when David commits the sin of adultery with Bathsheba. First, he decides not to go to battle

with his army as kings are expected to do (11:1). Then he allows himself to be lazy and lustful (11:2-3), he commits adultery with a married woman (11:4), he tries to manipulate her husband Uriah, a soldier in David's wars, to cover for himself (11:6-13), and when his plans fall short, he orchestrates Uriah's death in battle and takes his wife for his own (11:14-26).

As previously mentioned, this incredible fall from grace has many negative ripple effects in David's life and on his royal reign. The ensuing chapters are devoted to David's life which are marred by the effects of the dysfunction of sin on his family. David's daughter Tamar is raped by her half-brother Amnon (13). David's third-born son Absalom seeks revenge and kills Amnon, his first-born (14). David's life is threatened when Absalom attempts to usurp his throne (15). David is verbally humiliated by a Saulide loyalist who throws stones and dirt at him (16:5-14). Then Absalom is killed by Joab, David's army commander, who disobeyed orders (18) and David mourns the death of his rebellious son (19).

As David's life nears its end, he must finally deal with another civil rebellion (20). Then everything included after this event is in the form of an addendum. This is obvious since it breaks away from the previous narrative chronology, beginning with a vague reference to "the days of David" in 2 Sam. 21.<sup>36</sup> But this does not mean that the narratives included in the addendum were included at random. Instead, many "post WWII commentary writers" identify the remaining chapters of Samuel (21-24) as six accounts that are carefully arranged in a chiasmic structure (a-b-c-c'-b'-a).<sup>37</sup> For example, Hahn observes,

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<sup>36</sup> Henry Preserved Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, ICC (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1899), 374. Cf. Craig E. Morrison, *2 Samuel*, ed. Jerome T. Walsh, BOSHNP (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), 278.

<sup>37</sup> Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC 7 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 442. See also: Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary*, trans. by J.S. Boden, OTLC (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 415. Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel* (Downers Grove: Inter-varsity Press, 1988), 282-83. P. Kyle McCarter Jr, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, AYBC 9 (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 18. Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 276. For an alternative point of view see Mary J. Evans, *1 and 2 Samuel*, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000), 228.

Accounts one and six concern *plagues* that troubled David's reign (21:1-14; 24:1-25); accounts two and five inform us about *warriors* in David's army (21:15-22; 23:8-39); and accounts three and four preserve *poems* from the hand of David himself (22:1-51; 23:1-7). This final section of the book, which records events that took place at various times during the life and reign of David, serves as a tribute to his legacy as a king, priest, prophet, and military commander.<sup>38</sup>

### **Immediate Narrative Background**

The narratives throughout Samuel have included, in detail, the virtues and vices of King David. After David's last words (23:1-7), but before the illicit census narrative (24), there are short narratives about the legacy of David's mighty men (23:8-39). Therefore, there is an emphasis on the moral uprightness of David's mighty men and a defense of their various military endeavors that anticipates the illicit census narrative.

### **Analysis of MT 2 Sam. 24**

This section focuses upon 2 Sam. 24 based on the Masoretic Text (MT) and will be analyzed in the following manner: 1) Translation of the text 2) Analysis of the form and structure 3) Verse-by-verse textual analysis 4) and Commentary.

### **Translation of MT 2 Sam. 24**<sup>39</sup>

24:1 Again the anger of the Lord was kindled upon Israel, and he incited David against them saying, "Go count Israel and Judah."  
2 The king said to Joab, commander of the army who was with him, "Go to all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and count the people so I may know the number of the people.  
3 And Joab said to the king, "May the Lord your God add to the people a hundred times whatever they are while the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why do you delight in this thing?"

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<sup>38</sup> Scott Hahn, Curtis Mitch, and Michael Barber, *The First and Second Books of Samuel*, ICSB (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2016), 98.

<sup>39</sup> My translation based on *The Lexham Hebrew Bible* and the BHS. Works consulted include BDB and the Holy Bible (RSV-SCE), 2 Sam. 24.

4 But the word of the king prevailed over Joab and upon the commanders of the armies. Joab and the commanders of the armies went out from the presence of the king to count the people of Israel.

5 They passed through the Jordan and encamped in Aroer, on the right side of the city which is near the wadi of Gad and on to Jazer.

6 Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim Hodshi, and they came to Dan-yaan and around to Sidon.

7 They came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and the Canaanites and they went out to Negev of Judah at Beer-sheba.

8 When they had gone throughout all the land, they came to an end in Jerusalem after nine months and twenty days.

9 Joab gave the number of the census to the king. And there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword. The men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

10 David's heart struck him after he counted the people. David said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly since I did this thing. Now Lord, I pray, take away the iniquity of your servant because I have acted very foolishly."

11 When David rose in the morning, the word of the Lord was with Gad the prophet, the seer of David saying,

12 "Go and speak to David, 'Thus says the Lord, three things I offer you. Choose one of them that I may do it to you.'"

13 So Gad came to David and told him. He said to him, "Will you have seven years famine come to your land? Or will you flee three months before your enemies while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days pestilence in your land? Now consider and see what I will return to him who sent me."

14 David said to Gad, "I am deeply distressed. Let us fall into the hand of the Lord because his mercy is great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man.

15 The Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time. People from Dan to Beersheba died, seventy thousand men.

16 And when the angel sent his hand to Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented from the evil, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "Enough, now stay your hand." The angel of the Lord was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

17 David spoke to the Lord, when he saw the angel who was destroying the people, and said, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have committed iniquity. These sheep, what have they done? Let your hand, I pray, be against me and my father's house.

18 Gad came to David on that day and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite."

19 So David went up according to Gad's word, as the Lord commanded.

20 Araunah looked out and saw the king and his servants coming up to him. Araunah went out and bowed down to the king with his face to the ground.

21 Araunah said, "Why did my lord, the king come to his servant?" David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you to build an altar to the Lord in order that the plague be stopped among the people."

22 Araunah said to David, "Let my lord, the king take and offer up all that is good in his eyes. See, the oxen for burnt offering, the threshing sledge, and the yoke of the oxen for wood."

23 All this, O king, Araunah has given to the king." Araunah said to the king, "May the Lord your God be pleased with you."

24 The king said to Araunah, “No, I will certainly buy it from you for a price. I will not offer to the Lord my God offerings that cost me nothing.” David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty silver shekels.

25 David built an altar to the Lord there and he offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings. And the Lord heeded the prayers for the land and the plague was averted from Israel.

### **Form and Structure**

The form of this account is a narrative recalling David’s illicit census. There are many important characters in the narrative including the Lord, Israel, David, Joab and the commanders of the army, men who “drew the sword” in Israel and Judah, the prophet Gad, the destroying angel, David’s servants, and Araunah the Jebusite. However, the main characters could be narrowed down to David and the Lord. The reader comes to deeper knowledge and understanding of most of these main characters through narrator-led dialogue. This means that this account is primarily driven by the narrator and then greater character depth is achieved through the medium of the character’s direct speech.<sup>40</sup> The plot can be summarized as regarding a conflict and resolution.

The illicit census narrative in 2 Samuel 24 can be divided into three parts: (1) 24:1-9, (2) 24:10-15 (3) 24:16-25. By emphasizing these divisions, a detailed plot takes shape. David is incited by the Lord’s anger to take an illicit census of Israel, David orders the commander of his army to take a census, Joab objects, the king’s order remains unchanged, Joab concedes, and the census is taken and reported to David (vv.1-9).

Immediately after the census is reported, David’s heart struck him, and he repents of his sin. Subsequently, the prophet Gad is sent by the Lord to give him three options for punishment. David chooses to “fall into the hand of the Lord” which ultimately leads to the death of seventy thousand men in Israel by the sword of the destroying angel (vv.10-15).

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<sup>40</sup> See Chap. 4 in Robert Alter’s *The Art of Biblical Narrative* for further insights into revelation of characters.



Finally, the Lord “repents of the evil” and ends the punishment. This happens in two stages or subsections: first, the Lord directly commands the destroying angel to stop in Jerusalem near the threshing floor of Araunah (v.16). Second, the Lord is pleased with David’s repentance, obedience, and sacrifice made at the threshing floor (vv. 17-25). David first assumes responsibility for the pestilence (v.17), and he is obedient to the Lord’s command given through the prophet Gad (vv. 18-25a) by negotiating the purchase of the threshing floor with Araunah (vv. 20-23), purchasing it (v.24), building an altar and offering sacrifices upon it (v.25a), and averting the plague (v.25b).

### **Textual Analysis**<sup>41</sup>

v.1, “Again, the Lord’s anger was kindled against Israel” (וַיִּקְרַח אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). This phrase is awkward in its placement in the immediate narrative context since “the Lord’s anger” is not explicitly referred to in it. The only obvious connection with this phrase is from the preceding narrative in 2 Sam. 21. Williamson agrees with Hertzberg’s observation that “the Lord’s anger, the need for expiation, catastrophe, holy place, and ultimate blessing, [are all] underlined by the use of identical phraseology in 21:14 and 24:25.”<sup>42</sup> Therefore, it is logical to conclude that 2 Sam. 24 and chapter 21 were originally “closely linked” due to parallel themes shared between them. Moreover, linking the two narratives helps explain why the Lord incited David ( וַיִּקְרַח אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ) to take the census on a linguistic level. Otherwise, as Karl Budde observes, “The reason for modifying the verse falls to the ground”.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Works consulted include BHS, *the Lexham Hebrew Bible*, BDB, and Strong’s Dictionary. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds. *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). Lancelot C. L. Brenton, *The Septuagint Version: Greek* (London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1851), 2 Kgdms 24:1–3. *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012). *Biblia Sacra Juxta Vulgatam Clementinam*, Ed. electronica (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2005), 2 Sa 24:1. William Whitaker, *Dictionary of Latin Forms* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2012). Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987).

<sup>42</sup> Williamson, *I Chronicles*, 142. Cf. Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel*.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

v.2, “The king said to Joab, commander of the army.” LXX and Syriac manuscripts have David speak to “Joab *and to the commanders*” (καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἄρχοντας) which is in agreement with 1 Chr. 21:2.<sup>44</sup> Also, Dan is the traditional northern border of the kingdom and Beersheba is traditionally the southern border.

v.3, “A hundred times whatever they are” (מֵאָהַ הַפְּעֻמִּים הַזֵּהִם) is somewhat difficult to translate since the phrase “whatever they are” (הַזֵּהִם הַפְּעֻמִּים) is constructed of prepositions and pronouns. Regardless, the meaning is clear: the army commander Joab questions David’s motives.

v.5, Joab started from the southernmost tip of Israel, in the city Aroer, east of the River Jordan. This land was captured in the beginning of the Israelite conquest (see Deut. 4:48; Josh. 12:2).<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the census route that Joab took travels the borders of the kingdom from the south to the north, east of the River Jordan and back down again, near the sea.<sup>46</sup>

v.9, “And Israel had eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword. And the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.” There are conflicting reports regarding these numbers. For example, the LXX Lucianic manuscripts and Josephus’ *Antiquities* have 900,000 men in Israel. However, these two sources disagree about the number of men in Judah: the LXX Lucianic tradition has 500,000 men in Judah while Josephus has 400,000 men. 1 Chr. 21:5 gives a different, higher number in its census report.<sup>47</sup> When comparisons are made between the Books of Chronicles and Samuel, scholars believe that the count is exaggerated in each. To give an example in support of this claim, one scholar sites that “archaeologists suppose that the population of Jerusalem at this period was between 4,000 and 6,400 people.”<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, to provide textual evidence for the possibility of an exaggerated report, McCarter advises to compare the much smaller number available to Saul. “When he mustered them at Bezek, the men of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah were thirty thousand” (1 Sam 11:8).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The Lucianic Codices of the LXX, the Syriac, including the Ambrosian and British Museum Codices of the Syriac.

<sup>45</sup> McCarter Jr, *II Samuel*, 510.

<sup>46</sup> Joab’s route is illustrated by map. Ibid., 530 (map 10).

<sup>47</sup> McCarter Jr, *II Samuel*, 505.

<sup>48</sup> Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 310.

<sup>49</sup> McCarter Jr, *II Samuel*, 510.

v.10, Why “David’s heart *struck* him” (וַיִּדְּבַר לִבּוֹ אֶת־דָּוִד) is neither elaborated upon nor explained.

v.12, The Qal, masculine, singular absolute participle translated as “to offer” more literally means “to lay upon” (נָטַל), especially when the preposition (עַל) is included. However, Strong suggests that the concept of “offering” is implied.<sup>50</sup>

v.13, “Will you have *seven* years famine come to your land?” The MT, Josephus, and the Latin Vulgate all have seven years. Josephus has, “Whether he would have a famine come upon the country for seven years.” The Latin Vulgate has, “Either *seven* years famine to come into your land...” (Aut *septem* annis veniet tibi fames in terra tua). However, the LXX has, “Whether three years famine should come to your land” (εἰ ἔλθῃ σοι τρία ἔτη λιμὸς ἐν τῇ γῆ σου). This is the same proposal that Gad communicates to David in MT 1 Chr. 21:12.

v.15, “And the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time.” This seems to imply that the three days pestilence was completed. However, some scholars contest that “the appointed time” should be translated as “dinnertime,” “lunchtime,” or “the time of sustenance, nourishment.”<sup>51</sup> This would align with the LXX which states, “So David chose for himself the death. And it was the days of the harvest of wheat and the Lord allowed death in Israel from early morning *until lunch time* (πρωῖθεν ἕως ὥρας ἀρίστου) and the slaughter was appointed among the people.”<sup>52</sup> The Chr omits any such temporal reference (cf. 1 Chr. 21:14).

v.16, “The destroying angel” is introduced into the narrative. Interestingly, the Dead Sea Scroll textual witness of 2 Sam. 24 (4QSam<sup>a</sup>) resembles the MT 1 Chr. 21 more than the MT 2 Sam. 24. This will be discussed in detail when analyzing the latter text.

v.17, The LXX (Vatican) and 4QSam<sup>a</sup> render “I have committed iniquity” (וְאָנֹכִי הֵעָוִיתִי) similarly to 1 Chr. 21:17. In the Chr’s version, David says, “I have *certainly* committed evil” (וְהִרְעָה הֵרְעוֹתִי) with the form of the infinitive absolute. However, there has been some discrepancy regarding the meaning of 4QSam<sup>a</sup> since there is an additional heh at the end of the first word (הִרְעָה הֵרְעוֹתִי). This added letter entirely changes the meaning of the phrase. Now the initial heh becomes a definite article for the noun as seen in the LXX translation, “I am the

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<sup>50</sup> Strong’s, 5190.

<sup>51</sup> See overview in McCarter Jr, *II Samuel*, 511.

<sup>52</sup> *The Lexham English Septuagint*, 2 Kgdms 24:15.

shepherd” (ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν). Therefore, Williamson and others suggest the translation, “‘I, the shepherd, who did wrong’, provides a better contrast with the continuation *but these sheep*.”<sup>53</sup>

v.18, Here the owner of the threshing floor is identified as Araunah (אַרְנָה) the Jebusite. But the spelling of the name here is corrupt.<sup>54</sup> Given the textual evidence, the spelling Ornan (אֲרָנָן) in 1 Chr. 21:18 is much more believable.<sup>55</sup> It is unclear exactly what the original form of the name was,<sup>56</sup> but most likely it was either a Hittite title meaning “aristocrat” or a Hurrian title meaning “lord.”<sup>57</sup> Also it is important to mention that the Jebusites were the inhabitants of Jerusalem before David conquered the city (2 Sam. 5:6-10).

vv. 21-24, This section of the narrative closely resembles Abraham’s negotiation with the Hittites in order to buy burial ground after Sarah dies (Gen. 23:3-16).

v.23, “All this, *O king*, Araunah has given to the king.” (הַכֹּל נָתַן אֲרָנָה הַמֶּלֶךְ לַמֶּלֶךְ). A few Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX, and two Lucianic Codices are lacking the vocative exclamation “*O king*”, and the word in the MT is most likely a scribal error.<sup>58</sup> Araunah says to King David, “May the Lord *your* God...” and later David says, “I will not offer to the Lord *my* God...” (vv.23-24). Here a clear distinction has been made between Araunah and David. Interestingly, Knoppers observes that “Chronicles does not distinguish between the god of Ornan and the god of David.”<sup>59</sup>

v.24, “No, I will *certainly* buy it from you” (כִּי־יִקְנֶה אֶתְּךָ).” The infinitive absolute is used here for emphasis; however, there is discrepancy regarding the spelling of “certainly” (קָנָה). Many Hebrew manuscripts have it rendered with the alternate (קָנָה) which is similar to Lev. 25:24 and 1 Chr. 21:24.

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<sup>53</sup> See Williamson, *I Chronicles*, 148. He cites the manuscript evidence of LXX, MT 2 Sam. 24, Josephus, and 4QSam<sup>a</sup>. Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*, 92-93. Selman, *I Chronicles*, 208.

<sup>54</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 747.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. “Ornan” (*rnn*). LXX *Orna*; Tg. *rwn* (“Arwan”). MT 2 Sam 24:16 is corrupt; Kethib *h`wrnh* (Qere *rwnh*); cf. *rnyh* in 2 Sam 24:18 and *rwnh* in 2 Sam 24:20. 4QSam<sup>a</sup> *rn*

<sup>56</sup> Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, 391.

<sup>57</sup> Richard D. Nelson, “Araunah (Person),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 353.

<sup>58</sup> McCarter, *II Samuel*, 508. He takes note that “*hmlk* is lacking in LXX, OL, Syr., Targ., and Vulg.<sup>MSS</sup>.” Therefore, he surmises, “This suggests not that *hmlk* should be removed but rather that *lmlk* arose in correction of *hmlk*, replacing it in some MSS and combined with it in a conflate text in others.”

<sup>59</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 749.

### **Commentary: Section One (vv.1-9)**

In the narrative, David is portrayed as committing the sin of taking a census, repenting of this sin, and ultimately pleasing the Lord with sacrifices offered on an altar (vv. 10, 17, 25). This seems simple enough but after analyzing the text of David's illicit census narrative, the reader is left with many questions concerning the Lord's anger (v.1), the Lord's incitement of David (v.1), the nature of David's sin (v.10), what motivated David's repentance (v.10), the Lord's command to the destroying angel (v.16), and how the plague was averted from Israel (v.25). Finally, the reader is left wondering what effect the inclusion of this narrative has on the overall legacy of David. Many of these questions are left unanswered in the narrative as it has been preserved. However, it is possible to arrive as close as possible to satisfactory answers when analyzing the narrative in its given context.

The narrative begins with the statement that the anger of the Lord was enkindled on Israel *again*. When was the last time the Lord was angry with Israel (v.1)? It seems natural to return to previous narratives in order to discover the answer. One can see some connection between this account and 2 Sam. 21. In the latter, there is a famine in Israel for three years and David seeks the Lord to discover the cause of this. The Lord informs David that there is bloodguilt on the house of Saul since he unjustly put the Gibeonites to death (1 Sam. 22:6-19, esp. 17-19). This story contains many similarities with the illicit census story, even though the anger of the Lord is only implicit in this one since God allowed (or caused?) a famine in the land (1 Sam. 21). However, in each narrative, after sin was punished, God explicitly hears the prayers of his people by "heed[ing] supplication for the land" (2 Sam. 21:14; 2 Sam. 24:25).

If this is the case, it still does not explain what caused God's anger at this specific time leading up to the census. The most likely answer is that God's anger was provoked by Israel's disobedience. Morrison observes how the formulaic expression of the Lord's burning anger

occurs most frequently in Deuteronomy as “the expected divine reaction to human disobedience (see Deut. 6:15; 7:4; 11:17; 29:27; 31:17).”<sup>60</sup> However, in this narrative, the implied sin is unknown. Therefore, the reader must simply trust that Israel offended God somehow; otherwise, God’s anger seems volatile, capricious, and unjustified.

Finally, if it seems bizarre that the Lord incited David against Israel, there is already precedent for the notion that the Lord incites people against others in 1 Sam. 26:19. Here, David pleads with Saul to believe that his intentions towards the king are noble and upright. He states, “If it is the Lord who has incited you against me, may he accept an offering; but if it is men, may they be cursed before the Lord.” If Israel did sin, then David himself knows that God can incite people against each other. In any case, David does not seem to be aware that he was being inveigled at all. Perhaps David was undergoing some kind of a test by the Lord. While it is true that he was incited to take the census, this does not mean that he *ought* to take it.

David believes that he sinned in taking the census; this much is clear (vv. 10, 17). What is not so clear is how taking the census was sinful at all. The reader is left searching for context clues, and one very helpful hint comes from David’s army commander (v.3). When David gives Joab the command to take a census, Joab emphatically objects saying, “May the Lord your God add to the people a hundred times whatever they are and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why do you delight in this thing?” Joab is clearly questioning David’s motives for taking a census, similar to his questioning of the king when David mourned for his treasonous son Absalom (see 2 Sam. 19:6-8). Joab exclaims, perhaps as a subtle reminder, that it is only the Lord who can add to Israel’s numbers. Therefore, Joab provides a possible subjective answer to the question of the sinful nature of David’s illicit census.

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<sup>60</sup> Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 307.

An interesting literary allusion and parallel can be drawn with this dialogue between Joab and David and the dialogue between the Lord and Gideon when his army was selected. The Lord actually decreased Israel's number, instead of increasing it. It might seem strange that God would do such a thing, but in the beginning of the narrative the Lord explains his reasoning. "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, 'My own hand has delivered me'" (Judges 7:2). Interestingly, Gideon and the Lord are described as testing the men to see who will lead them in battle. However, the comparisons stop there since Gideon and his selected three hundred men pass the test (Judg. 7-8). In contrast, David certainly believes he failed his test (2 Sam. 24:10, 17).

Despite these interesting insights, one is still left wondering why, objectively speaking, taking a census is considered sinful at all. If it was David who sinned subjectively due to the condition of his heart, then why does God punish the people of Israel instead of David? In order to answer these questions, a deeper analysis on biblical censuses is necessary.

Throughout the Hebrew Bible, censuses are taken for military and tax purposes. Often times these activities were presented as a mundane, uneventful necessity of Israel's leaders (cf. Josh 8:10; 1 Sam. 11:8; 15:4; 2 Sam. 18:1). However, there were specific requirements that needed to be met when taking a military census. First, only men twenty years of age or older "who were able to go to war" were allowed to be counted (Num. 1:2-3; 26:2). Joab seems to indicate that he followed this precept when he gave the report to David only counting "men who drew the sword" (2 Sam. 24:9). Also, the precept given to Moses should be closely considered since it connects obediently taking a census with averting a plague. The Lord said to Moses,

When you take the census of the sons of Israel, then each shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord when you number them, that there be no plague among them when you number them. Each who is numbered in the census shall give this: half a shekel...And you shall take the atonement money from the people of Israel and shall appoint it for the

service of the tent of meeting; that it may bring the people of Israel to remembrance before the Lord, so as to make atonement for yourselves,” (Ex. 30:11-16).

Taken in context, Israel had not yet done anything to merit punishment from the Lord.

Therefore, as Golani points out, “Exodus 30:12 presents the census as inherently dangerous; the census is expected to bring about a plague. The ransom is meant to block the danger from harming Israel.”<sup>61</sup>

But why is it that census taking is considered so dangerous? Although this concept may be foreign to some people, many cultures view counting the population as taboo.<sup>62</sup> For example, “[T]o this day a traditional Jew will not enumerate the ten-man quorum required for public prayer (*minyān*) but will instead recite a ten-word prayer while pointing at each eligible worshiper.”<sup>63</sup> Many refrain from counting people since they are afraid that an evil spirit will hear them and become an adversary to them. For example, Golani reports,

The fear of ‘*Ayin haRa*’, the “Evil Eye,” i.e. the danger of “seeing” the number of the people. Although precursors of this explanation can be found in Rabbinic writings (e.g., b. *Yoma* 22b), its first explicit occurrence, as an evil presence lurking within the census, is in the Middle-Ages, in Rashi’s commentary of Exodus 30:11:

שהמנין שולט בו עין הרע והדָּבָר בא עליהם כמו שמצינו בימי דוד.  
“...the counting is controlled by ‘*Ayin haRa*’ and the plague came to them, as we found in the days of David.”<sup>64</sup>

In some respects, to take a census is to gain power over the population, and this privilege is understood to be reserved for God alone. Rabbinic tradition in the Talmud (b. *Yoma* 22b) states,

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<sup>61</sup> Shira Golani, “Is There a Consensus That a Census Causes a Plague?” TheTorah.com, April 15, 2022. <https://www.thetorah.com/article/is-there-a-consensus-that-a-census-causes-a-plague>.

<sup>62</sup> For a plethora of examples see Theodor Herzl Gaster, *Myth, legend, and Custom in the Old Testament: A Comparative Study with Chapters from Sir James G. Frazer's Folklore in the Old Testament* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 483-488.

<sup>63</sup> See William H. C. Propp, “The Soul’s Ransom: The Clearing Silver,” in *Exodus 19–40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYBC 2A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 534.

<sup>64</sup> Golani, “Is There a Consensus That a Census Causes a Plague?”



Said R. Eleazar, “Whoever counts out Israelites violates a negative commandment, as it is said, ‘Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured’ (Hos. 2:1).”

R. Nahman bar Isaac said, “He violates two negative commandments: ‘Which cannot be measured nor numbered.’”<sup>65</sup>

As far as David’s census is concerned, David does not consult with God on the matter, asking whether he should even take a census. Moreover, there is no indication that he collected and paid the half-shekel census tax in order to “make atonement for Israel” (Ex. 30:15) and place it “at the service of the tabernacle” or the future temple site (Ex. 30:16; cf. 2 Sam.7:5-13; 1 Chr. 16:39; 17:4-12; 21:29).

## **Section Two: vv.10-15**

The fact that David is struck by his guilty conscience and confesses his sin before the prophet Gad has the opportunity to rebuke him is an important turning point in the narrative (v. 10). It is true that there is no clear explanation for what caused David to feel remorse for his sin, but the fact remains that the narrative portrays David as an upright man who quickly learns from his mistake. This is not how David acts after his lustful behavior with Bathsheba and his conniving behavior against her husband Uriah.<sup>66</sup> At that time, David was far from freely confessing his guilt. Instead, it took the word of the Lord through Nathan the prophet to convict him of his guilt and cause him to repent (2 Sam. 12:5-6). In stark contrast, now he is repenting on his own accord.

If David sinned in that he did not follow divine precepts on how to take a census, then another question arises. If there was a clear cause and effect relationship between taking an illicit census and receiving a plague, then why was David presented three choices for punishment by

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<sup>65</sup> Jacob Neusner, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, vol. 5a (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2011), 73.

<sup>66</sup> Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 311.

God? When the prophet Gad is introduced into the narrative (v.11), the word of the Lord comes to him and he is given specific instructions regarding a message to give David. “Go and say to David, ‘Thus says the Lord, Three things I offer you. Choose one of them that I may do it to you...’” (vv.12-13). Some scholars believe that these verses are problematic to the logical movement of the narrative and that this is proof that they were not a part of the original.<sup>67</sup> Ultimately, there is no clear explanation why David is given these choices.

David is given three options as punishment for his sinful census. He chooses to fall into the hand of the Lord because of his great mercy (v.14). Interestingly, there is precedent in the Hebrew Bible that the phrase “hand of the Lord” can also refer to a plague/pestilence (cf. Ex. 9:15-16; 1 Sam. 5:6). Morrison posits that this narrative contains a chiasmic structure centering around this verse. He claims, “At the center of this episode David chooses his punishment as he acknowledges God’s mercy.”<sup>68</sup> However, as a result of David's census (of the living), a census of the dead takes place. Overall, seventy thousand Israelite people die, and David’s life is also in danger. Does this mean that God’s promise to David to establish his house and his kingdom forever is in danger of being revoked (2 Sam. 7:16)?<sup>69</sup>

### **Section Three: vv.16-25**

The destroying angel is introduced into the narrative as acting on the Lord’s behalf while the angel “sent his hand” against Jerusalem (2 Sam. 24:16). However, the Lord repents of the evil he intended to do against Jerusalem. Even though there is no clear indication in the narrative as to why this is the case, it is clear that David lives and reigns in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:5), and the

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<sup>67</sup> McCarter Jr, *II Samuel*, 510.

<sup>68</sup> Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 307.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

Lord has already made an everlasting covenant with him (2 Sam. 7). Whether or not this is the reason why the Lord decided to stop the plague is not at all explicit, but the fact remains that God has a change of heart here and at the end of the narrative (2 Sam. 24:16,25).

In contrast to the opening of the narrative when David obstinately takes the census, David displays a change of heart after seeing the effects of God's punishment. David takes full responsibility for his actions telling God to punish him and his house for his sin instead of the people of Israel (v.17). Practically speaking, this means that David is willing to sacrifice his life, as well as the future of his dynasty, for the sake of his innocent sheep.

Another significant consideration is how the plague was ultimately averted from Israel. The Lord stopped the destroying angel by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (v.16). Then the Lord commands David, through the prophet Gad, to build an altar there. Interestingly, threshing floors were traditionally the sites of theophanies (cf. Judg. 6:37; 2 Sam 6:6) and were also places where divine messages were received (2 Kings 22:10).<sup>70</sup>

Obedience is the sure path for David and Israel to be reconciled with God. Unlike David's original stubborn obstinacy when his command prevailed over Joab (v.4), David promptly follows Gad's word just as the Lord commanded (v. 19). Araunah honors David by prostrating himself before him. David explains the reason for his visit, telling him that he needs to buy the threshing floor and build an altar on the site in order for the plague to be averted. Araunah not only offers his lord and king his threshing floor, but he also offers him the animals and the wood necessary for the sacrifice. David refuses the offer and insists on paying him since he will not offer God anything that costs him nothing (v.24). Finally, David completes the command of the Lord by building an altar at the threshing floor of Araunah. Only after David offers peace offerings, prays, and intercedes on behalf of Israel, is the plague ultimately averted.

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<sup>70</sup> McCarter Jr, *II Samuel*, 511–512.

## Preliminary Conclusion

The question remains, what purpose does the illicit census narrative have in Samuel and what is its effect on David's legacy? Interestingly, many scholars assert the same reason it was included in Samuel as the reason why it was included in Chronicles. For example, Morrison<sup>71</sup> and McCarter<sup>72</sup> both argue that, in its final form, the narrative has an etiological function meant to validate the chosen temple site.

Other scholars are more reserved when discussing the narrative's purpose in Samuel. Campbell, for example, recognizes that the etiological character of the narrative is not made explicit at any point. He observes that "the Hebrew text says nothing about the future of the threshing floor and its altar."<sup>73</sup> For him, the purpose of the narrative in its final form is to communicate "aspects of Davidic wisdom (balancing David's folly, v.10), divine mercy, and Jerusalem's special status; they are not negligible."<sup>74</sup>

Smith also analyzes the purpose for David's illicit census narrative as given in Samuel. He observes an important addition that was made in the LXX in 2 Sam. 24:25. It reads, "And David built there an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. *And Solomon added more on the altar in the end because it was small at first.*"<sup>75</sup> However, he

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<sup>71</sup> Morrison clearly states, "As the curtain drops on David's public life, we are assured that Israel's future prayers for forgiveness will be received by God from this altar, around which the future temple will be built. This is David's final act." Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 314.

<sup>72</sup> Likewise, McCarter asserts, "It is clear, therefore, that the story of the census plague functioned in post-exilic tradition as an etiology for the holocaust altar in the Solomonic temple" in *II Samuel*, 517-18. However, to be fair, McCarter believes that the original narrative immediately followed 2 Sam. 21 which would help explain the reference to "again, the Lord was angry." Therefore, he believes the narrative was "an official account of the plague, the erection of the altar being described to show how the plague was finally averted... *Its chief purpose*, moreover, was to show that David was responsible for stopping the ensuing plague by erecting an altar and appeasing the angry god. Thus, David was presented not as a king who had brought grief to the people but, on the contrary, as a king who had saved them from grief."

<sup>73</sup> Antony F. Campbell, *2 Samuel*, FOTL 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 210. He continues, "The narrative has [this] lingering over it; it passes over the significance. As noted above, it is left to Chronicles to make this explicit (cf. 1 Chr. 22:1; 2 Chr. 3:1)."

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, 392-393.

cautions that this interpretation in the LXX reflects the Chr's intentions for including the narrative. In agreement with Campbell, Smith sees no clear indication that the site of the altar, where David averted the plague, became the site of Solomon's temple.<sup>76</sup>

### **Summary**

1. The narrative of the illicit census in 2 Sam. 24 is placed in an appendix section in its current form. It is much more likely that the illicit census narrative originally followed the narrative concerning the bloodguilt on the House of Saul (1 Sam. 21:1-14). In both narratives there is reference to the Lord's anger (implied or explicit), punishment of sin, death, prayer, and God responding to supplication for the land. This would help answer the question, what is "*Again*, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel" referring to? Therefore, joining these two narratives together seems logical. In their current places, the plague narratives bracket the beginning and end of a chiastic structure centered around David's poems.
2. Somehow Israel was disobedient to the Lord, and this caused the Lord to incite David against Israel. This would help answer the question, "What caused the Lord's anger to be against Israel?"
3. David was undergoing a kind of test by the Lord. This would help answer, why David is punished for doing what he was incited to do by the Lord. Even though he is *incited* to take the illicit census, that does not mean that he *ought* to take it.
4. David believes that he sinned in taking the census (2 Sam. 24:10, 17). But this confession is long after Joab, the commander of David's army, objects to the census saying, "May the Lord your God add to the people a hundred times whatever they are..." (v.3; cf. Judg. 7).
5. In comparison to other biblical sources, specific requirements were necessary for a census to be made and David did not follow all of them. First, only men twenty years of age or older "who were able to go to war" were allowed to be counted in a census (Num. 1:2-3). Joab seems to follow this precept when he reports the number of men counted as being men capable "of drawing the sword" (2 Sam. 24:9). Second, Moses is given specific census instructions from the Lord, "When you take the census of the sons of Israel, then each shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord when you number them, that there be no plague among them when you number them. Each who is numbered in the census shall give this: half a shekel..." (Ex. 30:11-12). As far as David's census is concerned, he does not consult with God whether he should even take a census. Moreover, there is no indication that he collected and paid the census tax.
6. There is no clear explanation for what caused David to feel remorse for his sin. However, the fact remains that he did feel remorse, so he confessed his sin before a prophet rebuked him as had happened before (2 Sam. 24:10; cf. 2 Sam. 12:5-6).

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

7. There is no clear explanation why David is given three choices rather than receiving the imminent punishment of a plague (2 Sam. 24:12; cf. Ex. 30:11).
8. The narrative emphasizes David's trust in the Lord's great mercy (2 Sam. 24:14).
9. There is no clear indication in the narrative as to why the destroying angel stops in Jerusalem. However, it is clear that David lives and reigns in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:5), the Lord has already made an everlasting covenant with David (2 Sam. 7), and God has a change of heart here and at the end of the narrative (2 Sam. 24:16,25).
10. David is portrayed as a repentant king who is willing to sacrifice his life, and perhaps the future of his dynasty, for the sake of his innocent sheep in Israel (2 Sam. 24:17).
11. Obedience to the Lord's command is the sure path for David and Israel to be reconciled with God. The Lord stopped the destroying angel by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite where he commands David, through the prophet Gad, to build an altar.
12. David insists that he buy the property since he will not offer to God anything that cost him nothing (v.24).
13. David completes the command of the Lord by building an altar at the threshing floor of Araunah. Here, where he offers peace offerings, prays, and intercedes on behalf of Israel, the plague is ultimately averted (v. 25).
14. The original reason why this narrative was included in the book of Samuel seems to be to give an official account of how the punishment for a plague due to an illicit census was averted. Ultimately, God was appeased through the sacrifice offered on the altar (v.25).
15. The purpose of the illicit census narrative in Samuel has been obfuscated due to the same account presented in Chronicles. The LXX shows how the narrative of the latter affected the former.

CHAPTER FOUR  
*David's Illicit Census according to 1 Chr. 21*

**Introduction**

In order to complete the comparison of David's illicit census narrative found in 2 Sam. 24 and 1 Chr. 21, it is now necessary to analyze the Chr's version of the narrative in its given context. This will help complete the exercise of comparing and contrasting the two narratives. Ultimately analyzing the illicit census narrative in Chronicles will assist in discovering the Chr's purpose for its inclusion in the text and its effect on David's legacy.

**Narrative Background of 1 Chronicles**

In a fascinating choice for an introduction, the Chr uses the first nine chapters to trace the origins of all twelve tribes of Israel as stemming from Adam, using extensive lists and genealogies. After Adam's, Noah's, and Abraham's descendants are made clear (1 Chr. 1), the sons of Israel are highlighted with special focus on the tribe of Judah (1 Chr. 2). Here the reader encounters the first mention of David in the list and genealogy of Judah (2:15). Then special attention is given to the descendants of David and Solomon (1 Chr. 3). It is noteworthy to mention that David is described as the seventh son of Jesse (2:15); however, it is clear in the parallel narrative that David is the eighth son of Jesse (1 Sam. 16:10-12).<sup>77</sup> There seems to be a particular theological significance to the Chr's numbering.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> After the Lord rejects Saul for his disobedience, Samuel is prompted to anoint one of the sons of Jesse the Bethlehemite. Jesse brings forth seven sons, but Samuel makes it known that they have not been chosen by the Lord. Then Samuel asks, "Are all your sons here?" Jesse replies that there remains yet the youngest, but he was out pastoring the sheep. Thus, David is the eighth son.

<sup>78</sup> After all, the number seven is considered to be one of the holiest numbers in the Hebrew Bible. God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh making it holy (Gen. 2:3). Further evidence of this tradition is apparent in Jewish interpretation. "All sevens are beloved... as it is written, 'And David is the seventh'" (Leviticus Rabbah 29.9; Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*, 36).

Some scholars argue that the genealogies tell the reader little about the Chr’s overall narrative purposes.<sup>79</sup> However, many scholars including Williamson,<sup>80</sup> Selman,<sup>81</sup> Knoppers,<sup>82</sup> Boda,<sup>83</sup> and Hahn<sup>84</sup> – among others, see the essential unity between the Chr’s genealogies and the overall narrative. Furthermore, many scholars detect a special chiasmic structure among the genealogies highlighting the tribes of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin.<sup>85</sup> What is interesting about these three tribes is they are each related to kingship and/or priesthood. Saul was the first king of Israel from the tribe of Benjamin (1 Sam. 8-10), David was the second king of Israel from the tribe of Judah, who acted at times like a priest-king (1 Sam. 16; 2 Sam. 2; 6:14; 1 Chr. 11), and the Levites are the designated priests of Israel who perform important liturgical duties (1 Chr. 15;

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<sup>79</sup> Freedman, “The Chronicler’s Purpose,” 436–42; esp. 436-37. Robert R. Wilson, *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World* (New Haven: Yale, 1977), 137.

<sup>80</sup> Williamson, *1 Chronicles*, 39. “There is a considerable number of points of contact between the genealogies and the narrative such as a concern for ‘all Israel’, an emphasis on David and the dynasty, the centrality of Judah and Jerusalem, immediate retribution... Even more telling, however, are common stylistic features, not paralleled elsewhere...”

<sup>81</sup> Selman, *1 Chronicles*, 85. “The Chronicler’s first readers... had nagging doubts about whether Israel could ever again really be God’s people. Furthermore, many Jews felt that their present sad state of affairs was God’s will, a punishment for past sins. And yet these seemingly intractable problems are almost certainly the kind of issues that the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1-9 are intended to confront.

<sup>82</sup> Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1-9*, 260. “What is important is the use of genealogies, as in 1 Chr 1–9, as a prelude to a longer narrative history of a given period or war...The lines of descent provide vital information to the readers or hearers about the identity of the persons introduced. If so, this would parallel the purpose that may be ascribed to the genealogies in 1 Chr 1–9. These lines of descent introduce readers to the Israelites—their identity, their land, and their internal kinship relationships.”

<sup>83</sup> Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 25. “For the first section of his work, the Chronicler has taken the many genealogies within Genesis and stripped them from their surrounding narratives. These lists introduce an elongated genealogy that stretches for nine chapters and tests the patience of even the most committed Hebrew scholar. But the Chronicler, by collating these lists and placing them at the outset of his grand narrative, shows that for him the lists were not only significant as ancient records of Israel but essential for the reading of the subsequent narrative in 1 Chronicles 10–2 Chronicles 36.”

<sup>84</sup> Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*, 18. He maintains that the genealogies “contain a wealth of insights into the Chronicler’s motives and concerns.”

<sup>85</sup> For summary see Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1–9*, 261, fn. 30. For a recent position in support of a chiasmic structure see James T. Sparks, *The Chronicler’s Genealogies: Towards an Understanding of 1 Chronicles 1-9* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008). He argues, “The Chronicler’s purpose is to ensure that the proper cultic officials are offering the proper cultic offerings in the proper cultic place, and that the people are supporting the cult so as to maintain its proper functioning” (32, 362). For an alternate view see Kyle Rapiuchuk, “The Function of the Chronicler’s Genealogies: Establishing Covenant Continuity,” in WordPress database, <https://kylerapiuchuk.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/function-of-the-chroniclers-genealogies.pdf>.



23-26). Therefore, the genealogies function as both an overview of Israelite history and as an interpretative key regarding how to understand the Chr's worldview and purposes.

Significantly, the genealogies end with a description of the family of Saul, then the narrative begins with the tragic end of Saul's life. At the very beginning of the Chr's narratives, Saul and his sons die in battle against the Philistines. Whereas Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua are slain at the hands of their enemies, Saul chooses to fall on his sword instead of dying at the hands of his foes. However, the Philistines do something even worse to Saul; they mock the God of Israel by putting Saul's armor in the temple of their gods and then they fasten his head in the temple of Dagon (1 Chr. 10:10). This is essentially the reversal of the circumstances between Israel and Philistine (cf. 1 Sam. 5:1-5),<sup>86</sup> and it caused the Chr to add a very negative evaluation of Saul.

So Saul died [מות] for his unfaithfulness; he was unfaithful to the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance, and did not seek guidance from the Lord. Therefore the Lord slew [מות - Hifil] him and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse" (1 Chr. 10:13-14).

Boda comments, "The Chronicler makes it clear through his evaluative note that the death of Saul was not a mere accident but rather a direct work of Yahweh."<sup>87</sup>

From this evaluation, it is clear that the Chr viewed the narrative of Saul's disgraceful death necessary in order to contrast the reigns of Saul and David. According to the Chr, immediately after Saul's death, David is thrust into the spotlight. He is anointed king of all

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<sup>86</sup> Brian E. Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles* (JSOTsup, 211; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 68–69.

<sup>87</sup> Mark J. Boda, *A Severe Mercy: Sin and Its Remedy in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 491. He continues, "Between these two appearances of the root, the Chronicler identifies Saul's trespass (קָעַל) against Yahweh as the reason for this severe judgment. This term (קָעַל) is used in priestly literature to denote 'a sin against God,' in contrast to a sin against humanity. It is categorized either as the *Sancta Trespass*, inappropriate contact with something holy (Lev. 5:14-19; 14:10-14, 21-24; 22:14-16; Num. 6:12; cf. Jer. 2:3, Ezra 10:19) or violation of an oath taken in God's name (Lev. 5:20-26, Num. 5:6-8)."

Israel (1 Chr. 11), successful in military affairs (11-20), and sensitive to important liturgical matters (13; 15; 21).

Unlike Saul, David proposes to care for the ark of the covenant which seemed right in the eyes of all Israel (1 Chr. 13:1-4). However, this does not mean that David is portrayed as a perfect figure. The Chr retains the narrative regarding the liturgical abuses he made when transferring the ark from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem. As mentioned before, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and the Lord struck Uzzah dead since he reached out his hand and touched the ark. Later, David realizes that “no one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, for the Lord chose them to carry the ark of the Lord and to minister to him forever (1 Chr. 15:2). This leads to the ark being properly brought into Jerusalem as the Levites carry it with polls upon their shoulders, according to the Law of Moses (1 Chr. 15:15; cf. Deut. 10:8; 18:5). Therefore, David is portrayed as a figure who enacts important liturgical reform and as someone who rectifies his mistakes through humility and obedience to the Law.

When the ark is placed in its tent in Jerusalem, David acts as a priest-king. He assists in making the burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord, blesses the people in the name of the Lord, and distributes portions of a shared meal to all Israel (1 Chr. 16). Then David’s appointed singers, Asaph and his brothers, sing a song of thanksgiving unto the Lord. In this song the themes of “seeking the Lord,” the Abrahamic covenant, the promise of land, the promise of safety to the Lord’s anointed, the Lord’s kingship, and the Lord’s deliverance and salvation are especially repeated (1 Chr. 16:8-36; cf. Ps. 105; 96; 106:47-48).

David continues to display his concern and affection for the Lord when he asks if he can build the Lord a house to dwell in, as a replacement for the tent. God responds that David will not build a house for the Lord but rather the Lord will build a house/dynasty *for him* (1 Chr. 17;

cf. 2 Sam. 7). However, in response to David's question, God tells him that one of his offspring will build him a house. God promises to establish the throne of his offspring forever, not taking his merciful love from him as he took it away from Saul (1 Chr. 17:10-14). Interestingly the Chr's account presents David's offspring as ruling the Lord's house and kingdom (v. 14).<sup>88</sup> This makes the earthly king subordinate to the divine. The order of the hierarchy is unmistakable; David and his sons are vice-regents and servants of the Lord. David responds with a humble prayer of thanksgiving (vv. 16-22).

### **Immediate Narrative Background**

So far, the portrayal of David has been very positive. After God tells him that he will establish his dynasty forever (1 Chr. 17), David's kingdom is strengthened, established, and extended even more (1 Chr. 18-20). David defeats the Ammonites, a coalition of Aramean city-states (1 Chr. 18-19) as well as the Philistines (1 Chr. 20).

It is also quite clear that the Chr edited out any reference of David's sin with Bathsheba. He retains only part of the verse, "In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle, Joab led out the army... But David remained at Jerusalem" (1 Chr. 20:1; 1 Sam. 11:1). This is especially interesting since it occurs immediately before the illicit census narrative. Given the evidence that the Chr edited his source material in order to portray David more favorably by subtracting the Bathsheba narrative, why did he include the narrative of his illicit census?

### **Analysis of MT 1 Chr. 21**

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<sup>88</sup> Compare the parallel passage in 2 Sam. 7:16, "And *your* house and *your* kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; *your* throne shall be established for ever;" as opposed to 1 Chr. 17:14, "But I will confirm him in *my* house and in *my* kingdom for ever and his throne shall be established for ever."

This section focuses upon 1 Chr. 21 based on the Masoretic Text (MT) and will be analyzed in the following manner: 1) Translation of the text 2) Analysis of the form and structure 3) Verse-by-verse textual analysis 4) 4QSam<sup>a</sup>: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary and 5) Overall Commentary

### **Translation of MT 1 Chr. 21**<sup>89</sup>

- 1 An adversary stood up against Israel, and he incited David to count Israel.
- 2 David said to Joab and to the commanders of the army, “Go, count Israel from Beer-sheva to Dan and bring it to me that I may know the number.
- 3 Joab said, “May the Lord increase his people as many as one hundred times. Are not all of them servants of my lord the king? My lord, why do you request this thing? Why will there be guilt upon Israel?”
- 4 But the word of the king was strong over Joab, and Joab went out and walked throughout all Israel, and he came to Jerusalem.
- 5 Joab gave the number of the census of the people to David and all Israel was one million, one hundred thousand men who drew the sword. Judah was four hundred and seventy thousand men who drew the sword.
- 6 But Levi and Benjamin were not counted among them because the word of the king was repulsive to Joab.
- 7 This thing was evil in the eyes of God, and he struck Israel.
- 8 David said to God, “I have greatly sinned by doing this thing but now please forgive the guilt of your servant because I have acted very foolishly.”
- 9 The Lord spoke to Gad, the seer of David saying,
- 10 “Go and speak to David saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: I offer you three things, choose one of them and I will do it to you.’”
- 11 So Gad came to David, and he said to him: “Thus says the Lord, ‘Choose
- 12 either three years of famine or three months of devastation before your enemies while the sword of your enemy overtakes you or three days of the sword of the Lord and a pestilence in the land and an angel of the Lord destroying in all the territories of Israel. Now consider what word I will return to the one who sent me.’”
- 13 David said to Gad, “I am in great distress, may I fall into the hand of the Lord because his mercy is great, but into the hand of man let me not fall.”
- 14 So the Lord sent a pestilence to Israel and seventy thousand men fell from Israel.
- 15 God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it and as he was about to destroy it, the Lord saw, and he repented of the evil, and he said to the destroying angel, “Enough, now stay your hand.” And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.
- 16 David lifted up his eyes and he saw the angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven and his sword drawn in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders clothed in sackcloth and fell on their faces.

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<sup>89</sup> My translation based on *The Lexham Hebrew Bible* and the BHS. Works consulted include BDB and the Holy Bible (RSV-SCE), 1 Chr. 21-22:1.

17 David said to God, “Did I not say to count the people, I have sinned, and I have certainly done evil. But these sheep, what did they do to the Lord my God? Please may your hand be against me and against the house of my fathers but let not the plague be against your people.”

18 The angel of the Lord spoke to Gad to tell David that he should go up and build an altar to the Lord at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

19 David went up at the word of Gad which was spoken in the name of the Lord.

20 When Ornan turned and saw the angel, his four sons with him hid themselves. But Ornan continued to thresh wheat.

21 Then David came to Ornan, and Ornan looked, and he saw David and he went out from the threshing floor, and he bowed down to David with his face to the ground.

22 David said to Ornan, “Give me the site of the threshing floor and I will build there an altar to the Lord. For the full price, give it to me that the plague might be restrained from the people.

23 Ornan said to David, “Take it for yourself, and let my lord the king do what is good in his eyes. See, I give the cattle for burnt offering, the threshing sledges for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; I give it all.”

24 King David said to Ornan, “No, I will certainly purchase it for the full price, for I will not raise what is yours to the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing.”

25 So David gave to Ornan six hundred gold shekels by weight for the place.

26 David built there an altar to the Lord and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings and called to the Lord, and he answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering.

27 The Lord spoke to the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath.

28 At that time, David saw that the Lord answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite and he sacrificed there.

29 The tabernacle of the Lord, that Moses made in the desert, and the altar of burnt offerings was at the high place at Gibeon.

30 But David was not able to go before it to inquire of God because he was terrified by the sword of the angel of the Lord.

22:1 Then David said, “This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel.”

### **Form and Structure**

This account is also in narrative form as it recalls David’s illicit census. There are many important characters in the narrative including: the adversary, David, Joab, the Lord, the commanders of David’s army, men “who drew the sword” in Israel and Judah, the tribes of Levi and Benjamin, the prophet Gad, the destroying angel, elders, Ornan the Jebusite, his four sons, and Moses. However, the main characters can be narrowed down again to David and the Lord. Very similar to 2 Sam. 24, the reader comes to a revelation of most of the main characters through narrator-led dialogue. The plot revolves around David’s sin, repentance, and obedience

in building an altar and presenting peace offerings unto the Lord. This narrative concludes with the validation of the temple site.

The illicit census narrative in 1 Chr 21 can be divided into four parts: (1) 21:1-6, (2) 21:7-14 (3) 21:15-27 (4) 21:28-22:1. By emphasizing these divisions, a simplified plot takes form. David is incited by the adversary “satan” to take an illicit census of Israel, he orders the commander of his army to take a census, Joab vehemently objects, the king’s order remains unchanged, Joab concedes, and the census is taken, albeit in an incomplete manner, and it is reported to David (vv.1-6).

Due to David’s sin, God must strike Israel (v.7). David recognizes and repents of his sin (v.8). Then the prophet Gad is sent by the Lord to give him three options for punishment: three-year famine, three-month devastation by Israel’s enemies, or three days pestilence. David makes his selection by ultimately choosing to “fall into the hand of the Lord” since “his mercy is very great” (v.13). Consequently, seventy thousand men die in Israel due to the pestilence administered by the destroying angel (vv. 7, 14).

Even though the Lord sent this punishment upon Israel, the Lord “repents of the evil” and gives David the blueprint for how to make atonement and avert the punishment of the plague (vv.15-27). This seems to happen in two stages or subsections, if the narrative is understood to occur in chronological order: first, the Lord “sees” something which causes him to directly command the destroying angel to stop wreaking havoc as the angel reaches Jerusalem, near the threshing floor of Ornan (v.16). Second, the Lord is pleased with David’s repentance, obedience, and sacrifice made at the threshing floor (vv. 18-27). David and the elders clothe themselves in sackcloth and fall on their faces in repentance after David sees the destroying angel hanging in midair between earth and heaven. Then David assumes complete responsibility

for the pestilence (v.17), he is obedient to the Lord's command given through the angel to the prophet Gad (vv. 18-25a) by negotiating the purchase of the threshing floor of Ornan (vv. 22-24), he purchases it for the "full price" (v.25), builds an altar (v.25), and the plague is averted when the Lord answers him with fire from heaven (v.26). Consequently, the Lord commands the angel to put his sword back into its sheath.

Finally, a defense or validation of the temple site is given by the Chr in the last section (21:28-22:1). When David sees that the Lord is pleased with his sacrifices and answers him there, he continues to make sacrifices at this precise location, instead of in the high place at Gibeon (v.28). The latter was the place that the tabernacle of the Lord and the altar of burnt offerings were from the time of Moses (v.29). However, David does not go to Gibeon since he is terrified at the sight of the sword of the angel of the Lord (v.30). Therefore, David declares, "Here will be the House of the Lord" (22:1).

### **Textual Analysis**<sup>90</sup>

1 Chr. 21:1–27 bears many basic similarities with the Chr's *Vorlage* of 2 Sam. 24. However, 1 Chr. 21:28–22:1 is completely unique to Chronicles. Second, 4QSam<sup>a</sup> is available as a textual witness and as an aid to textual criticism between 2 Sam 24:16–20 and 1 Chr. 21:15–21.

v.1, "An adversary (יָצִיץ) stood up against Israel and he incited David to count Israel." First, this is distinctly different from "the Lord incited David" (2 Sam. 24). Interestingly, the admittedly late Targum Chronicles uses the synchronic method by combining both sources as

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<sup>90</sup> Works consulted include the BHS, *the Lexham Hebrew Bible*, BDB and Strong's Dictionary. NETS and Brenton, *The Septuagint Version: Greek*, 1 Chr. 21-22:1. *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Septuagint*. *Biblia Sacra Juxta Vulgatam Clementinam*, 1 Chr. 21-22:1. Whitaker, *Dictionary of Latin Forms*. Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus*. J. Stanley, McIvor, *The Aramaic Bible: The Targum of Ruth and The Targum of Chronicles*, Vol.19 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 1 Ch 21:1. Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon, *Targum Chronicles* (Hebrew Union College, 2005), 1 Ch 21:1.

“The Lord raised up Satan against Israel, and he incited David” ( ואקים ה' סטנא על ישראל ואתגרי ) (בדוד).

This verse is the only mention of satan in all of Chronicles and it has generated considerable controversy. Much of the dispute revolves around how to interpret the Chr's reference to שָׂטָן *without* the definite article. Grammatically, this can be understood as a proper noun or a common noun. BDB states that שָׂטָן refers to a proper name and this is what the majority follow.<sup>91</sup> However, this has not stopped the minority from making grammatical arguments otherwise.<sup>92</sup> Ironically, both sides use instances where Satan is referenced *with* the definite article as evidence for their claims for how it is used *without* it. Ultimately, after careful consideration, arguments based on historical grammar are not able to settle the issue. Instead, one ought to turn toward a linguistic analysis of the verse to shed light on the identity of the “satan” figure (see full commentary below).

“An adversary stood up against Israel and he incited David to count Israel.” Also, notice that the account begins in the narrator's voice recounting an indirect discourse between an adversary and David. This is distinctly different from 2 Sam. 24 where the narrative is recounted through the direct discourse of the Lord inciting David to “Go count Israel and Judah.”

The Chr's version has “to count *Israel*” (שָׂרְאֵל) without any mention of Judah (יְהוּדָה). This is different than the command in 2 Sam. 24:1. Perhaps the version in Samuel was anticipating the reports of the two divisions given later by Joab (2 Sam. 24:1,9; 1 Chr.21:1,5). Also, in contrast to his sources, the Chr insists that Israel is one, referring to the twelve tribes as “all Israel” whenever possible.<sup>93</sup> Therefore, “An emphasis on the people's abiding unity and completeness is central to the book's concept of Israel.”<sup>94</sup>

v.2, “David said to Joab *and to the commanders of the army*,” As previously mentioned, this differs from Samuel's version where King David addresses Joab alone (24:2). Also, the Chr gives preference to David's personal name (דָּוִד) instead of his title (הַמֶּלֶךְ) here and throughout the narrative (vv. 5,21; cf. 2 Sam. 24:2,9,20). Additionally, notice that the Chr flips the typical

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<sup>91</sup> BDB, 966. See Paul Evans, “Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21: An Overlooked Aspect of the Chronicler's Theology,” *Biblica* 85:4 (2004): 545, fn. 3.

<sup>92</sup> Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 114-117. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 744.

<sup>93</sup> See Chapter Three: “The Idea of ‘All Israel,’” in Sara Japhet's *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.



order in the reference to all Israel when David commands, “Go, count Israel *from Beer-sheva to Dan*” (cf. 2 Sam. 24:2).

v.3, “*Are not all of them servants of my lord the king?*” This is a unique addition of the Chr from his *Vorlage*. Joab tries to redirect David’s attention to the Lord’s omnipotence saying that God can add to the number of the people a hundred times whatever they are. This question replaces the phrase “while the eyes of my lord the king see it” (2 Sam. 24:3).

“*Why will there be guilt upon Israel?*” The mention of guilt (אשמה) is also a unique addition by the Chr. Joab heightens the seriousness of David’s transgression by asking this rhetorical question (cf. 2 Chr. 19:10; 24:18; 28:13; 33:23).

v.4, “*He [Joab] walked throughout all Israel and he came to Jerusalem.*” This is a summary of the nine month and twenty-day excursion recounted in the Chr’s *Vorlage* (2 Sam. 24:5-8).

v.6, “*Levi and Benjamin were not counted among them because the word of the king was repulsive to Joab.*” Again, this unique addition made by the Chr heightens David’s guilt and diminishing the culpability of Joab.

v.7, “*This thing was evil in the eyes of God, and he struck Israel.*” This is an interesting reinterpretation of the Chr’s *Vorlage* which states that “David’s heart struck him after he counted the people” (2 Sam. 24:10). In the Chr’s version, God is the subject of the verb “struck” (ךָּ) while in Samuel, it is David’s heart. Thus, it could be interpreted here that the Chr gives a different explanation for what caused David to repent. Finally, in case there was any doubt, the Syriac version makes it clear that “this thing” was “David’s census.”

v.10, “*I offer you three things, choose one of them and I will do it to you.*” The verb is literally “extending” (הִטָּוֶה) although it also has the connotation of “offering” in this context as well (cf. several translations including RSV, NASB, ESV, KJV).<sup>95</sup>

v.12, “*Or three days of the sword of the Lord and a pestilence in the land and an angel of the Lord destroying in all the territories of Israel.*” These added descriptions of the plague are not found in the synoptic text (2 Sam. 24:13). Knoppers speculates that these additions were made in anticipation of the ensuing narrative (vv. 14-15). Therefore, he considers the “shorter

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<sup>95</sup> Strong’s, 5186.

and more imprecise version of MT 2 Sam 24:13, ‘and a plague in your land,’ [to] probably [be] the more original reading.”<sup>96</sup>

v.13, “*May I fall* into the hand of the Lord,” differs from the synoptic version, “Let us fall into the hand of the Lord” (2 Sam. 24:14). Thus, the Chr’s version becomes a plea by David for himself.

v. 14, As previously mentioned, the Chr omits the duration of the plague “from the morning until the appointed time” from his sources (2 Sam. 24:15). Some suggest this means that the plague did not last the full three days.<sup>97</sup>

v.15, “The Lord saw, and he repented of the evil.” This is a great example of anthropomorphic language describing “God’s decision to bestow mercy on the repentant instead of carrying out his judgment against them.”<sup>98</sup>

v.15b, “‘Enough, now stay your hand.’ And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.” As previously discussed, the owner of the threshing floor is identified as Ornan, not Araunah. This same (reconstructed) verse was discovered in 4QSam<sup>a</sup> (see textual analysis in the following section).

v.16, “*David lifted up his eyes and he saw the angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven and his sword drawn in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem and David and the elders clothed in sackcloth and fell on their faces.*” This entire verse is lacking from MT 2 Sam. 24 but corresponds remarkably well with 4QSam<sup>a</sup>. Scholars speculate that this verse was lost in haplography in MT Samuel.<sup>99</sup> Also, “The angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven” is described in the inverse in a few versions (Syriac & V). Boda explains, “In Hebrew this phrase [between the earth and the heavens] is actually ‘between earth and heaven,’ an expression that occurs in two other cases in the Old Testament: Zechariah 5:9 and Ezekiel 8:3. In all three cases this region appears to designate a neutral zone where heavenly beings are able to carry out their mission unimpeded by earth’s inhabitants”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 746.

<sup>97</sup> Klein, *I Chronicles*, 424.

<sup>98</sup> Hahn, ed., *Catholic Bible Dictionary*, 763.

<sup>99</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 747.

<sup>100</sup> Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 177.

v.18, “*The angel of the Lord spoke to Gad...*” (וּמַלְאָךְ יְהוָה אָמַר אֶל-גָּד). Interestingly, 2 Sam. 24:18 has Gad address David without help from the angel (וַיִּבְאֶר-גָּד אֶל-דָּוִד). This verse is not extant in 4QSam<sup>a</sup>.

This is the first mention of Ornan in the Chr’s narrative. As previously mentioned, there is debate regarding the original form of the name. Interestingly, the name may not be a name at all but rather a Hittite title meaning “aristocrat” or a Hurrian title meaning “lord.”<sup>101</sup>

v.20, “Ornan *turned*” (וַיִּשָּׁב) instead of looked out (וַיִּשְׁקֹף) as in 2 Sam. 24:20 (MT & V). “Ornan *saw the angel and four of his sons with him hid themselves.*” This significantly varies from Samuel’s account, “Araunah looked out and saw the king and his servants coming up to him.” Also, the LXX’s version of 1 Chr. 21 aligns more closely with Samuel’s MT account in speaking about the king rather than the angel/messenger. Clearly, the two synoptic MT accounts differ regarding what Ornan saw and who was there. The MT declares that Ornan’s sons hid themselves (for fear of the angel?) as “Ornan continued to thresh wheat.”

v.21, “*Then David came to Ornan*” the phrase is lacking in MT 2 Sam. 24. Knoppers observes that “4QSam<sup>a</sup> is fragmentary, but space considerations would seem to require some such statement.”<sup>102</sup>

v.22, “David said to Ornan, “Give me *the place* of the threshing floor” (מְקוֹם). The reference to “the place” is not found in the synoptic text (2 Sam. 24:21). Perhaps, the Chr used this loaded term on purpose in anticipation of what the sacred place would become (22:1; cf. Gen. 28:17; Deut. 12).

“For the full price” (מְלֵא מַחְבֵּרֵי) is lacking from synoptic text 2 Sam. 24:22. The only other time this phrase is used in the Hebrew Bible is in Gen. 23:8-20 in the narrative regarding Abraham’s purchase of the burial ground at the cave of Machpelah.

v.25, “David gave to Ornan *six hundred gold shekels* by weight for the place.” 2 Sam. 24:24 reports the sale was made for the much smaller amount, fifty silver shekels. The Syriac text synchronizes its sources and reports a sale for fifty gold shekels.

“For the place” (בְּמִקְוֹם) instead of “the threshing floor and the oxen” (2 Sam. 24:24). See remark on v.22.

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<sup>101</sup> See fn. 57.

<sup>102</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 749.

vv.26b-27, “[The Lord] *answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering. The Lord spoke to the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath.*” These verses are unique to the Chr. 2 Sam. 24:25 simply states, “[David] prayed to the Lord for the land and the pestilence was averted from Israel.” The Chr’s version is quite a remarkable addition when taken in context with other instances when the Lord accepted sacrifices offered by his servants with fire from above (cf. Lev. 9:24; 1 Kgs. 18:24, 37-38). Moreover, the LXX, and Syriac add that the Lord “consumed the burnt offering” (καὶ κατανάλωσεν τὴν ὄλοκαύτωσιν).

vv.28-1 Chr. 22:1, It is difficult to understand the function of these verses. They could be considered parenthetical or a later interpolation.<sup>103</sup> How scholars answer this question determines how they interpret these verses.

v.28, “and he *sacrificed* there.” It is unclear how to understand the temporal reference of this act; is this *during* or *after* the census event?

22:1, “David said, “This is the house of the Lord God, and this is *the altar* of burnt offering for Israel.” MT apparently lost the definite article before “altar” (אלטאר) in haplography. Notice how the LXX still retains it (τὸ θυσιαστήριον).<sup>104</sup>

### **Introduction of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>**

Many scholars have studied the synoptic differences between Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. One of the main questions in recent scholarship is, what sources did the Chr use as his *Vorlage*. Originally, it was believed that the Chr used a text similar to the MT; however, this theory has been largely disproven in light of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. When observing the similarities between 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and 1 Chr. 21 first notice how remarkably similar the reconstruction of the text is to Chronicles. Second, notice that even though 4QSam<sup>a</sup> (2 Sam. 24:16b-17a) is a reconstruction, key extant words and phrases (not supplied) are equal to 1 Chr. 21:15b-16a.

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<sup>103</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 388-89.

<sup>104</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 751.

#### **4QSam<sup>a</sup> (2 Sam. 24:16)**<sup>105</sup>

24:16 [בעם רב עתה הרף ידך ומלאך י]הוה עומד עם[ גרן אר]נא הי[ב]וֹסִי ויִשָּׂא [דו]יָדְךָ [את] עיניו וירא את מלאך יהוה עומד בין[ הָאָרֶץ וּבֵין הַשָּׁמַיִם] וְחָרַב [ב]וֹ שְׁלוֹפָה בִּידוֹ נְטוּאָה[ה] 2 [על ירושלים ויפלו הזקנים ע]ל [פנ]יָהֶם מִתְכַּחֲסִים [ב]שָׁקִים 3

#### **MT 1 Chr. 21: 15-16**

רַב עֲמָה הָרָף יָדְךָ וּמְלָאךְ יְהוָה עֹמֵד עִם־גְּרֹן אֲרָנָן הַיְבוּסִי: וַיִּשָּׂא דָוִד אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת־מְלָאךְ יְהוָה עֹמֵד בֵּין הָאָרֶץ וּבֵין הַשָּׁמַיִם וַחֲרַב שְׁלוֹפָה בְּיָדוֹ נְטוּיָה עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיִּפֹּל דָוִד וְהַזְקֵנִים מִכְּסִים בְּשָׁקִים עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם:

#### **Translation**<sup>106</sup>

1. [When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity, and said to the angel destroying the people, “That is enough. Now stay your hand.” The angel of the L]ORD *was standing* b[y the threshing-floor of Arau]nah the [Jeb]usite.
2. [David] *rai[sed his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing bet]ween earth and [heav]en; [his] drawn sword was in his hand [stretched out*
3. *toward Jerusalem. David and the elders, cover]ed [in sackclo]th, [fell down on] their [face]s.*

#### **Commentary on 4QSam<sup>a</sup>**

It is important to note that the Qumran text 4QSam<sup>a</sup> has been largely reconstructed. This means that several of the words are missing letters due to the fragmentary nature of the Scroll. However, there is great evidence that Chronicles bears striking similarities to 4QSam<sup>a</sup>.<sup>107</sup> Cross,<sup>108</sup> Lemke,<sup>109</sup> Ulrich,<sup>110</sup> and McKenzie<sup>111</sup> all have made significant contributions in the field of textual criticism relating to Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. These scholars are all influenced by Cross who believed that the passages in 4QSam<sup>a</sup> (2 Sam.24:16b-17a) were lost in the MT due to haplography.

<sup>105</sup> Donald W. Parry and Andrew C. Skinner, “4Q51” in Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Library Biblical Texts. Accessed December 30, 2021. doi:[http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2451-9383\\_dsselbt\\_DSS\\_EL\\_BT\\_4Q51](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2451-9383_dsselbt_DSS_EL_BT_4Q51).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> For summary see: Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 28-31.

<sup>108</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1961), 41, 188-91.

<sup>109</sup> Werner E. Lemke, "The Synoptic Problem in the Chronicler's History," *HTR* 58:4 (1965): 349-63. Accessed January 14, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1508546>.

<sup>110</sup> Eugene Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978), 162-64.

<sup>111</sup> Steven L. McKenzie, *The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1984), 55-58.

What does this mean for the comparative studies of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles? It means that Chr's *Vorlage* of Samuel was closer to the Qumran text than to the MT. Ulrich gives four convincing arguments why the MT of 1 Chr. 21 is based on a text close to 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and not vice versa.<sup>112</sup> These points were helpfully summarized by Dion as follows: First, the Qumran text speaks of 'rn' instead of Ornan (cf. LXX of Samuel and Chronicles). Second, its description of David and his men falling upon their faces, covered with sackcloth, has the Hebrew terms in a more correct sequence. Third, the hitpa'el of *mitk[assim]* in the Qumran text is more classical than the pu'al version in Chronicles MT. Fourth, David addresses his prayer to YHWH rather than Elohim.<sup>113</sup> Clearly, this discovery was groundbreaking in biblical studies. It is important to reiterate Boda's comments on the impact of these findings.

Close study of the Masoretic Text of Chronicles, the Masoretic Text of Samuel-Kings, Qumran evidence of Samuel (4QSam<sup>a</sup>, 4QSam<sup>b</sup>, 4QSam<sup>c</sup>), and the Septuagint for Samuel *has demonstrated that Chronicles drew on a text of Samuel closer to 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and the Septuagint than to the Masoretic Text of Samuel, but on a text of Kings closer to the Masoretic Text of Kings.* This latter point is very important because it reminds us that some of the "differences" between Chronicles and its key source, Samuel-Kings, are not due to editorial revision by the Chronicler but rather to textual revisions by scribes.<sup>114</sup>

This means that one should not jump to conclusions about the Chr's purposes based on the differences between the MT of 2 Sam. 24 and 1 Chr. 21 since 4QSam<sup>a</sup> corresponds very strongly to 1 Chr. 21. However, the Qumran scroll 4QSam<sup>a</sup> offers limited textual evidence for analysis when comparing it with 1 Chr. 21. Moreover, if the LXX should resemble 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and 1 Chr. 21, there is no explanation why it omits details about the destroying angel, standing

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<sup>112</sup> Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*, 162-164.

<sup>113</sup> Paul-Eugène Dion, "The Angel with the Drawn Sword (II Chr 21,16): An Exercise in Restoring the Balance of Text Criticism and Attention to Context," *ZAW* 97 (1): 114-17.

<sup>114</sup> Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 11, emphasize added.

between heaven and earth, threatening Jerusalem (vv. 16b-17a).<sup>115</sup> Therefore, it seems safest to admit that the Chr used a text of Samuel close to 4QSam<sup>a</sup> when constructing his narrative. However, this by no means excludes the possibility that the Chr added innovative ideas to shape his narratives and solve perceived theological problems. Dion's analysis of the angel with the drawn sword helps illustrate this important point which will be discussed further in the textual analysis and commentary of 1 Chr. 21.<sup>116</sup> Finally, even if more evidence is found to support the idea that the Chr was simply transmitting his sources (1 Chr. 21=4QSam<sup>a</sup>), this would not explain other innovations he made with other synoptic texts (2 Chr. 7≠1 Kgs. 7).

### **Section One: vv.1-6**

Without a doubt one of the greatest differences between the synoptic texts comes at the very beginning of the narrative; namely, that the Chr replaces “the anger of the Lord” (הַחֶרֶף יְהוָה) with “satan” (שָׂטָן). There remains tremendous disagreement among scholars over who the satan-figure is. Traditionally, most scholars have asserted that the noun refers to the name “Satan” found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Job 1-2; Zech. 3:1-2).<sup>117</sup> However, modern scholars have challenged this position by positing that “satan” is a reference to an anonymous human adversary or stumbling block.<sup>118</sup> Each of these popular positions need to be evaluated to grasp the function and the identity of this figure.

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<sup>115</sup> William M. Schniedewind, *The Word of God in Transition: from Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Pr., 1995), 140.

<sup>116</sup> Dion, “The Angel with the Drawn Sword (II Chr 21,16).”

<sup>117</sup> For overviews see: Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, 114, fn. 422. Paul Evans, “Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21,” 545, fn. 3. Ryan E. Stokes, “The Devil Made David Do It... or “Did” He? The Nature, Identity, and Literary Origins of the “Satan” in 1 Chronicles 21:1,” *JBL* 128, 1 (2009): 92, fn. 4.

<sup>118</sup> For overview see: Stokes, “The Devil Made David Do It... or “Did” He?,” 93, fn. 5-6. See Peggy L. Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: sātān in the Hebrew Bible*, HSM 43 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 127-45.

Why would the Chr make the switch from “the anger of the Lord” to “satan”? It has been commonly argued that the Chr included “Satan” into his account in order “to remove the offence caused by the statement that Yahweh was the direct instigator of an act portrayed as sinful. David sinned by ordering a census...without having been commanded to do so by God.”<sup>119</sup> If this is the case, the Lord is not only above reproach but totally exonerated from any wrongdoing. However, this position has one major weakness. If there is one example of the Chr retaining his *Vorlage* with any reference to the Lord directly influencing someone to do something portrayed as sinful, then this theory is invalid, and this is exactly what one finds in the narrative of Micaiah’s prophecy to Ahab and Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 18:1-27; 1 Kgs. 22:13-28).<sup>120</sup> Therefore, this one example is enough to prove that the Chr did not include a reference to “Satan” to safeguard the Lord’s reputation.

Even though “Satan” is not used in that specific way, it is possible that the Chr’s reference is still to a supernatural being. For example, the Chr may have used the phrase “rose up against” (רָיַעַמַד עַל), to refer to a supernatural being since this is how it is used in Zech. 3:1 (cf. v.1).<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, the Chr could have elected to preserve the verb “to entice” (סִוֶה) from his sources since it is used in connection with the same supernatural figure in Job 2:3 (cf. v.1).<sup>122</sup>

Even though there are these interesting literary parallels, opponents of the “Satan” theory make a grammatical critique. They observe how “this is the only instance in the entire Hebrew

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<sup>119</sup> Edward Lewis Curtis and Albert Alonzo Madsen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles, International Critical Commentary* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1910), 246–247. According to this reasoning, “Since such a figure does not appear elsewhere in Chronicles, it probably reflects the common piety of the day, which hesitated to speak of God as the direct cause of evil.”

<sup>120</sup> Micaiah tells Ahab that he received favorable prophecies from others because “the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these, your prophets; [but] the Lord has spoken evil concerning you” (2 Chr. 18:21-22). This is problematic since it certainly appears to portray God as the direct cause of evil.

<sup>121</sup> Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 174.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*



Bible where the term is used with such a denotation” – without the definite article.<sup>123</sup> All other references to a similar Satan-figure include the definite article (cf. Job 1:6-9,12; 2:1-4,6-7; Zech. 3:1-2). Therefore, these scholars think it best to identify “satan” as an indefinite noun. But proponents of the “Satan” theory say that the Chr’s reference “represents the final stage in the [Hebrew Bible’s] development of a figure in YHWH’s heavenly council who not only brings charges against his people but actually incites them to evil.”<sup>124</sup> Ironically then, both sides use instances where Satan is referenced *with* the definite article as evidence for their claims when it is used *without* it. This makes the issue quite perplexing.<sup>125</sup> Thus, it is clear that any argument based on historical grammar will not settle the matter at hand.

It is possible that the Chr included “satan” as a reference to a human adversary. The plain meaning of the term “satan” is simply “adversary,”<sup>126</sup> and there are several times the Hebrew Bible uses it as such (Num. 22:22; 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Kgs. 5:4; 11:14,23,25; Ps. 109:6). In these instances, “satan” is used in military, political or legal contexts. In light of the Chr’s narrative, the immediate context of the census is King David establishing and extending his kingdom through military battle (1 Chr.18-20). Also, the Chr describes the adversary as one who “rose up against” (רָם עָלַי), a phrase used elsewhere by him in order to describe a military conflict (2 Chr. 20:23; cf. v.1).

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<sup>123</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 744.

<sup>124</sup> Braun, *I Chronicles*, 216-217. Cf. Evans, "Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21," 545-58. Evans asserts, "It is, in fact, the final stage in the development of שָׂטָן in the OT." (557).

<sup>125</sup> For example, on the one hand Japhet argues, "From a purely linguistic point of view it is in fact the absence of the article which should raise doubts about understanding it as a proper noun" (*I & II Chronicles*, 374). On the other hand, Evans highlights the fact that she uses *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* to make her etymological claim when it actually makes the opposite case ("Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21," 547, fn. 8). Evans concludes, "Historical grammar will not decide the issue."

<sup>126</sup> BDB, 966.1; cf. Strong's, 7854.

Japhet,<sup>127</sup> Wright,<sup>128</sup> and Knoppers<sup>129</sup> – among others, all interpret “satan” as a reference to an anonymous human adversary. However, asserting that “satan” is a human adversary in the context of military campaigns also remains problematic since it poses an incomplete solution to the problem.<sup>130</sup> If that was the case, many vexing questions remain concerning the adversarial figure’s identity: what camp is he from, what is his motive, and most importantly, how was the conflict with this figure resolved? None of these questions are answered.

Lastly, there is another possibility that has not been mentioned yet since it has gained acceptance just recently. It is possible that “satan” simply refers to an angel of the Lord as a divine intermediary in accord with Numbers 22. In fact, Stokes – among others,<sup>131</sup> observes that there are numerous similarities found in these narratives making it possible that Numbers 22 was among the Chr’s *Vorlagen*.<sup>132</sup>

Here is a list of these discoverable similarities. First, the narratives begin with a reference to God’s burning wrath (Num. 22:22; 2 Sam. 24:1; cf. 1 Chr. 21:1). Second, there are the prominent roles of the angels (Num. 22:22-27, 31-32, 34-35; 1 Chr. 21:12,15-16, 18, 20, 27, 30) and their swords (Num. 22:23,29,31; 1 Chr. 21:12, 16, 27, 30).<sup>133</sup> Third, the protagonists repent after seeing the threatening angels (Num. 22:34; 2 Sam. 24:17; 1 Chr. 21:16-17). Fourth, in the final form of each narrative, the Lord’s actions seem contradictory (Num. 22:20,32; 2

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<sup>127</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 375. She believes satan “refers to ‘an adversary,’ who acts against Israel by inciting the king to take the wrong action. From a literary point of view, this anonymous schemer is the antithesis of Joab....” Elsewhere she adds, “Perhaps [it was] one of David’s officials or courtiers” *Ideology of Chronicles*, 116.

<sup>128</sup> Wright, “The Innocence of David in 1 Chronicles 21,” 93. “It would seem that שָׂטָן most likely represents an anonymous enemy that attacks Israel, an unanticipated foe who threatens Israel’s national security.”

<sup>129</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 744. He clearly sides with Japhet saying “the most plausible meaning for the noun *śātān* is “an (anonymous) adversary.”

<sup>130</sup> Stokes, “The Devil Made David Do It... or “Did” He?,” 98-99.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-106. See also: Ristau, “Breaking Down Unity,” 207, fn. 11; Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 174.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 102, fn. 35. Klein also demonstrates that the Chr makes use of the Book of Numbers as one of his sources several times (*I Chronicles*, 38). Stokes recognizes that many of the Book of Numbers references in Chronicles are also in other Books of the Pentateuch. However, the similarities between these narratives cause him to conclude that the possibility that Numbers 22 is among the Chr’s *Vorlagen* “is certainly more than plausible.”

<sup>133</sup> For example, מַלְאָךְ is discovered 11x in 11 verses throughout Numbers 22. It is found 9x in 7 verses throughout 1 Chr. 21.

Sam. 24:1,15; 1 Chr. 21:1,7,14). Finally, in each the Lord requires total obedience to his command in order to avoid punishment (Num. 22:20,35; 2 Sam. 24:18-25; 1 Chr. 21:18-27).

Thus, there are three total possibilities for the identity of שָׂטָן. First, “Satan” has become a proper noun and this name refers to the same adversary and archenemy of God as found in Job 1-2 and Zech. 3:1-2. Second, “satan” refers to an anonymous human adversary in the context of a military setting (cf. 2 Chr. 20:23). Third, “satan” refers to an angel of the Lord as a divine intermediary carrying out the divine command. In light of all these possibilities, the remarkable resemblance between this narrative and the narrative found in Num. 22 makes the final option most convincing. It seems that the Chr was uncomfortable with the theological implications of his source, so he elected to have an angel of the Lord act as an adversary (שָׂטָן) to David and carry out God’s burning anger and wrath against Israel instead (cf. Num. 22:22-23; 2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chr. 21:1). Interestingly, while interpreting the phrase “slow to anger” (Joel 2:13) in the context of the Chr’s unique verse (2 Chr. 7:14), Talmudic tradition also claims,

“[T]he Holy One, blessed be He, said, ‘Anger and wrath are angels of destruction. Lo, I shall send them a long way away, so that if Israel angers me, while I am summoning and bringing them to me, Israel will repent, and I shall accept their repentance.’”<sup>134</sup>

Overall, having the angel as the adversary fits in quite well with one of the Chr’s prominent motifs: the angel is given a greater role as a divine intermediary. This motif will be discussed later in greater detail.

The next important question centers around the moral evaluation of David’s census; namely, was taking the census in fact sinful? First, David is clearly the main character of the

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<sup>134</sup> Y. Ta’anit. 2.1, III.7.J. Jacob Neusner, *The Jerusalem Talmud: A Translation and Commentary* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008).

overall narrative, and he is portrayed as responsible for taking the census (vv.2-6).<sup>135</sup> Wright emphasizes that the Chr focuses on David in a unique way throughout the narrative. He also contends that the act of taking a census is quite common and is portrayed positively throughout Chronicles.<sup>136</sup> Interestingly he concludes that Joab, not David, was at fault since he takes an *incomplete* census (cf. 1 Chr. 27:23-24). Indeed, the Chr added that Joab chooses not to count the tribes of Levi and Benjamin (v.6). In doing so, Wright asserts that Joab is the one who endangered Israel.<sup>137</sup> But how is this position tenable, in light of David proclaiming, “I have greatly sinned” (v.8) and “done very wickedly” (v.17)? Wright concludes that David was “an innocent victim” who attempts “to act vicariously for Israel.”<sup>138</sup>

Many scholars find this position hardly convincing. On the one hand, Knoppers agrees that “for the Chronicler, musters are an appropriate feature of national administration.”<sup>139</sup> But on the other hand, he concludes, “Even more so in Chronicles than in Samuel, David is guilty.”<sup>140</sup> Likewise, Bailey systematically dismantles the position that David is innocent. She concludes that David “does not refer to the incompleteness of the census, nor does he accept, or for that matter mention, Joab's putative guilt (vv.8,17).”<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Knoppers mentions that David “is mentioned twenty-five times in 1 Chr 21,1-22,1. Knoppers, “Images of David in Early Judaism,” 451. In Samuel, David is mentioned fifteen times in thirteen verses (2 Sam. 24).

<sup>136</sup> Wright, “The Innocence of David in 1 Chronicles 21,” 90-92. He urges his readers to compare the language used to describe other lists of Israel (1 Chr. 5:1,7,17; 7:5,7,9,40; 9:1; 11:11; 23:6-26:32; 2 Chr. 17:13-19; 25:5; 26:11-13).

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 96-97. “Fail[ure] to enroll Benjamin would eliminate nearly one-half of the military strength of the Davidic king... By omitting the sons of Levi from the census, Joab cuts the theological heart out of Israel, the very personnel who might ensure David's military success against his adversary.”

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 89, 104. “The David of 1 Chronicles 21, therefore, is not an aberration in the Chronicler's idealized picture of Judah's founding king. Divinely chosen, crowned by popular acclaim, cultically beyond suspicion, victorious in battle, the David of 1 Chronicles heroically offers to accept undeserved divine wrath to save the people of Israel. David's reign falls short of no one's in the history of Judah” (104).

<sup>139</sup> Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29*, 751. He lists many of the same references including 1 Chr 9:1; 11:11; 12:24; 23:3; 27:1–34; 2 Chr 2:2; 17:13–19; 25:5; 26:11–13; 31:12–19.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 752. Cf. Selman, *1 Chronicles*, 201, fn. 1. In fact, Selman claims that the Chr patterned his illicit census narrative on the narrative of David's adultery and murder saying there is a “striking resemblance” between the two (2 Sam. 11-12; 1 Chr. 21). This is an interesting comparison but not at all certain since many aspects of each are also found in the Chr's *Vorlage* (2 Sam. 24). Selman's argument is that the Chr *enhanced* these shared aspects.

<sup>141</sup> Noel Bailey, “David's Innocence: A Response to J. Wright”, *JSOT* 64 (1994): 89.

In the narrative context, Joab does not seem to be the guilty one. Immediately after David commands the census, Joab responds, “May the Lord increase his people as many as one hundred times. Are not all of them servants of my lord the king? My lord, why do you request this thing? Why will there be guilt upon Israel?” (v.3). Initially, Joab is both befuddled and nonplussed. Then Joab decides to take the census in obedience to David, but he refrains from counting the tribes of Levi and Benjamin because “the word of the king was repulsive to him” (v.6).

Now Joab’s motive for his disobedience is clear, but what is the explanation behind why these two tribes in particular were left out? According to Mosaic Law, the Levites were excused from any military censuses (Num. 1:49; 2:33). The only way that they could be numbered was for liturgical purposes (Num. 3:14-39; 26:57-65; 2 Chr. 23-26). Yet, even if Joab excluded Levi for this reason, this does not explain why he left out the tribe of Benjamin. Scholars have offered various speculative explanations but most likely, Joab does not include them out of respect for the tabernacle which was residing in Gibeon, within the territory of Benjamin (Jos. 18:25; 1 Chr. 16:39; 2 Chr. 1:3; 5:5).<sup>142</sup> Therefore, in the Chr’s version, Joab emphasizes that it is the Lord who adds to Israel’s numbers (v.3a), he highlights that the men in Israel are the king’s servants (v.3b), he inquires why David is bringing guilt upon Israel (v.3), and he refuses to count the Levites and Benjaminites because the king’s command was abhorrent to him (v.6). This certainly heightens David’s guilt and diminishes Joab’s responsibility. It also shows that David’s census is the antithesis of Gideon’s (cf. Judg. 7). However, eventually David confesses his sin (v.8), takes full responsibility for his actions (v.17), and offers atonement for his offence (v.26).

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<sup>142</sup> See overview of issue: Curtis and Madsen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles*, 248. Cf. Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 422.

Now that it is clear that taking the census was sinful in David's eyes, it is still unclear precisely what David's sin was. There are many different possible answers. First, David's census was sinful because he acted pridefully, placing his trust in man instead of the Lord (v.3).<sup>143</sup> Second, David should not have taken the census since Israel's number is uncountable (Gen. 15:5; 1 Chr. 21:3; 27:23).<sup>144</sup> Then scholars offer several more explanations including David's sin was his failure to conquer the Jebusite occupied land – a violation of God's command (Deut. 7:1-2),<sup>145</sup> David's sin was his premature preparations for the construction of the temple,<sup>146</sup> and David's sin was his failure to collect and pay the half-shekel census tax (כֶּפֶר) required by Mosaic Law.<sup>147</sup>

Among all the various options, it is most convincing that God punished Israel for David's illicit census because he neglected to pay the half-shekel tax required by the Law. First, there is clear evidence that the Chr was aware of Mosaic Law in regard to the proper maintenance of the ark of the covenant by the Levites (Ex. 25:14-15; Deut. 10:8; 1 Chr. 15:2), as well as to the proper maintenance of the tabernacle/temple by enforcing the census tax (Ex. 30:12-16; 2 Chr. 24:4-16). Second, the Law explicitly states the connection between the improper legislation of a census *and* the result of a plague (Ex. 30:12; 1 Chr. 21).<sup>148</sup> Therefore, in terms of culpability, David may not have broken Mosaic Law intentionally, or even knowingly. However, "In the

<sup>143</sup> For an overview of this position see Evans, "Let the Crime Fit the Punishment," 67, fn. 8-9.

<sup>144</sup> Although, it is unclear if these two references are to one and the same census. For an overview see Bailey, "David's Innocence," 89-90.

<sup>145</sup> J.J. Adler, "David's Last Sin: Was It the Census?" *JBQ* 23 (1995): 91-95; David's Census: Additional Reflection," *JBQ* 24 (1996): 255-57.

<sup>146</sup> K.R. Greenwood, "Labor Pains: The Relationship between David's Census and Corvee Labor," *BBR* 20 (2010): 467-77.

<sup>147</sup> Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities*, 7.13 in *The Works of Josephus*, 205. William Johnstone, *Chronicles and Exodus: An Analogy and Its Application* (JSOTsup 275; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 128-140. Evans, "Let the Crime Fit the Punishment," 65-80.

<sup>148</sup> Similar words and their cognates are used in each narrative for taking a census (Ex.30:12, פִּקֹד and in 1 Chr. 21:5,6 פִּקֹד/מִפְקֹד) and for the resultant plague (Ex. 30:12, נָגַף and 1 Chr. 21:17,22, מַגֵּפָה). However, the Chr does alter his *Vorlage* in some places (1 Chr. 21:2; cf. 2 Sam. 24:2) which weakens the connection. For a detailed argument about the ramifications of the Chr's changes see Evans, "Let the Crime Fit the Punishment," 71-73. See also William Johnstone, *Chronicles and Exodus*, 128-140.

Chronicler's view, the best that can be said of David's actions was that he acted negligently (i.e. he was unaware but *should have been* aware of breaking the Torah at this point.)"<sup>149</sup>

Thus, David's sin and its effect on Israel could have been avoided. Objectively, David should have ensured that every Israelite was ransomed by paying the tax (Ex. 30:12-16). Subjectively, he also should have trusted God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 15:5; 1 Chr. 21:3; cf. 27:23). Ultimately, it seems that David was put to the test (1 Chr. 21:1; 29:17).<sup>150</sup> Similar to the synoptic text 2 Sam. 24, David was incited to take the census but that does not mean that he *ought* to have taken it. At the very least, he should have consulted God on the matter; instead, David stubbornly orders a census without following the Torah's instructions for how to do so.

## **Section Two: vv. 7-14**

Next there is some obscurity regarding what happens immediately after the census is taken and reported. The Chr's version states, "*This thing* was evil in the eyes of God, and he struck Israel" (v.7). Wright attempts to make "this thing" (עַל־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה) a reference to Joab's incomplete census (v.6; 2 Chr. 27:23-24).<sup>151</sup> But Bailey rightly calls this a "dubious syntactical connection" since David used the exact same phrase in reference to taking the census in the following verse.<sup>152</sup> David says, "I have greatly sinned by doing *this thing*..." (v.8, אָתָּה־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה). Again, this underscores David's culpability for the illicit census and makes him responsible for the ensuing result of the plague. As it stands, it seems the Chr chose to provide a

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<sup>149</sup> Evans, "Let the Crime Fit the Punishment," 77-78.

<sup>150</sup> For a convincing description of this theme see Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*, 86-90.

<sup>151</sup> Wright, "The Innocence of David in 1 Chronicles 21," 99. He claims, "The closest antecedent is not the completion of the census, but its incompleteness: Joab's refusal to count Benjamin and Levi (v. 6)." Cf. Day, *Adversary in Heaven*, 139.

<sup>152</sup> Bailey, "David's Innocence," 89. Bailey correctly identifies Wright's methodology of interpreting 1 Chr. 21 through the lens of 1 Chr. 27:23-24. Therefore, "[T]his passage cannot be the starting point, if it be such, for the argument about guilt in 1 Chronicles 21" (90).

motive for David's confession of sin (contra 2 Sam. 24:10). Thus, according to the Chr, David repents because God strikes Israel (vv. 7-8).

However, this presents a major problem in the Chr's narrative. Does God strike Israel with a plague twice? Some scholars claim that there are indeed two plagues,<sup>153</sup> while others claim that there is only one.<sup>154</sup> If one is to take the first position, the burden would be on them to answer many questions. Who was punished and affected by this plague, where did God send it, and how was it carried out? All of these questions remain unanswered. One would have to admit that God's actions here are unspecified and that the change does not make the Chr's narrative any smoother.<sup>155</sup> If one takes the second position, then the function of the verse is solely as a proleptic overview – an anticipation of what is to come. But it seems best to consider a third position; that the verse does “double duty” acting as a preview of what is to come *and* an explanation for what motivated David's confession (vv.7-8).<sup>156</sup>

No sooner had David cried out to God, did the Lord send him a message through the prophet Gad. The message is grim; David is asked to choose among three serious punishments for Israel: three years of famine, three months of devastation by his enemies, or three days of

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<sup>153</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 379. She avers, “David's unmotivated repentance calls for motivation, and this is provided by the smiting of Israel in v.7 (cf. also the repentance of Rehoboam following the words of Shemaiah in I Chron. 12.6; Manasseh, after his exile, II Chron. 35.12, etc.) See also Noel Bailey, “David and God in 1 Chronicles 21: Edged with Mist,” in M. Patrick Graham and Steven L. McKenzie eds., *Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture* (JSOTsup, 263; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 342; and Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 753-54.

<sup>154</sup> De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 171. He argues that “this is the ChrH's prolepsis for the entire section. See also Williamson, *1 Chronicles*, 145. He echoes the same notion saying, “The whole verse is a summarizing introduction to the following paragraph, so that *and he smote Israel* refers to the pestilence of v. 14, not to some other and additional catastrophe.” Cf. Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 176. He also offers the helpful remark that this verse is “much like the function of Gen 1:1 in the account of creation” (fn. 8).

<sup>155</sup> Knoppers and Japhet each admit these important points (Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 754; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 379.)

<sup>156</sup> Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 422. He supports his claim saying, “Similarly, Pharaoh came to his senses when Yahweh unleashed plagues on Pharaoh and his household after he had taken Sarai, Abram's wife (Gen 12:17–18). In the Vorlage at 2 Sam 24:10 David's heart struck him (conscience pangs that anticipate God's punishment?) after the report of Joab's census, but, as the Chronicler would have noticed, no reason is given for his sense of guilt. The Chronicler now supplies one.”



pestilence (v.12). David chose to command a census and now he must choose the punishment for it. Significantly, all three punishments have a covenantal basis and background (Lev. 26:14-39).<sup>157</sup> David's humble response is equally as significant. Knoppers detects a chiasmic structure in David's words,

- a let me fall
- b into the hand of YHWH,
- c because his compassion is exceedingly great.
- b' but into the hand of man
- a' let me not fall.<sup>158</sup>

Essentially, David only eliminated the second option out of the three but ultimately, he entrusts himself to God's mercy.

However, it does seem strange that David is given three options at all, especially since Mosaic Law specifically warned of the punishment of a plague if the ransom of the census tax was not paid (Ex. 30:11-12). Evans suggests the possibility that the word pestilence (רָגַג) used in Ex. 30:12, could have a broader meaning in this verse; for example, besides "plague" רָגַג could also mean "a fatal blow" or "divine smiting" (cf. Ex. 12:13ff).<sup>159</sup> Therefore, God could be asking David what kind of fatal punishment he chooses for Israel as a consequence for his sin. If this explanation is not entirely convincing, Knoppers gives another practical solution suggesting that the Chr recounts the three choices since he may have been constrained by his sources.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Notice how the pestilence (רָגַג) and the sword (חֶרֶב) are common motifs of covenant punishment in both Leviticus and Chronicles (Lev. 26:21,23-25, 32-33, 36-39; 1 Chr. 21:12; 2 Chr. 6:28; 20:9). Selman notes one of these similarities Lev. 26:25-26 and 1 Chr. 21:11-12 (*I Chronicles*, 206).

<sup>158</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 756.

<sup>159</sup> Evans, "Let the Crime Fit the Punishment," 78. BDB, 620. This is the way the word functions in the Passover narrative when God strikes Egypt's firstborn sons (Ex. 12:13,23,27).

<sup>160</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 752. Earlier in his commentary he says that "one has also to recognize that the Samuel story may have carried a certain force, in spite of the changes the Chronicler made to it."

The Chr also significantly alters his *Vorlage* adding a detailed description of how the Lord would carry out the plague punishment. Instead of simply referring to a “pestilence in your land” (2 Sam. 24:13b), Gad prophecies that it will be a pestilence carried out by a “destroying angel of the Lord in all the territories of Israel” (v.12b). Gad’s eerie prediction proves true in the ensuing narrative (vv.15-16).

Lastly, the death of the seventy thousand men in Israel is the fulfillment of what was anticipated (vv. 7,14). Some scholars find it difficult to reconcile the idea of God’s mercy with the death of so many men here (vv.13-14). Indeed, it seems strange that seventy thousand are punished by death while David is not. However, there is precedent for this sort of occurrence in the Hebrew Bible. Elmslie makes the helpful connection between individual sin and corporate punishment (Lev. 4:2-3).<sup>161</sup> Here God tells Moses,

Say to the sons of Israel, if anyone sins unwittingly in any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, and does any one of them, if it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer for the sin which he has committed a young bull without blemish to the Lord for a sin offering.

Bailey agrees with Elmslie in part saying that she suggests Lev. 4:3 can be used as an intertext to 1 Chron. 21:3 since they share common references to “sin” (אָטָה) and “guilt” (אֲשָׁמָה).<sup>162</sup>

However, Bailey still finds David’s reference to God’s mercy highly questionable.<sup>163</sup> Elmslie’s

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<sup>161</sup> W.A.L. Elmslie, *The Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 131. He says, “The community is a unit, and the guilt of one falls on all.” This is cited in Bailey, “David and God in 1 Chronicles 21” in *Chronicler as Author*, 339.

<sup>162</sup> Bailey, “David and God in 1 Chronicles 21” in *Chronicler as Author*, 339.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 345-46. Bailey argues this point on two levels. First, Bailey claims that Joab was the representative of the people who (all) resisted the census. Bailey says, “The voice of the people, expressed in the objections of its strongest non-ruling representative, gives way to the privilege and power of monarchy (v.4), yet their act of resistance is ignored by Yahweh. Their act is, fundamentally, a positive one, for they come down on the side of Yahweh: they are essentially seeking Yahweh against the wishes of one who is busy forsaking Yahweh. However, retribution still comes to them: wrath for their faithfulness, an attack for their loyalty.” Second, Bailey suggests that David’s statement that “the Lord’s mercy is great” was not so much a declaration but an act of “wishful thinking” (346). In response to Bailey’s first point it is worth asking, if the people are guiltless, then why don’t they object to David’s census? Surely some of them knew the stipulation of the census tax. In response to the second point, David could have made a declaration *and* had “wishful thinking;” these acts are not mutually exclusive.

intertextual interpretation is certainly helpful in understanding and explaining God's punishment upon Israel (v.14), David's lack of punishment (vv.14-27), and David's role as a priest who intercedes for his people in the ensuing narrative (1 Chr. 21:17-22:1).

### **Section Three: vv.15-27**

The destroying angel had begun carrying out God's wrath when suddenly it was halted by God at Jerusalem. The Chr recounts, "As he was about to destroy it, the Lord saw, and he repented of the evil. And he said to the destroying angel, "Enough, now stay your hand." And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (v.15). The scene is highly suspenseful. Why did the Lord stop the destroying angel, and what did the Lord see?

This verse is interpreted in different ways. First, it is possible that the beginning of the verse functions proleptically. This is a literary technique the Chr used before (vv.7). Therefore, the remaining narrative explains what the Lord saw (vv.16-27), and the final verse in this section is a fulfillment of the preview (vv. 15,27).<sup>164</sup> Second, the verse is to be read as happening in sequential order. This would mean that the Lord relents his destruction after seeing the death of the seventy thousand men. Verse 14 then acts as an explanation of the Lord's motives in v.15. Yet this makes David totally oblivious and unaware of God's command to the angel (v.15b) and it calls into question the angel's command spoken in the name of the Lord to David (v.18). Why have David offer sacrifice to avert the plague if it has already been averted? Also, even more troubling, the angel seems to act contrary to the Lord's command the first time since it is only after David's sacrifice that the angel sheathes his sword (vv.15, 27)! Third, the verse is to be

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<sup>164</sup> Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 177. "The overview in 21:15a describes God's commanding the death angel to stop, but this is actually the outcome of the story, and it is repeated at the very end in 21:27. What is provided in 21:15b-26 (beginning with "at that moment") is the event that prompted the outpouring of God's mercy."

read in sequential order, but the Lord was motivated by something else entirely. The Targum declares that the Lord saw something very specific.

Then God sent the angel of the pestilence to Jerusalem to destroy it. When he was destroying it, he observed the ashes of the binding of Isaac which were at the base of the altar, and he remembered his covenant with Abraham which he had set up with him on the mountain of worship; (he observed) the sanctuary-house which was above, where the souls of the righteous are, and the image of Jacob which was engraved on the throne of glory, and he repented in himself of the evil which he had planned to do.<sup>165</sup>

Thus, the Targum claims that the Lord relents from destroying Jerusalem for two reasons. First, God halts the destruction because of his covenant fidelity with Abraham (Gen. 22:16-18). Second, he relents because of his covenant fidelity to the souls of the righteous in the heavenly sanctuary. This Midrashic interpretation of the Targum corresponds well with a declaration later made by the Chr; namely, that “Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah” (2 Chr. 3:1). “Moriah” is the same name of the land where God tested Abraham, asking him to bind (ܐܩܕ, *ʾaqad*) and sacrifice his promised son Isaac (Gen. 22).<sup>166</sup> The interpretation that both narratives occurred in the same setting is unique to the Chr alone.<sup>167</sup> Thus, Dillard concludes in his analysis,

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<sup>165</sup> J. Stanley McIvor, trans. *The Aramaic Bible: The Targum of Ruth and The Targum of Chronicles*, 1 Chr. 21:15

<sup>166</sup> James R. Davila, “Moriah (Place),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 905. Levenson also notes the possibility of a wordplay in the name. He says that “there is a play on Moriah and the verb *ra’a*, “to see,” and its derivative nouns, *mar’a* and *mar’e*, meaning “sight, spectacle, vision.” Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), 94-95. However, there is plenty of skepticism about this interpretation. Davila asserts, “The MT also calls the place *yahweh yir’eh*, “Yahweh will see” in v 14. This seems to be a corruption of an original *’elohim yir’eh*. “God will see” (found in the Sahidic Coptic version and the unpublished Qumran manuscript 4QGen Exa; see Davila, *fc.*). The corruption arose through a folk etymology that associated Moriah with the Hebrew root *r’h*, “to see,” and the divine name *Yah*, short for *Yahweh*; thus “vision of *Yahweh*” or the like. This etymology is incorrect; it does not explain the *o* vowel in the name. The actual meaning is unknown.”

<sup>167</sup> Isaac Kalimi, “The Land of Moriah, Mount Moriah and the Site of Solomon’s Temple in Biblical Historiography,” *HTR*: 83:4 (1990): 345-62. In his in-depth study of the place “Moriah,” Kalimi concludes, “The Temple Mount seems already to have been identified with the site of the Aqeda in the First Temple period (Gen 22:14b), while the name “Mount Moriah,” as far as can be determined, was only linked to the site through the

The Chronicler not only adds the material designating Ornan's threshing floor as the temple site, but he also makes an identification of this location with Mt. Moriah, an identification unique to II Chronicles 3:1. The imagery is pregnant: at the same site where Abraham once held a knife over his son (Gen. 22:1-19), David sees the angel of the Lord with sword ready to plunge into Jerusalem. In both cases death is averted by sacrifice. The temple is established there as the place where Israel was perpetually reminded that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin (Heb. 9:22).<sup>168</sup>

Hahn also sees a clear allusion between Abraham's binding of Isaac and David's census.<sup>169</sup> While there are certainly comparisons to be made (Abraham-angel; Isaac-Israel), the biggest difference is that seventy thousand Israelite men die because of David's census. So, what eventually caused God to tell the destroying angel, "Enough, now stay your hand" (15a)? Why was the angel standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite? Most importantly, how was the plague ultimately averted?

David sees the angel of death hovering over Jerusalem in a threatening stance, with his drawn sword outstretched against it (v.16). This is certainly intimidating, and it proves that David's military census plan to count all Israel had completely backfired (v. 5). How is this verse to be understood in its narrative context? If the previous verse is meant to be understood sequentially, this verse is difficult to explain. Was the angel disobedient to the Lord's command, "Enough, now stay your hand" (v.15)? That does not seem to be the meaning. Was the plague

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interpretation of the Chronicler's account (2 Chr 3:1) in the Second Temple period... The reference to the site of the Temple in Chronicles seems to be a result of the Chronicler's desire to "fill in the gaps" in the Book of Kings" (362).

<sup>168</sup> Raymond B. Dillard, "David's Census: Perspectives on II Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21" in *Through Christ's word: a festschrift for Dr. Philip E. Hughes*, Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, W. Robert Godfrey, and Jesse L. Boyd eds. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1985), 107.

<sup>169</sup> Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*, 91. He details the similarities saying, "Both David and Abraham are said to 'lift up their eyes to see' visions of divine import. In Chronicles, the angel stands between heaven and earth, his sword unsheathed and raised above Jerusalem, as Abraham put forth his hand and raised his knife above Isaac. By divine command, the hands of both the killer angel and Abraham are stayed. In place of both the firstborn people of Israel and the beloved firstborn Isaac, burnt offerings are made instead. Both stories end with an apparent allusion to the temple: David recognizes that this is to be the site of the house of God and Israel's altar of burnt offering; Abraham names the site 'the LORD will provide/see' because, as he had hoped, God had seen to it to provide the lamb for the sacrifice instead of Isaac. Thus, the Genesis account concludes with an apparent anticipation of the temple: 'As it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD it/he shall be provided/seen' (22:14)."

averted twice (vv. 15, 27)?<sup>170</sup> It makes much more practical sense to follow Boda's suggestion that the previous verse functions proleptically. The angel of death does not lower his sword now, but he will. Read this way, readers are left in suspense. They know the plague will be averted and they are waiting for the details about how it is to be done. Moreover, with this interpretation there are no vexing contradictions in the narrative.

Additionally, one should not underestimate the power of the literary techniques employed in this narrative. At the very center of the story, there is a threat and a response. First, there is the imposing angel, standing between earth and heaven, with a drawn sword (v.15b). This verse is dripping with literary allusions. It is not the first time that an angel with a drawn sword plays a prominent role in narratives throughout the Hebrew Bible (Num. 22:21-35; Josh. 5:13-15).<sup>171</sup> As previously mentioned, there are tremendous similarities between the narratives of Balaam, his donkey, and the angel – on the one hand, and the threatening angel in David's illicit census on the other.<sup>172</sup> Moreover, there are tremendous similarities between the narratives of Joshua's and David's visions of an angel.<sup>173</sup> First, Joshua and David "lift their eyes" (Josh. 5:13; 1 Chr.

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<sup>170</sup> Rofé claims that the plague was averted in two distinct phases saying, "Thus the author of 1 Chronicles 21 distinguishes two phases in the cessation of the pestilence: the first is when the Lord repents and tells the angel to stay his hand; the second is after David performs the proper ritual, then the Lord tells the angel to put away his weapon" (322). See Alexander Rofé, "Writing, Interpolating and Editing: 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21 as a Case Study," in *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel: Perspectives on Editing in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Judaism* Vol. 3 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014): 317-26.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. Williamson, *1 Chronicles*, 147; Selman, *1 Chronicles*, 209-10; Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*, 89-90. It is also notable that the cherubim angel in the Adam and Eve narrative in Genesis does not have a sword drawn in the same way. After the Lord God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden as a result of their disobedience of his command the angel has "a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life" (Gen. 2:17; 3:24). This angel will be discussed at the end of the narrative.

<sup>172</sup> See fn. 131. Hahn also notes that, "In addition to prophesying a king for Israel, Balaam refers to the very covenant promise that David is guilty of forgetting in 1 Chr. 21 - 'Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number the fourth part of Israel?'" (Num. 23:10).

<sup>173</sup> Johnstone, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 233. Cf. Williamson, *1 Chronicles*, 147. Johnstone also claims that the Chr portrays David as "the new Joshua (cf. 1 Chr. 12:15)." But this hardly seems to be an emphasis of the Chr. First, the biblical reference he uses does not refer to David crossing the Jordan but to David's followers (1 Chr. 12:15). Second, Joshua receives the fulfillment of the promise of Abraham when he is permitted to enter into the promised land (Gen. 12:1-2; Josh. 6ff). God makes a covenant with David after he tells him that he will not be permitted to build the Lord a house (1 Chr. 17; 2 Chr. 13:5; 21:7). Therefore, Solomon receives the fulfillment of the promise of

21:16a). Second, both men see an angel “standing” before them “with his drawn sword in his hand” (Josh. 5:13; 1 Chr. 21:16a). Third, both characters react by “falling on their faces” (Josh. 5:14; 1 Chr. 21:16b). Finally, there is also the reference to the special sanctity of each location (Josh. 5:15; 1 Chr. 22:1).

What are the Chr’s purposes for including these striking similarities and literary allusions (Num. 22:21-35; Josh. 5:13-15; 1 Chr. 21-22:1)? The Chr is communicating that the God of Israel requires total allegiance to him. If Israel and its leaders are faithful to God’s command, then God and his divine intermediaries are their allies as implied in Josh. 5:13-15. If they are not faithful to God’s command, then God and his angels become their enemies as seen elsewhere (Num. 22:21-35; 1 Chr. 21:7,14,16).

Then David’s humility and repentance are highlighted more in the narrative of Chronicles than Samuel. This is clearly seen in the description of David’s speech and his actions after he sees the killer angel with his lethal weapon threatening all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. First, David and the elders clothe themselves in sackcloth and fall on their faces (v.16b; v. omitted from MT 2 Sam. 24:16-17). This is a clear description of repentance since sackcloth was often worn to humble oneself before God.<sup>174</sup>

Second, David intercedes for Israel before God in the strongest possible language. He says, “Did I not say to count the people, I have sinned, and I have certainly done evil. But these sheep, what did they do to the Lord my God? Please may your hand be against the house of my fathers and may the plague be not against your people.” Noticeably, David speaks in the first

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David by being permitted to build the Temple (1 Chr. 22; 28; 2 Chr. 7). It is more accurate to say that David is the new Moses and Solomon is the new Joshua according to the literary allusions and depictions made by the Chr.

<sup>174</sup> BDB, 974. Also, Hahn describes repentance as implying “a genuine sorrow and turning away from sinful actions...Often this “turning” was expressed through penitential actions—fasting, lamenting, tearing of garments, wearing sackcloth and ashes, and openly confessing guilt” (*Catholic Bible Dictionary*, 763).

person five times which emphasizes his personal responsibility and guilt. Having exonerated his people (including Joab), David requests that God's anger be solely upon him and his family. Also, only David's voice is heard among the group of elders participating in the act of repentance which underscores his intercessory role as mediator between God and Israel despite the tremendous risk his request imposed upon himself and his royal line.<sup>175</sup> After witnessing the damage that he has done, David is ready to lay down his life for his sheep.

Thus, David's humility and repentance are accentuated in this narrative in Chronicles. David's words and actions are at the very center and heart of the message of the Chr and his *Vorlage* of Samuel, which, as demonstrated above, was closer to 4QSam<sup>a</sup> than to MT. Ristau interprets this to mean that the Chr is communicating "the importance of the unity of the community and the centrality of Jerusalem for that community."<sup>176</sup> While this is certainly one aspect of the message, it is not the main substance of it. Instead, the Chr is highlighting the necessity of prayer and repentance to the post-exilic community modeled by David. It is only due to David's penitential action and humble response to God that God outlines how he can avert the plague in the ensuing narrative.

Next, the angel of the Lord communicates to Gad what to prophesy to David in order to avert the plague. He says to Gad to tell David that he should go up and build an altar to the Lord at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (v.18). This highlights that the Chr has a greater role for divine intermediaries than his *Vorlage* (2 Sam. 24:16-17; compared with 1 Chr. 21: 12, 15-16, 18, 20, 27, 30).<sup>177</sup> It also stresses that Gad was following the Lord's command rather than

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<sup>175</sup> Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*, 92-93. Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 178.

<sup>176</sup> Ristau, "Breaking Down Unity," 220.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. Evans, "Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21." He summarizes his point that "unlike in Ch's *Vorlage*, the angel is clearly distinguished from Yahweh himself. Also, by having the angel communicate Yahweh's word to Gad, Ch has given the angel the role of revelator. This belief in intermediaries is also manifest in Ch's introduction of אש in place of Yahweh as the inciter of David" (556-57). Overall, I find Evans's argument cogent and compelling.



his own devices (2 Sam. 24:18). Also, the angel and the prophet Gad once threatened David with punishment (vv. 13, 15-16), but now they relay God's merciful plan. David displays his unquestioning obedience by immediately going up "at the word of Gad which was spoken in the name of the Lord" (v.19).

Here the reader encounters a scene change and becomes acquainted with a new character and a new setting. Here, readers learn more about Ornan, an obscure character that was only mentioned before in passing (v.15). It is as if the narrator's perspective and focus suddenly zooms in, giving Ornan and his threshing floor pride of place.

Ornan is depicted as a fearless man. The narrator describes him saying, "When Ornan turned and saw the angel, his four sons with him hid themselves. Meanwhile, Ornan continued to thresh wheat" (v. 20). While all of Jerusalem is terrified of the killer angel and his lethal weapon – including Ornan's four sons, Ornan sees it and then continues threshing wheat. Moreover, instead of falling prostrate at the sight of the angel as David does, Ornan falls prostrate at the sight of David (v.21, cf. v.16). In this manner, Ornan shows great deference and respect to David throughout their dialogue.

Whereas Samuel has Ornan (Araunah) begin the conversation, the Chr has David begin it. He says, "Give me the place of the threshing floor and I will build there an altar to the Lord. For the full price, give it to me that the plague might be stopped from all the people" (v.22). While the substance of the discourse is largely the same, the Chr adds important words and phrases to his sources. First, David mentions his desire to purchase "the place" (מְקוֹם) twice (vv. 22,25). It is likely the Chr included this loaded term on purpose for his audience. Indeed, references to "the place" occur in Jacob's dream of angels ascending and descending on a ladder (Gen. 28:10-22). The narrative concludes with Jacob exclaiming, "How awesome is this place

(מְקוֹם!) This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven” (Gen. 28:17).

This important word is also used seven times when the Lord declares to Israel that he will choose a specific place in the promised land and make his name dwell there (Deut. 12:1-28; esp. 5, 11, 13-14, 18, 21, 26).

Furthermore, David desires to purchase the threshing floor “for full price” (cf. 2 Sam. 24:21). The only other verse that this particular phrase occurs is in the narrative regarding Abraham’s acquisition of Sarah’s burial site at the cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23:1-20; esp. v.9). Hahn stresses,

The cave was the only property in the promised land that was purchased by the patriarchs: all the rest was gained through military conquest. The hereditary burial grounds where Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their respective wives were laid to rest ([Gen.] 25:9; 49:29-32; 50:13), the cave was a kind of ‘firstfruit... of the land of promise.’”<sup>178</sup>

Therefore, the Chr extends his Abrahamic typology. Not only is the temple site built on Mt. Moriah, the location of the *ʿaqedah* (2 Chr. 3:1), now David is acting like Abraham by negotiating and purchasing the land for the temple site. It is easy to see the theological implications of this for David’s legacy: David acquires the threshing floor of Ornan which was the firstfruits of the temple, and he also will receive the firstfruits of the Lord’s mercy offered at the temple site (cf. 1 Chr. 21:26; 2 Chr. 7:12-16).

One could even argue that the Chr employs Adamic typology here as well. Hahn observes that there are extrabiblical legends which identifies the Cave of Machpelah as the place

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<sup>178</sup> Hahn, “*The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*,” 94. At the end of the quotation he references H.G.M. Williamson, “The Temple in the Books of Chronicles,” in *Templum Amicitiae: Essays on the Second Temple Presented to Ernst Bammel*, William Horbury, ed. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 22. Unfortunately, Hahn fails to recognize that Jacob also purchased a share in the promised land without resorting to military conquest (Gen. 33:19).

of Adam and Eve's burial. He avers that it is likely that "Chronicles conceives of the temple as a new creation or, better, as the goal of God's original creation."<sup>179</sup>

Then Ornan impressively responds, "Take it for yourself, and let my lord the king do what is good in his eyes. See, I give the cattle to sacrifice the threshing sledges for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; all I give to you." But David's response is equally impressive. He says, "No, I will certainly purchase it for the full price because I will not offer that which is yours to the Lord, sacrifices which cost me nothing." Now David is modeling the correct attitude of repentance and sacrifice. God not only deserves Israel's total allegiance; God also deserves Israel's best (cf. Gen. 4:4). Then David purchases the threshing floor of Ornan for six hundred gold shekels by weight. This is a much steeper amount than reported in Samuel: fifty silver shekels versus six hundred gold shekels. How does the reader reconcile these differences? Rabbinic tradition in the Talmud states,

R. Eleazar b. Shammua says, 'One verse of Scripture states, "So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight" (1 Chr. 21:25), while another verse of Scripture states, "So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver" (2 Sam. 24:24). And how are these to be reconciled? He collected fifty from each tribe, six hundred in all.'

*Raba cited for his son and contrasted these verses of Scripture with one another: "So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight" (1 Chr. 21:25). 'So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver' (2 Sam. 24:24). And how are these to be reconciled? He collected fifty from each tribe, six hundred in all." Still, they contradict one another, for there it was silver and here gold! Say: he collected silver to the value of six hundred shekels of gold.*<sup>180</sup>

Whatever the case may be, it seems that the Chr has David collecting fifty shekels from each tribe so that all Israel has a share in the altar and in the site of the future temple.

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid. Hahn references G.K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 69 fn. 90; 99 fn. 36; 100 fn. 39; & 108 fn. 60. Beale documents the claim that "David was created at the site of the later temple, which was also at Eden or was apparently close to it (as the latter text would imply)" (67). See Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Genesis 2:7; 3:23; *Midrash Rabbah Genesis* 14:8 et al.

<sup>180</sup> Talmud Bavli, tractate Zeb. 116b. See Neusner, ed. *The Jerusalem Talmud*.

Finally, David offers up an offering to the Lord God that “cost him something.” This is an act of direct obedience to the Lord’s command as relayed by the divine intermediary and the prophet (v. 18). Here David is seen, once again, as a priest offering up burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord (v.26; 1 Chr. 16:1-2). This scene also draws the reader in with allusions to other significant events in Israel’s history. First, David calls upon the name of the Lord in the same way as Moses and Aaron during Aaron’s inauguration to the priesthood in the tabernacle (Lev. 9:22-24). Second, the Lord sends fire down from heaven and consumes the offering just as he did for Moses, Aaron, and Elijah (Lev. 9:24; 1 Kgs. 18:24, 37-38). This divine reaction of God is not included in the Chr’s sources, and it communicates to the reader a very emphatic message; just like other pivotal leaders before him and after him, David’s offering was acceptable to the Lord. This scene functions in a similar manner as the faces of the Roman deity, Janus. It looks backwards, tying David’s actions to biblical heroes of the past, and it looks forwards creating a link between David’s actions and Solomon’s consecration of the temple where the same divine response is given (cf. 2 Chr. 7:1).

Now the narrative is almost complete. The narrator communicates the two final actions of this section. “The Lord spoke to the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath” (v.27). Here the angel’s action makes good sense. In light of David’s repentance, obedience, and sacrifice, the Lord commands the plague to cease. The parallels in the Chr’s narrative in this section are obvious: angel-death; sword-plague (vv.15,27). Now, the plague has been averted.

If one is to understand the first verse in this section of the narrative proleptically (v.15), then there are not any major contradictions in the narrative as this section draws to a close (v.27). First, the angel of the Lord stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (v.15b). Second, David is terrified when he sees it, is repentant, and intercedes for his people (vv.16-17). Third,

David is commanded to build an altar to the Lord at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (v.18). Fourth, David meets Ornan and negotiates the purchase of the threshing floor (vv.19-24). Fifth, David purchases it and offers an acceptable offering unto the Lord (vv.25-26a). Sixth, God sees it and is pleased (v.26b). Seventh, the angel is obedient unto the Lord and sheathes his sword, signifying that the plague has been averted (v.27).

#### **Section Four: 1 Chr. 21:28-22:1**

There is widespread disagreement regarding what to do with this section of the narrative. Japhet summarizes the issue, “There is no doubt that vv.28-30 constitute a self-contained passage which can be interpreted in one of two ways: as a parenthetical element in the Chronistic composition itself (Curtis, 254; Rudolph, 148; Williamson, 150-1), or as a later interpolation.”<sup>181</sup> Both camps are well-represented. Williamson, Selman, Japhet – among others,<sup>182</sup> understand this section as supplementary by the original Chr. Other scholars like Knoppers are not convinced that it is the Chr’s original work.<sup>183</sup> After observing these two possibilities, it is most convincing that the language, style, structure, and theological views found therein all stem from the hand of the Chr. Therefore, like Boda, this section can be viewed as a “postscript” as well as an introduction to the Chr’s narrative about the preparation for the temple.<sup>184</sup> Ultimately, this section seeks to validate the temple site of David and answer the perceived theological problem, was the temple site determined by divine choice or by David’s human limitation and fear?

The Chr is trying to explain why David was offering sacrifices unto the Lord away from the designated altar of burnt offering at the high place at Gibeon (vv.28-29). The Chr first

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<sup>181</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 388-89.

<sup>182</sup> Williamson, *I Chronicles*, 150-51; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 389-90; Selman, *I Chronicles*, 210.

<sup>183</sup> See summary Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29*, 759-60.

<sup>184</sup> Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 178.

explains that David saw that the Lord answers him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, so he sacrifices there (vv.26,28), even though the tabernacle of the Lord was in Gibeon (v.29).

Second, the Chr attributes David's choice to sacrifice at the threshing floor of Ornan, rather than at the tabernacle of the Lord, to his terror of the killer angel's lethal weapon (vv.16, 29).

Investigating the motif of "the angel with the drawn sword" and arguing on the basis of textual analysis, Dion says,

[The Chronicler] does not pick up his tools *ex nihilo*, he picks up on a particular detail of his *Vorlage*, the angel's drawn sword, and enlarges it as much as he can (vv.12,20?,27), so as to turn it into a credible excuse for David's hastiness in offering sacrifice away from the traditional altar.<sup>185</sup>

Following Ulrich's arguments, Dion believes there is no doubt that the Chr relied on some manuscript version of Samuel. However, as it was previously explained, in no other textual witness is the angel with the drawn sword given such importance, not in 4QSam<sup>a</sup> or in LXX.

This leads Dion to conclude,

The Chronicler's version of the census narrative thus remains a first-class example of his manipulation of ancient tradition, even more than his dependence on it. After 4QSam<sup>a</sup> as well as before its discovery, the Chronicler's innovations retain all their magnitude, which a purely text-critical approach should not be allowed to obfuscate.<sup>186</sup>

Even if one proceeds with more caution than Dion, given the limited and fragmented textual evidence of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>,<sup>187</sup> it is important to observe how the Chr employs "the angel with the drawn sword" in his narrative in order to understand the Chr's narrative purposes.

Overall, the Chr is communicating to his audience that David's sacrifice was necessarily made at the threshing floor of Ornan due to the sequence of events in the illicit census narrative. Clearly, the angel is not still threatening David with a drawn sword since the Lord already commanded the angel to put it in its sheath (vv.27, 30). Is David threatened by the memory of

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<sup>185</sup> Dion, "The Angel with the Drawn Sword," 117.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Evans, "Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21," 552-53.

the angel's sword? It is not entirely clear if the Chr is giving a defense of David's decision to offer sacrifices at the threshing floor of Ornan instead of at the altar in Gibeon during the census event or after it. It seems most reasonable to assume that in verses 29-30 the Chr is primarily concerned with David's choice to offer sacrifices at the threshing floor in Jerusalem instead of at the high place of Gibeon, *during* the census event. Yet this does not mean that David entirely rejected offering sacrifices at Gibeon either. As Klein argues,

[T]he Chronicler does not preclude that David might have worshiped [at Gibeon] after this crisis was over, and Solomon did make a pilgrimage to this very sanctuary and offered a thousand burnt offerings on its altar (2 Chr 1:3–6). In the meantime, the Chronicler implies that David continued to sacrifice at the threshing floor of Ornan.<sup>188</sup>

Thus, these verses are pro-Jerusalem and pro-David. David is not being punished as Adam was when he was expelled from the garden, debarred by the angel, and made unable to return (contra Johnstone; Gen. 3:24).<sup>189</sup> Instead, David's enduring legacy is as a repentant sinner who received divine favor and grace. His sacrifice was found acceptable to the Lord, and he was able to declare, "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel" (1 Chr. 22:1). So Hahn is correct when he says,

The Chronicler is signaling that at the threshing floor of Ornan we have reached a decisive transition point in Israel's worship and in salvation history... Making a pointed contrast between Moses's tabernacle and its altar of burnt offering for Israel, David clearly has in view the single central sanctuary promised in Deut. 12.<sup>190</sup>

For the Chr, the temple supersedes the tabernacle and Jerusalem takes precedent over Gibeon.

Overall, the Chr employs many important literary allusions to important stories in Israel's history. For example, he alludes or refers to Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac in the *'aqedah* (Gen. 22; 1 Chr. 21:15; 2 Chr. 3:1), Abraham's purchase of the Cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23:9; 1

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<sup>188</sup> Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 429.

<sup>189</sup> Johnstone, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 237.

<sup>190</sup> Hahn, "The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire," 95.

Chr. 21:24), Jacob's dream about the ladder (Gen. 28:16-17; 1 Chr. 21:22,25), Moses and Aaron's acceptable sacrifice to the Lord (Lev. 9:22-24; 1 Chr. 21:26), the Lord's proclamation that he will choose a specific place in the promised land and make his name dwell there (Deut. 12:5-26; 1 Chr. 21:22, 25), and to Joshua's vision of the commander of the Lord's army before he successfully conquered the promised land (Josh. 5:13-16). Clearly, David is now seen to be among a distinguished list of national heroes.<sup>191</sup> This leaves the question, what is David's enduring legacy as a result of the Chr's inclusion of the illicit census narrative?

### **Preliminary Conclusion: David is the Model Repentant Sinner**

The only two times in the Chr's narrative that David is depicted as a sinner breaking a commandment of the Lord, he is portrayed as repenting and receiving a divine blessing on behalf of all Israel.<sup>192</sup> First, David sins in failing to properly transport the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem (1 Chr. 13). Second, David sins in failing to properly conduct a census (1 Chr. 21).

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<sup>191</sup> Yairah Amit, "Araunah's Threshing Floor: A Lesson in Shaping Historical Memory," in *What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?* Ed. by Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana Edelman (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 140-41.

<sup>192</sup> Here I agree with Boda's assessment that the Chr describes David's failures twice. See Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 179. I disagree with Ristau's analysis, which asserts that the Chr explicitly portrays David's failure three times. He says, "Although often overlooked or downplayed by scholars, David's reign is marred by *three* explicit failures: his first attempt to transport the ark to Jerusalem (1 Chron. 13), his unacceptability as temple builder (1 Chron. 17:1-25; 22:7-10), and his sin in the census narrative (1 Chron. 21)." See "Breaking Down Unity," 213. It seems that Ristau is using the term "failure" analogously instead of univocally. It is important to note that David was not barred from constructing the Temple due to any failure to uphold Mosaic Law. Rather, the Chr communicates that David was not chosen since he had "shed much blood and waged great wars" (1 Chr. 22:8). Therefore, David is portrayed as a faithful servant to the Lord's command (1 Chr. 17:11-12, 18, 23-27) an obedient father who raises his son to keep the Law (22:13), and a righteous king who instructs his people to do the same (28:8-10). Berman explains that David was not disqualified to build the Temple due to the failure of sin. He argues, "Nowhere in the Bible is David criticized for any of the wars that he waged. His wars were just, fought on behalf of God and in defense of the Jewish people. Rather, the passage needs to be seen as a comment on the spiritual ramifications of killing another human being... even when justified - [it] leaves an individual spiritually tainted. It is in this vein that the Torah declares, concerning the construction of the altar (Ex. 20:22) ... a sword as an instrument of death, is antithetical to the spiritual perfection symbolized by the altar. The construction of the Temple can take place only when the spiritual standing of the Jewish people is on the highest plane. David's wars were just and necessary, but in an age of warfare, the Jewish people cannot attain the high spiritual standing necessary for the Temple's construction." Joshua Berman, *The Temple: Its Symbolism and Meaning Then and Now* (Northvale: Aronson, 1995), 73-75.



There are remarkable parallels between each narrative and their related sources.<sup>193</sup> First, David neglects an objective command of the Lord while performing sacred duties in transporting the ark (Ex. 25:14-15; Deut. 10:8; 1 Chr. 13:7) and taking a census (Ex. 30: 12-16; 1 Chr. 21:1-6). Second, the “anger of the Lord was kindled” against Uzzah for touching the ark (1 Chr. 13:9-10), just as it was kindled against Israel (2 Sam. 24:1; cf. 1 Chr. 21:1). Third, the Lord strikes Uzzah and he dies (1 Chr. 13:10), just as the Lord struck Israel and seventy thousand men die (1 Chr. 21:7,14). Fourth, David is distressed when he sees that Uzzah and the seventy thousand men in Israel are punished by death (1 Chr. 13:11; 21:14,17). Fifth, after seeing the Lord’s punishment, David is afraid of God (1 Chr. 13:13; 1 Chr. 21:16, 30). Sixth, the Chr describes how David changes course and becomes strictly obedient to God (1 Chr. 15:2, 12-15; 1 Chr. 21: 19-26). Finally, each instance of David’s failure and sin results in divine blessing (1 Chr. 16; 1 Chr. 22:1). Now it is clear that each narrative describes David’s preparation for Jerusalem as the central place of worship for Israel (Deut. 12). The result is fascinating, “For the Chronicler, even David’s failure turns to gold.”<sup>194</sup>

Many scholars have noted the Chr’s special portrayal of David as a model repentant sinner before.<sup>195</sup> However, Knoppers was the first to really emphasize this point. He convincingly argues,

The image of David as the model of a repentant sinner is a constituent element in the Chronicler's depiction of David. The David of the census story is a person of confession and supplication *par excellence*, a human sinner who repents, seeks forgiveness, intercedes on behalf of his people, and ultimately secures the site of the future temple.

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<sup>193</sup> See Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 178-179; Bailey, “David and God in 1 Chronicles 21,” in *Chronicler as Author*, 358-359.

<sup>194</sup> Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 173.

<sup>195</sup> Hahn, “*The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*,” 93; Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 408; Philippe Abadie, “From the Impious Manasseh (2 Kings 21) to the Convert Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33): Theological Rewriting by the Chronicler” in *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, ed. by M. Patrick Graham, Steven L. McKenzie, and Gary N. Knoppers (London & New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 99.

Precisely because David is a pivotal figure in the Chronicler's History of Israel, David's repentance and intercession are paradigmatic.<sup>196</sup>

Indeed, the reason that the disaster of the plague was averted was due to David's prayer, repentance, obedience, and sacrifice.

Clearly, David is depicted by the Chr as Israel's cult leader and founder of liturgical worship (1 Chr. 21-22:1; 23-26; 28:19; 2 Chr. 8:14; 29:25-30; 35:15). No one argues that. Likewise, as argued above, it is clear that the Chr portrays David as a model repentant sinner. If his relationship with God can be restored through repentance and atonement made through sacrifice, so can Israel's relationship. This was a poignant message for the Chr's post-exilic audience who were experiencing the effects of the trauma of their post-exilic state. Thus, the illicit census narrative was included for the two-fold purpose of portraying David as a model repentant sinner and as validating the temple site.

It is worth considering, if one of the Chr's main purposes of including the illicit census narrative was to highlight David as the model of repentance, why did the Chr choose not to include the Bathsheba narrative? Clearly, David is a model of repentance there as well (2 Sam. 12:13).<sup>197</sup> One explanation is that the Chr avoids many details related to the private lives of kings.<sup>198</sup> However, this explanation has a major weakness: David's private life blends together

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<sup>196</sup> Knoppers, "Images of David in Early Judaism," 469.

<sup>197</sup> According to the authority of the *Talmud Bavli* Moed Qatan 16b David is seen as the model of repentance. "Said R. Samuel bar Nahman said R. Jonathan, "What is the meaning of the verse of Scripture, 'The saying of David, son of Jesse, and the saying of the man raised on high' (2Sa. 23:1)? "It means, 'The saying of David, son of Jesse, the man who raised up the yoke of repentance, as through his actions he taught the power of repentance.'" See Jacob Neusner, ed. *The Jerusalem Talmud*.

<sup>198</sup> Knoppers credits Japhet and Steussy for highlighting "the Chronicler's reluctance to relate the private affairs of the public figures within his history" (Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29*, 740). Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles* and Marti J. Steussy, *David: Biblical Portraits of Power* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 97-128. Steussy says, "One might say that [Chronicles] offers us a public David – representative of the nation, a leader against whom no one even thinks about rebelling – whereas Samuel concentrates on David as a human individual involved in particular personal relationships with their attendant mixed motives and complications" (108).

with his public life in the Bathsheba affair. After all, he uses his authority as king to have Uriah killed in battle.

Knoppers offers a different solution. He argues that there is more to the Chr's purposes and narrative design than avoiding the details of David's private life. He says, "In the Chronicler's construction of history, David's success and Israel's success are intimately related.<sup>199</sup> Therefore, the narrative theme of David's success leaves no room for the Bathsheba account.

As far as the illicit census narrative is concerned, Knoppers also believes the Chr included it to accomplish many other important literary functions. Besides portraying David as the model repentant sinner, the illicit census narrative serves as a transition between David and Solomon's reign, and it also signals the fulfillment of God's promises to David given in the oracle of Nathan (1 Chr. 17:11-14; 21-29).<sup>200</sup> In this way, David and Solomon's reign become Israel's normative era and any material that challenges the idealized portrait of the United Monarchy period is thrown out.

Knoppers' evaluation is extremely beneficial and, in many ways, accurate. He strongly emphasizes the importance of David's military and political success in order to unite Israel and allow God's promises to come to fruition. But the Chr's editing purposes and narrative design include one more very important factor. The Chr is very careful only to include narratives recounting David's sin and repentance which have a liturgical aspect to them (cf. 1 Chr. 13 & 21). This is especially the case with David's illicit census narrative where the Chr wishes to

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 741.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

impress upon his audience the connection between prayer, repentance, and sacrifice with the temple and its altar.

### Summary

1. The Chr seemed to be uncomfortable with the theological implications of his source, so he decided to replace “the anger of the Lord” with “satan.” Satan is best understood as an adversary much like the angel of the Lord in Num. 22:21-35 who carries out the Lord’s anger.
2. David sins in taking the census subjectively and objectively (Gen. 15:5; Ex. 30:12-16; 1 Chr. 27:23; contra Gideon’s attitude Judg. 7-8). He says so himself (1 Chr. 21: 8,17).
3. The description of David’s sin is even amplified and made worse in Chronicles. Joab questions David’s command asking, “Why will there be guilt upon Israel” (v.3)? Then Joab takes an incomplete census because “the word of the king was repulsive” (v.6).
4. Verse 7 does “double duty” acting both proleptically and as a motive for David’s repentance (v.8). Therefore, there are not two plagues.
5. The Chr. adds the detail of the punishment being “a pestilence in the land” by “a destroying angel of the Lord” in all Israel (v. 12).
6. David stresses trust in the Lord’s mercy as evidenced by the chiasmic structure of his response (v. 13).
7. Verse 15a also acts proleptically and as a summary of the ensuing narrative.
8. Reconstructions of 4QSam<sup>a</sup> are remarkably similar to 1 Chr. 21:15-16. The Chr drew on a text of Samuel closer to 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and the Septuagint than to the Masoretic Text of Samuel, but on a text of Kings closer to the Masoretic Text of Kings. Therefore, one should heed the warning not to attribute a specific tendentious worldview to the Chr wherever his account diverges from his sources.
9. When David sees the angel with a drawn sword, he immediately leads a group of elders in a penitential act putting on sackcloth and falling on their faces (v.16).
10. Verses 15-16 display several allusions to important stories throughout Israel’s history including narratives of Abraham and Isaac - in the *ʿaqedah* (Gen. 22; 2 Chr. 3:1), Balaam, his donkey, and the angel (Num. 22:21-40) and Joshua’s vision (Josh. 5:13-15). The angel functions similarly in each narrative as a divine intermediary with total allegiance to God.
11. David intercedes for his people and is willing to lay down his life for his sheep (v.17).
12. There is a greater role given to divine intermediaries in the MT of Chronicles than in the MT of Samuel.
13. David is told to build an altar to the Lord at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (v.18) and his obedience to the command spoken in the name of the Lord is unquestioning (v.19).
14. David asks Ornan to give him “the place” (מְקוֹם). This is a loaded term used on purpose in anticipation of what the sacred place would become (22:1; cf. Gen. 28:17; Deut. 12).
15. David also asks Ornan if he can purchase the threshing floor for “full price” (v. 22, 25). This is an allusion to Abraham’s purchase of the Cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23:9). Theologically speaking, just as Abraham received the firstfruits of the promised land by purchasing the cave, David received the firstfruits of the temple and the Lord’s mercy

offered at the temple by acquiring the threshing floor of Ornan and offering acceptable sacrifices there (1 Chr. 21:24-27; cf. 2 Chr. 7:12-16).

16. David refuses to offer sacrifices to the Lord that cost him nothing and purchases the threshing floor for six hundred gold shekels (v.25). Now all the twelve tribes of Israel will have a share in the altar at the temple site.
17. In obedience to the Lord's command (v.18), David offers a sacrifice to the Lord that costs him something (vv.25-26) and the Lord answers him with fire from heaven upon the altar. There is a clear allusion here to Moses and Aaron's acceptable sacrifice (Lev. 9:22-24) and Solomon's acceptable sacrifice at the dedication of the temple (2 Chr. 7:1).
18. Verse 27 is evidence that verse 15 is proleptic. If not, then the destroying angel is disobedient to the Lord's command and the Lord's instructions for David to build an altar at Ornan's threshing floor in order to avert the plague do not make sense.
19. Verses 21:28-22:1 act parenthetically and as a postscript. These verses are an attempt to explain the apparent theological problem regarding why David did not go to the tabernacle of the Lord that Moses made in the desert and to the altar of burnt offerings at the high place at Gibeon (v.29). The Chr asserts that he did not go primarily because he was terrified of the threatening angel *during* the census event (vv. 16,30).
20. The Lord accepted David's sacrifice with fire (v.26), allowing David to proclaim, "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel" (22:1).
21. God's acceptance of David and his offerings sum up the Chr's two-fold purpose for including the illicit census narrative: the Chr portrays David as the model repentant sinner and validates the temple site.
22. The Bathsheba narrative was not included since the Chr was careful to focus on David's successes and to include only the narratives recounting David's sins and repentance that have a liturgical aspect to them (1 Chr.13 & 21).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *The Lord's Second Appearance to Solomon According to 1 Kings 9:1-9*

#### **Introduction**

Even though it has been clearly demonstrated that David is portrayed as the model of a repentant sinner in the illicit census narrative, it is necessary to explore any further intertextual evidence of this motif in order to assess the portrayal of the Chr's overall legacy of David. Thus, it is important to assess one of the most explicit instances where David is held up as a model and exemplar.<sup>201</sup> Thus, a comparison of the second appearance of the Lord to Solomon found in 1 Kgs. 9 and 2 Chr. 7 is in order. Again, it is necessary to analyze each narrative in its given context. By doing this exercise, it will help highlight the similarities and differences between them. Ultimately analyzing the Lord's second appearance to Solomon in 1 Kgs. 9 will assist in discovering any unique innovations by the Chr regarding David's enduring legacy in light of the illicit census narrative.

#### **Narrative Background of 1 Kings**

After the plague has been averted by David at Araunah's threshing floor (2 Sam. 24:25), the narrative picks up in Kings with the struggle for the succession to the throne (1 Kgs. 1). While David was on his deathbed being cared for by Abishag the Shunammite, his fourth son Adonijah had exalted himself saying, "I will be king" (v.5). Nathan hears about this and asks Bathsheba, "Have you not heard that Adonijah... has become king and David our lord does not know it" (v.11)? Bathsheba consults David and expresses her concern that Adonijah has made

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<sup>201</sup> Cf. differences between 1 Kgs. 3:3,14 and 9:4. Whereas the former only mentions that David kept the commands of the Lord and walked in his ways – in a general sense, the latter gives a detailed description *how* David walked.

himself king, inviting all the sons of the king, except her son Solomon (vv.19-21). Nathan expresses the same concern adding that he too was not invited (vv.22-27). This news causes David to spring into action. He has Solomon ride on his mule, and he instructs Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet to anoint Solomon with oil (vv.39,45). Then all the people shout, “Long live King Solomon” (vv.38-40)! Subsequently, Adonijah tries to return to the good graces of King Solomon (vv. 49-53).

David counsels Solomon to “walk in the ways of the Lord” (1 Kgs. 2:3-4). David passes on the same promise he was given by God, “If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and will all their soul, there shall not fail a man on the throne of Israel” (1 Kgs. 2:4b). Then David dies after reigning over Israel for forty years; reigning in Hebron seven years and in Jerusalem thirty-three years (vv.10-11). This incites Adonijah to begin scheming.

David’s fourth son Adonijah still thought that he was the true successor, even after David had Solomon anointed and appointed king. So, he asks Bathsheba to make a request to Solomon on his behalf, surmising that King Solomon would not be able to refuse her (vv. 13-18). Bathsheba agrees, but Solomon sees right through the request (vv.19-22). Solomon takes the request as a threat, and he commands that Adonijah be put to death. So Adonijah is killed by one of David’s mighty men, Benaiah (v. 25; cf. 2 Sam. 23:23). Then Solomon dismisses all those who showed loyalty to Adonijah, either by exile or by penalty of death. In Joab’s case, he pleads for Solomon’s mercy but the trust between them had already waned (1 Kgs. 1:7,19; 2:5,28). Solomon responds to his plea for pity by putting him to death at the hand of Benaiah (vv.28-36). Then Solomon’s reign is blessed.

Solomon is described as “loving the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father” (1 Kgs. 3:3). At Gibeon, the Lord God appeared to Solomon for the first time at night instructing him, “Ask what I shall give you” (v.5). Solomon responds, “You have shown great and merciful love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you...” (v.6, cf. v.14). This shows the high esteem that Solomon had for his father, David, and communicates David’s enduring legacy in the Kings narrative.

Solomon realizes the awesome responsibility of being the leader of such a great multitude of people that “cannot be numbered or counted” (v.8; cf. Gen. 15:5). Ultimately, Solomon prays for wisdom to govern the people rightly and discern between good and evil (v.9). God is impressed with his unselfish request and grants him his heart’s desire along with the added blessings of riches and honor (vv.10-14). Then, Solomon displays the wisdom of his judgment in the famous court case between the two harlots (vv.16-28).

Solomon’s kingdom is blessed and established. He makes Benaiah the commander of his armies (1 Kgs. 4:4), Zadok and Abiathar his priests (v. 4), Ahishar the “prime minister” of his kingdom, and Adoniram in charge of the forced labor, along with other important administrative decisions (vv.6-19). It is again reported that Solomon is receiving the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham since “Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea” (v.20; cf. Gen. 22:17; 32:12; 41:49). The fame of Solomon’s wisdom was rapidly spreading to “all the nations round about” (v.31). Indeed, he is even credited for writing three thousand proverbs, one thousand and five songs, and he demonstrated a grasp of the natural sciences. Solomon was a marvel; men came from all over the world just to hear him speak (vv.32-34).



Hiram, king of Tyre and Solomon made a treaty together to join forces and create a crew of forced laborers who would begin the preparations for the temple (1 Kgs. 5:1-18). Interestingly, it is here the reader discovers more details regarding why David was not chosen to construct the temple site. Solomon tells Hiram, “You know that David my father could not build a house for the name of the Lord his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him... But now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side...” (vv.3-5). Clearly, according to Solomon’s words, David was not barred from constructing the temple due to any disqualification from personal sin.

Then Solomon began to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign (1 Kgs. 6:1). He spares no expense as he overlaid the inside and outsides of God’s house with gold (vv.21-22). It took him a total of seven years to complete the temple’s construction (v.38). Next, Solomon began to build his own house along with other important buildings (1 Kgs. 7).

### **Immediate Narrative Background**

Finally, at the climax of the narratives of Samuel-Kings, Solomon dedicates the temple to the Lord (1 Kgs. 8). This was in fulfillment of God’s promise to David (2 Sam. 7:13-16). King Solomon assembles all the congregation of Israel in Jerusalem and instructs the priests to bring up the ark of the covenant to the inner sanctuary of the temple (1 Kgs. 8:1-8). Only Moses’s two tablets of stone remained in the ark at that time (v.8). Once this task was accomplished, “the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord” (vv.10-11).

Then King Solomon begins a speech to the assembly. First, he blesses all Israel and then he blesses the Lord God of Israel, in the presence of the people (v.14-15). His message to the people is simple: the Lord chose no other city for his house than Jerusalem; no other dynasty to

rule over Israel than his father David's royal line (v.16). Next, he proceeds to make a prayer of dedication of the temple in the presence of "all the assembly of Israel" (v.22). This is a long prayer that includes seven petitions (vv.31, 33, 35, 37, 41, 44, 46ff.). This prayer includes a direct reference to God's single central sanctuary promise when Solomon cries out, "O Lord my God... that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may listen to the prayer which your servant offers toward this place (vv.28-29, RSV; Deut. 12:11, *emphasis added*).

Solomon already identified the temple in Jerusalem as the single central sanctuary (v.16), now he proclaims the temple's crucial role in the atonement and forgiveness of sins for anyone who prays in its direction. Interestingly, he also includes a detailed prayer regarding plagues. Ultimately, if there is a famine in the land, then it can be averted if prayer is made toward the temple. He continues, "Whatever supplication is made... each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this house; then hear in heaven your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways" (vv.37-38). He concludes this section of prayer saying, "For you, you only, know the hearts of all the children of men (v.39). This prayer has many parallels with David's illicit census narrative (2 Sam. 24), but no mention of David is made in the prayer.

Solomon concludes his prayer of dedication by acting as a priest-king. First, he blesses his people (vv.54-61) and recognizes that the Lord has given Israel "rest" just as he had promised (v.56, Deut. 12:10,12). Second, he offers sacrifices upon the altar in epic proportions, offering to God twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep as peace offerings (vv.62-63)! Finally, he celebrated by hosting a feast for all Israel for seven days (vv.65-66).<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> It is noteworthy to recognize the repetition of the number seven throughout the narrative of the construction and dedication of the Temple. Bergsma and Pitre observe "The building of the Temple takes seven years; it is dedicated

### **Analysis of MT 1 Kgs. 9:1-9**

This section focuses upon 1 Kgs. 9:1-9 based on the Masoretic Text (MT) and will be analyzed in the following manner: 1) Translation of the text 2) Analysis of the form and structure 3) Verse-by-verse textual analysis 4) and Commentary.

### **Translation of MT 1 Kgs. 9:1-9**<sup>203</sup>

1. When Solomon finished building the house of the Lord, the king's palace, and all the things he desired to make,
2. The Lord appeared to Solomon a second time, as he appeared to him in Gibeon.
3. The Lord said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your supplication which you implored before me; I have consecrated this house which you built by putting my name there forever; my eyes and my heart will be there all time.
4. If you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing all that I have commanded you, keeping my statutes and my ordinances
5. Then I will establish your throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father saying, 'There shall not fail you a man upon the throne of Israel.'
6. But if you all turn aside from following after me, you or your sons, and you all do not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you all, but you all go and serve other gods and worship them,
7. Then I will cut off Israel from the face of the earth which I have given them; and the house which I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight; and Israel will become a proverb and an object of mockery among all peoples.
8. This house will be high, [=a heap of ruins; cf. discussion below]; everyone passing by it will be appalled, and hiss; and they will say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?'
9. Then they will say, 'Because they forsook the Lord their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and they kept hold of other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore, the Lord has brought all this evil upon them.'

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in the seventh month, in a festival of seven days, climaxed by a prayer of seven petitions. All these sevens recall the creation of the cosmos (Gen. 1): the Temple is a microcosm (micro-cosmos), and the cosmos is a macrotemple." Bergsma and Pitre, *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: The Old Testament*, 392.

<sup>203</sup> My translation based on *The Lexham Hebrew Bible* and the BHS. Works consulted include BDB and the Holy Bible (RSV-SCE), 1 Kgs. 9:1-9.

## **Form and Structure**

The form of this account is both narrative and divine speech, with the heavy emphasis on the latter. The characters of this pericope are the Lord, Solomon, Solomon's sons, David, Israel, other gods, all peoples of the earth, and Israel's fathers. The main characters are Solomon and the Lord. This passage can be divided into four parts: (1) 9:1-2, (2) 9:3, (3) 9:4-5, (4) 9:6-9. The plot is simple; after the narrator provides a summary of Solomon's accomplishments, he introduces the circumstances surrounding the Lord's second appearance to Solomon (vv.1-2; cf. 1 Kgs. 3:4-15). The Lord's divine speech is divided into three parts: a direct response to Solomon's prayer (v. 3), an address to Solomon (vv. 4-5), and an address to Solomon, his sons, and all Israel (vv. 6-9).<sup>204</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the Lord's second appearance to Solomon parallels his first appearance to him in many ways (1 Kgs. 3:4-15). However, there is one major difference between the two. The Lord's second appearance to Solomon abruptly changes its emphasis away from Solomon and he begins addressing a larger group (vv.6-9). Many scholars see this shift as evidence that these verses are "secondary in nature."<sup>205</sup> Thus, there is disagreement over whether or not this address is for the pre-exilic, exilic, or post-exilic community.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Cf. Jerome T. Walsh, *1 Kings*, ed. David W. Cotter and Chris Franke, BOSHNP (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 117.

<sup>205</sup> Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYBC 10 (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2008), 297.

<sup>206</sup> James Alan Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings*, ICC (New York: Scribner, 1951), 204. He asserts that these verses are generally assigned "to Exilic or post-Exilic composition. But Burney (with close study of the language, pp. 129–33) and Šanda argue for probable pre-Exilic dating; there is but a brief reference to exile, v. 7a; cf. Micah's prophecy of the destruction of the holy city, Mic. 3:12."

## Textual Analysis<sup>207</sup>

v.1, There is some discrepancy regarding when the Lord's second appearance to Solomon took place. As it stands, it is awkwardly placed since the Lord's revelation is reported as occurring as a response to Solomon's dedicatory prayers (v.3). Yet it is also reported as occurring after all of Solomon's building projects (vv.1-2; cf. temporal references in 1 Kgs. 6:38-7:1; 9:10,15-19).

v.3, "All time," stems from the temporal reference "all days" (כָּל־הַיָּמִים).

v.4, "If you will walk before me..." has the meaning of "if you serve me" (cf. 8:23). "As David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness...." Here David is set as a role model before Solomon (cf. language in Ps. 78:72; Job 1:1,8). Notice how David's sins are not included as counterexamples to his righteous behavior (1 Kgs. 15:5).

v.5, "There shall not fail you a man upon the throne of Israel." This verse is quoted from 1 Kgs. 2:4; 8:25 (cf. 2 Chr. 6:16; 7:18; Jer. 33:17-18; 35:19). "Upon the throne," (מֵעַל כִּסֵּא) is written as "to rule in" (מִיִּשֵׁב) in the LXX (ἡγοούμενος ἐν).

v.6, "But if *you all* turn aside from following after me, *you and your children*," (אָמַרְתִּי וַיִּבְרְכוּ) there is a sudden shift in the Lord's address from Solomon in the second person singular to Solomon and his children in the second person plural. Compare the difference in v.4.

"I set before you all," the verb used here (נָתַתִּי) usually means "to give" but in this context it is better translated as "set before you."

v.7, "I will cast," is written in the piel form (אֶשְׁלֵךְ). This differs from the word choice in 2 Chr. 7:20, in both root and in its hifil stem (אֶשְׁלִיךְ). However, there is little difference in meaning since both verb forms are active and communicate roughly the same idea.

"Proverb," (לְמִשְׁלָל) is rendered "destruction" (εἰς ἀφανισμόν) in the Septuagint from the Hebrew (לְשִׁמָּה). But there is other textual evidence that this phrase should be in reference to "a proverb and an object of mockery" (cf. Deut. 28:37; Jer. 24:9).

v.8, "*will be high [=a heap of ruins]*" MT עָלִיָּהּ literally means "high" as in the Lucianic LXX (ὕψηλός), Syriac, and Targum traditions (also cf. 2 Chr. 7:21). But this is "contextually

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<sup>207</sup> Works consulted include BHS and *the Lexham Hebrew Bible* as well as BDB and Strong's Dictionary. NETS and Brenton, *The Septuagint Version: Greek*, 3 Kingdoms 9:1-9. *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Septuagint. Biblia Sacra Juxta Vulgatam Clementinam*, Kgs. 9:1-9. William Whitaker, *Dictionary of Latin Forms*.

impossible”<sup>208</sup> and “problematic”<sup>209</sup> since it contradicts the negative thrust of the message. Gottlieb explains, “The process of textual transmission appears to have been attended by a number of changes to the text; cf. Cogan Kings, p. 269. The original text read, roughly, וְהָבִיתָ הַזֶּה (cf. Mic 3:12; Jer 26:18; Ps 79:1). לְעֵינַי became corrupted to עֲלֵיוֹן at a secondary but very early stage, and remains in this form in MT 1 Kgs. The text of Chronicles reflects both familiarity with the text of MT 1 Kgs and an effort to ameliorate the difficulty it poses by changing the verse to the past tense: אֶשְׂרַר הַיְהוָה עָלָיוֹן.”<sup>210</sup> Therefore, it seemed best to retain both meanings for the reader to grasp the original sense of the verse.

“Everyone passing by it will be appalled, and hiss,” is an expression used in many prophetic texts (Jer. 18:16; 19:8; 49:17; 50:13; Zeph. 2:15; Ezek. 27:36; Lam. 2:15; see also Deut. 29:23).<sup>211</sup>

### **Commentary: Section One vv. 1-2**

The Lord’s second appearance begins after the narrator’s summarizes all of Solomon’s construction projects including building the temple, his palace, and other various works. But did this narrative belong here? Upon closer observation, the Lord’s revelation to Solomon comes as a response to his dedicatory prayer thirteen years after the temple was constructed (cf. 1 Kgs. 6:37-7:1; 9:10, 15-19)!<sup>212</sup> A sequential contradiction can easily be detected. First, the narrator claims that all Solomon’s building projects were complete (v.1), yet more building projects occur shortly after the Lord’s appearance (vv.15-22). Second, God’s response to Solomon only includes mention of the temple that was completed thirteen years prior (vv. 3, 7-8). It appears

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<sup>208</sup> Cogan, *I Kings*, 296. He convincingly argues, “Reading ‘ywn for MT ‘lywn “will be high (‘elyōn),” which is contextually impossible. Second Chronicles 7:21 reads, “and this House that was high,” which is not much better; nor is “as for this high House” (cf. Luc). Targum “and this house that was high shall be a ruin” may preserve a double reading, hyh ‘lywn and yhyh l’ywn. For Heb ‘ywn/m, “ruin,” used in descriptions of destruction, cf. Mic 3:12 and Jer 26:18.”

<sup>209</sup> Leeor Gottlieb, *Targum Chronicles and Its Place Among the Late Targums*, SAS 16 (Boston: Brill, 2020), 120.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., fn. 15.

<sup>211</sup> Cogan, *I Kings*, 296.

<sup>212</sup> Walsh, *I Kings*, 116.

the narrator cleverly situated this narrative here in order to underscore Solomon's building accomplishments and to create a sense of closure.

The reader is informed that the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon (v.2). However, this statement does not necessarily mean that this revelation also occurred at Gibeon. It could have very well occurred in Jerusalem, the location of the temple. Then the Lord speaks to Solomon in a direct response to Solomon's prayer.

### **Section Two: vv.3**

The Lord says to Solomon, "I have heard your prayer and your supplication which you implored before me; I have consecrated this house which you built by putting my name there forever; my eyes and my heart will be there all time" (v.3). Unsurprisingly, the Lord's second appearance to Solomon has many important parallels with the first (1 Kgs. 3:4-15).<sup>213</sup> First, the Lord responds to Solomon's petitions favorably by granting him his desire. In the first revelation, he receives the gift of wisdom (3:9-12). In the second, he receives the promise that God will keep his "eyes" and "heart" on the temple (8:29-30, 52; 9:3). Second, God chooses to give the extra blessings to Solomon. In the first, he grants gifts of riches and honor to Solomon (3:13). In the second, God promises that not only will he be watchful of the temple at a distance, but he chooses to consecrate it and be present there for all time (9:3). Third, both highlight that God's blessings are conditional upon Solomon's obedience and both present David as the model of obedience (3:6; 9:4).

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<sup>213</sup> See overview in Walsh, *1 Kings*, 116-118.

### **Section Three: vv.4-5**

The Lord requires the same obedience from Solomon that he required from David (v.4). In fact, David is made to be the exemplar of obedience. God says to Solomon, “If you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness...” (v.4a). Here, in the protasis of the conditional statement, God names specific laudable qualities in David that are worthy of imitation (cf. Ps. 78:72).<sup>214</sup> The apodosis of the conditional clause explains the reward for Solomon’s obedience. God says, “Then I will establish your throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I spoke to David your father saying, ‘There shall not fail you a man upon the throne of Israel’” (v.5; cf. 1 Kgs. 2:4; 8:25; 2 Chr. 6:16; 7:18). God is now keeping the same promise that he made to David, with Solomon (vv. 4-5; 2 Sam. 7:13).

### **Section Four: vv.6-9**

Then strangely, the Lord’s speech takes a sudden shift in tone (vv. 6-9). No longer is Solomon addressed individually, now God addresses him in the second person plural. The change seems inexplicable. The Lord was addressing Solomon directly, but now is he addressing a wider audience? As mentioned before, some scholars see this as evidence that the following verses were added to the narrative for the sake of the exilic/post-exilic audience.<sup>215</sup> When read in its narrative context, the Lord’s warning extends from Solomon to Solomon and his children. Yet then the Lord refers to “Israel” saying, “But [if] you all go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the face of the earth which I have given them...” (vv.6b-7a). Who is the Lord addressing? Walsh suggests, “It is as if the voice of

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<sup>214</sup> Notice that this statement is not tempered by the mention of any of David’s negative deeds (cf. 1 Kgs. 15:5).

<sup>215</sup> See fn. 205.



Yahweh breaks out of the confines of the narrative to warn the hearers themselves, ‘If you people turn aside from following me....’<sup>216</sup>

The audience is reminded that the consequences for disobedience are ominous. The penalty and punishment for disobedience are the disasters of exile and destruction of the temple (v.7). The Lord says, “I will cut off Israel from the face of the earth which I have given them; and the house which I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight...” (7a). This is the same house that God had already “consecrated,” “put his name there forever,” having his “eyes and heart there for all time” (v.3). There is a stark contrast between the consequence for obedience and disobedience. If Israel and its king are obedient then the temple signifies a unique intimate relationship with the Lord unlike any other nation. But if they are disobedient then the destruction of the temple will signify their shame and they will become an object of mockery (vv.7-8). Indeed, if they are disobedient and they “forsake” the Lord then he will “bring evil upon them” (v.9). They will be destroyed for their guilt. Only their memory will remain in a passing crowd that is appalled at their disloyalty. This is a poignant message for any audience: obedience brings God’s blessings; disobedience brings curses.

### **Preliminary Conclusion: David’s Enduring Legacy in 1 Kgs. 9:1-9**

David’s enduring legacy is overwhelmingly positive in this narrative (1 Kgs. 9:4-5). Yet there are no strong literary allusions to David’s righteous behavior in light of his repentance in the illicit census narrative (2 Sam. 24). Perhaps, one could argue some similarities between the two. It is clear that God instructs Solomon to imitate his father David by “walking, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded...” (v.4).

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<sup>216</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 118.

Therefore, David's heart and obedience to God's commandments are highlighted in the description in 1 Kings.

David's heart is mentioned in the illicit census narrative as being "struck" after he had taken the census causing him to confess his sin (2 Sam. 24:10). David also displays his "integrity" by confessing his sin and then later declaring that he deserves to be fully punished for it. First, he confesses, "I have sinned greatly since I did this thing. Now Lord, I pray, take away the iniquity of your servant because I have acted very foolishly" (v.10). Second, he cries out, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have committed iniquity. These sheep, what have they done? Let your hand, I pray, be against me and my father's house" (v.17). Then David is portrayed as obediently following God's command as given through the prophet Gad. He goes up and builds an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite and the plague is averted (vv.18-25).

Therefore, the two narratives share three basic similarities. First, there is an explicit mention of David's heart (1 Kgs. 9:4; 2 Sam. 24:10). Second, there is the common theme of David's integrity in confessing his sin and asking to be punished (1 Kgs. 9:4; 2 Sam. 24:10, 17). Third, there is the shared motif of David's obedience to God's commands (1 Kgs. 9:4; 2 Sam. 24:18-25). Even though there are some similarities between the two narratives, the link between them is not very strong.

The connection between the narratives could have been much stronger if the Lord would have specifically addressed Solomon's petition concerning plagues (1 Kgs. 8:37-40; 2 Sam. 24). In each narrative there is the description of three national disasters: famine, devastation by enemies, and a plague (1 Kgs. 8:37; 2 Sam. 24:13). There are also parallels in the description of the affliction of man's heart (1 Kgs. 8:38; 2 Sam. 24:10), in the motifs of prayer and repentance

in “stretching out hands toward this house” and “offering burnt offerings and peace offerings” (1 Kgs. 8:38; 2 Sam. 24:25), and finally in the description of God’s response and forgiveness (1 Kgs. 8:39; 2 Sam. 24:25). These are not highlighted in 1 Kgs. 9 but they are highlighted in 2 Chr. 7.

### **Summary**

1. David’s enduring legacy is overwhelmingly positive in this narrative (1 Kgs. 9:4-5).
2. David’s heart and obedience to God’s commandments are highlighted.
3. There are no strong literary connections made between the description of David’s righteous behavior in the divine speech and in the illicit census narrative (2 Sam. 24).
4. However, there are three basic similarities between the two narratives: First, there is an explicit mention of David’s heart (1 Kgs. 9:4; 2 Sam. 24:10). Second, there is the common theme of David’s integrity (9:4; 2 Sam. 24:10, 17). Third, there is the shared motif of David’s obedience to God’s commands (9:4; 2 Sam. 24:18-25).
5. The connection between the narratives could have been much stronger if the Lord would have specifically addressed Solomon’s petition concerning plagues (1Kgs. 8:37-40; 2 Sam. 24).

## CHAPTER SIX

### *The Lord's Second Appearance to Solomon According to 2 Chronicles 7:11-22*

#### **Introduction**

In order to complete the comparison of the Lord's second appearance to Solomon in the synoptic text found in 1 Kgs. 9, it is now necessary to follow the same formula and analyze the Chr's version of the narrative in its given context. This will again help complete the exercise of comparing and contrasting the two narratives. Ultimately analyzing the Lord's second appearance to Solomon in Chronicles will assist in discovering the enduring legacy of David in Chronicles.

#### **Narrative Background of 1 Chronicles (after David's Census)**

As previously demonstrated, the illicit census narrative highlights David as the model repentant sinner and temple founder. Following this narrative, David's role as liturgical reformer and cultic leader are also greatly emphasized.<sup>217</sup> After the Chr validated the location of the temple site, he portrays David as consumed in his care for the preparations and maintenance of the temple (1 Chr. 22-29).

An enormous amount of material is added by the Chr concerning David's care for the preparation and maintenance of the temple that is not included in his *Vorlage*. David immediately begins preparations for the temple selecting stonecutters for the temple (22:2-5). Then he charges Solomon and the leaders of Israel to build the temple after explaining why he had not been chosen to do so (22:6-19). Next, David provides extensive instruction to the Levites for the proper care and maintenance of the temple according to each man's family

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<sup>217</sup> See Bergsma and Pitre, *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: The Old Testament*, 435-36. Hahn, *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire*.

lineage saying, “Twenty-four thousand shall have charge of the work in the house of the Lord, six thousand shall be officers and judges, four thousand gatekeepers, and four thousand shall offer praises to the Lord with the instruments which I have made for praise” (23:4-5; cf. chs. 23-26). Among the Levites, the sons of Aaron were the high priests of the temple (24:1-19).

Then David instructs Solomon to build the temple in the presence of all the leaders again and he again reiterates why he had not been chosen as temple-builder (28:1-21). Interestingly, the Chr adds that David received the plan (הַתְּכַנִּיֵת) and instructions to build the temple directly from God (28:19), just like Moses did when he built the tabernacle (Ex. 25-30; 36-40). There is a strong Mosaic typology discovered here. Then David continues to collect provisions for the building of the temple (29:1-9).

Throughout the Chr’s narrative, David is repeatedly concerned with the temple. Any mention of military concerns (27:1-15), tribal leaders (vv.16-24), and stewards and counselors of finances (vv.25-34) are overshadowed by the predominant theme of the temple. In David’s prayer of praise, he gives God all the credit for the success of his reign and his preparations for the temple saying, “O Lord, you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all... all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own” (29:11b-12,16).

Then the Israelite assembly anoints Solomon as king and Zadok as the high priest (v.22b). Solomon is described as the successor of David and the vice-regent of God sitting “on the throne of God” (29:23). Interestingly, Solomon is coronated king without any mention of family feud or struggle.

## Narrative Background of 2 Chronicles

Second Chronicles begins with the inclusion of the Lord's first appearance to Solomon when he requests wisdom from the Lord (2 Chr. 1:1-13). Not only does God grant him his desire but he also promises "riches, possessions, and honor, such as none of the kings had who were before [him]" (v.12). These blessings are then immediately realized and reported (1:14-17).

Thereafter it is Solomon's turn to showcase his care for the preparation of the temple (2:1-18). He begins building the temple as he was instructed by his father David (3:1-17). He gathers the furnishings of the temple (4:1-5:1). He brings up the ark of the covenant into the temple (5:2-14), and then, "[T]he glory of the Lord filled the house of God (v.14). Then Solomon dedicates the temple to the Lord (6:1-11) with special prayer (6:12-42). The majority of the Chr's report of Solomon's dedication is equal to his sources. However, he does add an important detail recounting what the Lord spoke to David saying, "Since the day that I brought my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city in all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there, and I chose no man as prince over my people Israel; but I have chosen Jerusalem that my name may be there..." (6:5). Clearly, David remains a very prominent figure for the Chr. By calling David "a prince" the Chr again draws out that David is a type of Moses (Ex. 2:14).

Additionally, the Chr adds a short prayer at the end of Solomon's dedicatory prayer that was not in his sources. Solomon says, "Now arise, O Lord God, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might... O Lord God, do not turn away the face of your anointed one! Remember your merciful love for David your servant (6:41-42; cf. Ps. 132:8-10). Famously, there is a debate around the meaning of the last verse.<sup>218</sup> Is it a case of a subjective or an

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<sup>218</sup> See discussions: Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 99–100. Roger L. Omanson and John E. Ellington, *A Handbook on 1-2 Chronicles*, ed. Paul Clarke et al, UBSH 1 & 2 (Miami, FL: United Bible Societies, 2014), 832.

objective genitive? Should the verse be rendered “David’s love for God” or “God’s love for David”? It appears to be related to Isaiah 55:3 which speaks of God’s merciful love “for David.” Either way, the Chr’s inclusion of this prayer highlights that David’s enduring legacy was bound to the temple.

### **Immediate Narrative Background**

When Solomon’s prayer is concluded, the Lord answers his prayer with divine approval. “When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices...” (v.1a). This is not found in the Chr’s *Vorlage*. Immediately, readers can detect an *inclusio* with David’s illicit census narrative when David’s offerings of burnt offerings and peace offerings were also consumed “with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering” (1 Chr. 21:26; cf. Lev. 9:24; 1 Kgs. 18:24, 37-38). Then “the glory of the Lord filled the temple” (v.1b; cf. Ex. 24:16; Lev. 9:6,23). The priests could not enter the temple since the glory of the Lord filled it (v.2; cf. Ex. 40: 34-35; 2 Chr. 5:14). When all Israel saw the fire and the glory of the Lord, they bowed their faces to the ground and worshipped saying, “For he is good, for his mercy endures forever” (v. 3; cf. 1 Chr. 16:41; 2 Chr. 5:13; 20:21; Ps. 103:17; 136).

Then King Solomon offers a plethora of sacrifices (vv. 4-5; 1 Kgs. 8:62-63). The Chr uniquely describes how many priests take their assigned posts, including the musicians assigned by King David for worship saying, “The priests stood at their posts; the Levites also, with the instruments for music to the Lord which King David had made for giving thanks to the Lord—for his mercy endures for ever—whenever David offered praises by their ministry...” (v.6). Then Solomon consecrates the temple and holds a feast for all Israel (vv.7-10).

## **Analysis of 2 Chr. 7:11-22**

This section focuses upon 2 Chr. 7:11-22 based on the Masoretic Text (MT) and will be analyzed in the following manner: 1) Translation of the text 2) Analysis of the form and structure 3) Verse-by-verse textual analysis 4) and Commentary.

### **Translation of 2 Chr. 7:11-22**<sup>219</sup>

11 Solomon completed the house of the Lord and the house of the king; all that came upon Solomon's heart to do, in the house of the Lord and the house of the king were successful.

12 And the Lord appeared to Solomon in the night, and he said to him, "I have heard your prayer and I have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.

13 If I restrain the heavens so that there is no rain, command the locusts to eat the land, or send a plague upon my people,

14 and my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.

15 Now my eyes will be open, and my ears will be attentive to the prayer of this place.

16 Now I have chosen, and I have consecrated this house that my name will be there forever.

17 And you, if you walk before me, as David your father walked, doing all that I commanded you to do, and you keep all my laws and ordinances,

18 Then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father saying, "You shall not lack a man to rule in Israel."

19 But if you all turn and forsake my ordinances and commandments which I gave to you all, and you all go and serve other gods and worship them

20 Then I will uproot them from my land which I gave them and this house which I consecrated to my name, I will cast away from my face and I will make it a proverb and a ridicule among all the peoples.

21 And at this house, that was exalted by all who passed by it will be appalled and will say, "Why did the Lord do this to this land and to this house?"

22 And they will say, "Because they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers who brought them out from Egypt, and they kept hold of other gods and worshipped them and served them; therefore, he brought upon them all this evil."

### **Form and Structure**

Similar to the synoptic version in Kings, the form of the Chr's account is both narrative and divine speech. The main characters of this pericope are the Lord, Solomon, God's people called by his name, David, Israel, other gods, all the peoples of the earth, and Israel's fathers.

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<sup>219</sup> My translation based on *The Lexham Hebrew Bible* and the BHS. Works consulted include BDB and the Holy Bible (RSV-SCE), 2 Chr. 7:11-22.



The only characters not explicitly mentioned by the Chr are Solomon’s sons. The synoptic passage can be divided into four parts: (1) 7:11, (2) 7:12-16, (3) 7:17-18, (4) 7:19-22. The plot is easy to follow. After the narrator provides a summary of Solomon’s accomplishments, he swiftly moves to the content of the divine speech during the occasion of the Lord’s second appearance to Solomon (vv.1-2a; cf. 1 Chr. 1:7-13). The Lord’s divine speech is divided into three parts: divine acceptance of the temple and conditional blessings pertinent to all Israel (vv. 12-16), conditional dynastic blessings pertinent to the Davidic dynasty (vv. 17-18), and conditional curses pertinent to the Davidic dynasty and all Israel (vv. 19-22).<sup>220</sup> The Chr wrote to his post-exilic audience.

### **Textual Analysis**<sup>221</sup>

v.11, “Solomon completed the house of the Lord...” This verse is understood to be a summary note of the previous section (vv.1-10). “Were successful” (נִצְחָה), an addition and “characteristic idiom” of the Chr used to describe the deeds of righteous kings such as Asa, Uzziah, and Hezekiah (2 Chr. 14:6; 26:5; 31:21).<sup>222</sup> This is also the word David employed when he urged Solomon and the leaders of Israel to build the temple (1 Chr. 22:11,13).

v.12, “in the night,” an added temporal reference which excludes mention of it being “the second time” as he had appeared to Solomon in Gibeon (1 Kgs. 9:2).

“I have chosen this place” a unique addition by the Chr (2 Chr. 7:12,16; cf. Deut. 12:5,11,14). Japhet notes, “the Deuteronomistic literature identified ‘this place’ with the city of Jerusalem, while the present text... focuses more specifically on the temple. This theological turn presumes a precise semantic interpretation of ‘this place’ (בְּמָקוֹם), meaning sanctuary.”<sup>223</sup> “A house of sacrifice” is language not found in 1 Kgs. 9 (cf. Is. 56:7; Ezr. 6:3).

<sup>220</sup> Cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 104. Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 271–275.

<sup>221</sup> Works consulted include BHS, *the Lexham Hebrew Bible*, BDB and Strong’s Dictionary. NETS and Brenton, *The Septuagint Version: Greek*, 2 Chr. 7:11-22. *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Septuagint. Biblia Sacra Juxta Vulgatum Clementinam.*, Ed. Electronica, 2 Chr. 7:11-22. Whitaker, *Dictionary of Latin Forms*.

<sup>222</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 614.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 615.

vv.13-16, All unique additions made by the Chr.

v.13, “If” (אִם) is a hypothetical particle “propounding a possibility.”<sup>224</sup>

“When I restrain the heavens so that there is no rain, or when I command the locusts to eat the land, or if I send a plague upon my people” addresses many concerns included in Solomon’s prayers of petition (1 Chr. 6:22-39). However, instead of being natural disasters as in Solomon’s prayers, they are brought about by God as the agent of the action.

v.14, “My people who are called by my name,” the Chr uses covenantal language used throughout the Hebrew Bible (Ex. 6:7; Lev. 26:12; Deut. 29:13; Jer. 31:33).<sup>225</sup> “Humble themselves,” “pray,” “seek my face,” and “turn” are four synonyms for repentance. These four specific terms are used as a means of communicating the Chr’s retribution theology for both faithful (2 Chr. 12:6-7,12; 32:26; 33:12,19; 34:27) and unfaithful kings (1 Chr. 10:13-14; 2 Chr. 33:23; 36:12). Notice the explicit parallels in the Chr’s portrayal of David (1 Chr. 16:10-11; 22:19; 28:8-9).

v.16, “I have chosen this place” the second repetition of this important motif for the Chr (2 Chr. 7:12,16; cf. Deut. 12:5,11,14).

v.17, “As David your father walked...” notice that the Chr has omitted “with integrity of heart and uprightness,” a description of how David walked (cf. 1 Kgs. 9:4a). The phrase, “my statutes and my commandments” occurs again in v.19 in reverse order.<sup>226</sup>

v.18, “as I covenanted with David your father” the Chr uses the verb “to cut (a covenant)” (כָּרַת) instead of “promise” (וַדַּבֵּר) and drops the words “over all Israel” in his sources (cf. Gen. 15:18).

“You shall not lack a man to rule in Israel” is different than, “There shall not fail you a man upon the throne of Israel” (1 Kgs. 9:5). The Chr’s version is extremely similar to Micah 5:2. Von Rad believes that the Chr was influenced by Micah, but Japhet and others assert that the LXX reading of 1 Kgs. 9:5 “may indicate that the Chronicler merely represented an original *Vorlage* which was eventually corrupted in the MT.”<sup>227</sup>

v.19, “But if you all turn...” The Chr retains the reference to the second person plural but omits mention of Solomon’s descendants (cf. 1 Kgs. 9:6).

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<sup>224</sup> BDB, 243; Strong’s, 2005.

<sup>225</sup> Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 273.

<sup>226</sup> Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 112.

<sup>227</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 617. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 113.

v.20, “This house which I consecrated to my name, I will cast away from my face and I will make it a proverb.” The temple will become a proverb and an object of ridicule instead of Israel (cf. 1 Kgs. 9:7).

v.21, As mentioned before, “This house that was exalted” is altered by the Chr from the future to the past tense in order to make it more intelligible. It is translated as “made desolate” (ἐρημώθησεται) in the Lucianic LXX and the Targum (cf. 1 Kgs. 9:8, Latin and Syriac versions).

### **Commentary: Section One v.11**

The Chr’s narrative about the consecration of the temple begins with fire coming down from heaven signifying the Lord’s approval of Solomon and the chosen temple site (v.1). This section of the narrative concludes by highlighting the success of Solomon’s building projects (v.11). Then the narrative transitions into the Lord’s second appearance to Solomon and the message given by divine speech (vv.12-22).

### **Section Two: vv. 12-16**

God’s speech begins with his divine acceptance of the temple saying, “I have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice” (v.12). This is an interesting addition by the Chr since his sources claimed that God had chosen Jerusalem (2 Chr. 6:5-6, 34, 38; 1 Kgs. 8:16, 44, 48) and David as king (2 Chr. 6:6; 1 Kgs. 8:16); but nowhere prior had God chosen the temple site as well. As previously mentioned, the Chr already referred to Ornan’s threshing floor as “this place” (בַּמָּקוֹם) which was pregnant with meaning (1 Chr. 21:15,18,25-26; Deut. 12:5,11,14).

Solomon’s concern in the previous chapter was that if God’s chosen people, Israel, turned toward the temple and prayed, then their prayers would be answered. God assures Solomon that he has

heard his prayers (2 Chr. 7:12). Then the Chr adds a central text that reveals the core of his theological conviction (12b-16a).

Selman, like Williamson before him,<sup>228</sup> recognizes that God's response to Solomon's prayers of petition "reveals the heart of the books of Chronicles and is actually Chronicles' summary of the essential message of the Old Testament."<sup>229</sup> Kelly strengthens this claim since he is the first scholar to discern a chiasmic structure in 2 Chr. 7:12b-16a. This structure bolstered his position and enabled him to declare, "It is difficult to overstate the significance of 2 Chron. 7:12b–16a for the interpretation of the work. This unit expresses in nuce the central theological conviction of the work...."<sup>230</sup>

When analyzing the text, the reader discovers two obvious differences in the Chr's account. First, the Chr's version has the Lord as the active agent, and possible cause, in three specific national disasters including droughts, famines, and plagues (v.13). The natural disasters included in Solomon's prayer are not understood to be directly caused by the hand of God (2 Chr. 6:22-39). Yet the Lord does not punish without a purpose. Boda recognizes that throughout the Hebrew Bible, divine punishment is understood in covenantal language as divine discipline aimed at drawing God's people back to covenant faithfulness.<sup>231</sup> Therefore, punishment is never merely a means of judgment. Instead, punishment is a gracious invitation to a restored relationship with God (cf. Lev. 26; Deut. 28-30; Amos 4:6-13).<sup>232</sup>

Second, the Chr uniquely outlines the blueprint for how Israel can successfully avert these disasters. He says, "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray,

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<sup>228</sup> Williamson, *2 Chronicles*, 225. He says, "It is quite extraordinary that none of the commentators has seen the vital significance of this verse [2 Chr. 7:14] for the Chronicler's theology, and in particular his doctrine of immediate retribution."

<sup>229</sup> Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 337.

<sup>230</sup> Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles*, 50–51.

<sup>231</sup> Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 272.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land” (v.14). The Chr employs covenantal language by referring to Israel as God’s people, called by his name (cf. Ex. 6:7; Lev. 26:12; Deut. 29:13; Jer. 31:33). These four positive actions of “humbling” (כִּנּוּעַ), “praying” (פִּלְלָה), “seeking” God’s face (שִׁקָּץ), and “turning” from sin (שׁוּב) are all synonyms for repentance. These same terms will be used in order to outline the Chr’s theology of retribution throughout the remainder of his work (2 Chr. 12:6-7,12; 32:26; 33:12,19; 34:27). “Hearing” from heaven (שָׁמַעַ), “forgiving” sin (סָלַח), and “healing” of land (רָפָא) are all synonyms for divine acceptance and are presented as the results of repentance. These terms were also included in Solomon’s petitions.<sup>233</sup> The Lord continues, “Now my eyes will be open, and my ears will be attentive to the prayer of this place” (v.15). He impresses upon Solomon, “Now I have chosen, and I have consecrated this house that my name will be there forever” (v.16). These are echoes and reaffirmations of God’s earlier statement (v.12). God is claiming that he has chosen the temple site and will accept prayers and sacrifices offered there forever. This is the central theological message for his post-exilic community: a restored relationship with God is possible through repentance, prayer, and sacrifice offered in the chosen temple site.

### **Section Three: vv.17-18**

Then the divine speech suddenly changes its tone. The Lord directly speaks to Solomon saying, “And you, if you walk before me, as David your father walked, doing all that I commanded you to do, and you keep all my laws and ordinances... (v.17). Here, David is

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<sup>233</sup> Klein notes, “Yahweh’s promise to hear from heaven is exactly what Solomon prayed for in chap. 6 (vv. 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 30, 33, 35, 39). ‘Forgive’ was used very frequently in chap. 6 (vv. 21, 25, 27, 30, 39) but never again after this verse in Chronicles” (2 *Chronicles*, 111).

explicitly made Solomon's role model by the Lord. This is the first part of the conditional sentence; the second part describes the covenant blessings linked to covenant faithfulness. The Lord concludes, "Then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father saying, "You shall not lack a man to rule in Israel" (v.18). Interestingly, the fulfillment of God's promise to David is seen as Solomon's sole responsibility. The Chr also enhances the significance of the Davidic promises (2 Sam. 7; 1 Chr. 17) by referring to them in covenantal language (v.18). The Lord says that he "cut (a covenant)" with David (cf. Gen. 15:18) instead of simply that he made a promise to him (cf. 1 Kgs. 9:5). The Chr also refers to Micah's prophecy that the Davidic dynasty "shall not lack a man to rule in Israel" (cf. Mic. 5:2) at a time when there is no Davidic king in power.

Thus, on the one hand, it appears that the Chr enhanced the theological significance of the Davidic dynasty. However, on the other, it appears that he may have diminished the significance of David himself. The reader observes how God excludes any description of how David "walked before me" (v.17a; 1 Kgs. 9:4). Japhet disregards the possibility that the Chr had an inclination to brevity and instead concludes, "In general, the Chronicler restricts – without excising completely – comparisons to David."<sup>234</sup> However, Japhet seems to miss the strongly implied comparison made between the Chr's central theological conviction and David's actions. Boda correctly observes, "David casts a shadow over this section of the divine speech [vv.17-22], as he is identified as the example to which Solomon must aspire ('as David your father did') and the one with whom the covenant was made ('I made this covenant with your father, David')."<sup>235</sup> Nowhere does God say that David is not the model for Solomon nor that his covenant with David has been, or will be, revoked.

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<sup>234</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 616.

<sup>235</sup> Boda, *1-2 Chronicles*, 273.

#### **Section Four: vv.19-22**

Finally, there is a last shift in focus and tone (vv.19-22). Suddenly, the Lord addresses a group in the second person plural without making reference to Solomon and his descendants as it does in 1 Kgs. 9:6-9. Many scholars emphasize the Chr's kerygmatic purposes of the text for his post-exilic audience. Williamson,<sup>236</sup> Selman,<sup>237</sup> and Klein,<sup>238</sup> see the Chr specifically addressing his post-exilic audience twice (vv.14,19). Other scholars disagree with this claim for different reasons. Boda claims that the Chr places a greater emphasis on Solomon in order to confirm the Davidic promises (cf. 1 Chr. 22, 28) and gives a stern warning to the Davidic dynasty not to abandon God (vv.19-22).<sup>239</sup> Japhet thinks that this section of the divine speech is directed solely at Israel.<sup>240</sup> It is true that in comparison to his *Vorlage*, the Chr's second-person plural

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<sup>236</sup> Williamson, in regard to 2 Chr. 7:14 says, "There is an appeal here to the Chronicler's own readers to respond in like manner, for much of what follows is then designed to illustrate that no circumstances are too formidable to prevent God's immediate, direct, and, if necessary, miraculous move to fulfil his promise" (2 *Chronicles*, 225). In regard to 2 Chr. 7:19 he notes that "the Chronicler omitted the reference in 1 Kgs. 9:6 to the sons of Solomon but retained the second person plural form of address, he must, on the basis of the foregoing context, have understood this warning to refer to Solomon and the people. Previously, the conditions for the blessing of the king and people have been dealt with separately. Now, however, where the dangers of disobedience are spelled out, they are brought together" (Ibid., 226-227).

<sup>237</sup> Selman, 2 *Chronicles*, 338. With regard to 2 Chr. 7:14 he says, "Although God's invitation is initially given to *my people*, 6:32-33 has made clear that anyone who acknowledges God's name and authority may pray with the same confidence of a hearing (cf. Joel 2:32; Zp. 3:9)." In regard to 2 Chr. 7:19 he highlights, "If the temple encouraged fresh hope of national restoration and the continuation of David's line, it must also symbolize Israel's commitment to God's written will. It must be a house of obedience as well as a house of prayer and of sacrifice, as the people are now reminded (the you of v. 19 is plural), following the pattern of earlier speeches directed partly to the king (or his son) and partly to the people (cf. 1 Ch. 22:6-16, 17-19 and 28:2-8, 9-10)."

<sup>238</sup> Klein, 2 *Chronicles*, 113. Here he says, "In the *Vorlage* (1 Kgs 9:6), the subject of the clause in the protasis is 'you and your descendants,' that is, as the plural pronoun in Hebrew makes clear, the address is to Solomon and his contemporary Israelites, as well as to future generations of Israelites. The Chronicler retains only the plural pronoun, referring to Solomon and the people, and dropping the reference to descendants."

<sup>239</sup> Mark J. Boda, 1-2 *Chronicles*, 274. In a rare case of disagreement, I think that Boda over-emphasizes the importance of the Davidic dynasty here to the detriment of the Chr's purpose, which is to give a two-fold message to the dynasty and to the people. Boda asserts, "The Chronicler retains the second-person plural references but eliminates the reference to the descendants (contra NLT's, 'you or your descendants,' in 7:19). This appears to put greater emphasis on Solomon's role of confirming the dynastic promise (see 1 Chr 28) ... the Chronicler [also] writes "I will uproot the people from this land that I have given them." This also has implications for 7:22, where the Hebrew text merely contains the generic "because they abandoned the Lord" (contra NLT, which inserts "his people"). Therefore, in the Chronicler's version, the object of God's discipline is more limited, focusing on God's discipline of the dynasty rather than the nation."

<sup>240</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 616. She avers that the Chronicler's warning which asserts, "But if you turn aside... then I will pluck you up..." (cf. 1 Kgs. 9:6-9) is a negative condition directed to the people of Israel. She concludes, "If they disobey the Lord, they will be driven from the land and the Temple destroyed" (616).

references are ambiguous. Therefore, it is possible to interpret his message as a warning to all three groups: Solomon, the Davidic dynasty, and the people of Israel.

The Lord speaks in the final section of his divine speech to Solomon warning both him, and others, that disobedience leads to covenant curses. The Chr uses this occasion to address his post-exilic audience in a powerful way. When God says, “If you *all* turn and forsake my ordinances and commandments... and serve other gods and worship them...” (v.19), These are all examples of covenant infidelity. The Chr has warned against “forsaking” (עָזַב) God before (1 Chr. 28:9,20), and will continue to warn against this behavior (2 Chr. 12:1,5; 13:10-11; 24:18; 19:6-7).<sup>241</sup> Due to their lack of attentiveness to this warning, Israel found itself punished by God.

God explains the consequences of Israel’s disobedience in the following conditional clause. He says, “Then I will uproot them from my land which I gave them ...” (v.20a). Israel’s punishment will be exile. This serves as an explanation of Israel’s present post-exilic state. God continues his warning, “And this house which I consecrated to my name, I will cast away from my face and I will make it a proverb and a ridicule among all the peoples” (v.20b).

It is quite the paradox that Israel’s punishment includes the Lord’s rejection of the temple. This is not the case in the Chr’s sources which states that God will reject Israel (cf. 1 Kgs. 9:7). This is the same temple that the Lord just promised to be present to forever (vv.15-16), so this seems like a contradiction. However, the Chr is impressing upon his audience that the Davidic dynasty and Israel’s disobedience led to the temple’s destruction which was once “exalted” (v.21a). Those who pass by it will ask, “What happened to Israel and the Lord’s

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<sup>241</sup> Kelly notes, “The Chronicler’s use does not depend on the Vorlage (except 2 Chron. 7:22 = 1 Kgs 9:9; 2 Chron. 34:25 = 2 Kgs 24:17) but is similar to those exilic/post-exilic texts which speak of Yahweh or his law or covenant being ‘forsaken’. Cf. Deut. 28:20; Judg. 2:12–13; 1 Sam. 8:8; 1 Kgs 18:18; 2 Kgs 17:6; Jer. 9:12.” Brian E. Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles*, 57.



temple” (v.21)? Others will respond, “Because they forsook (נָטַע) the Lord, the God of their fathers who brought them out from Egypt, and they kept hold of other gods and worshipped them and served them; therefore, he brought upon them all this evil” (v.22). How could Israel forsake the God who brought their fathers out of slavery in Egypt and gave them the promised land? Ultimately, the Chr is warning his audience of the covenant curses attached to *persistent* evil performed in stubborn disobedience. However, this warning is not without hope. God is merciful to those who repent (v.14).

### **Preliminary Conclusion: David’s Enduring Legacy in 2 Chr. 7:11-22**

David’s enduring legacy is even more positive in Chronicles than its synoptic text (1 Kgs. 9:1-9). The Chr’s central theological conviction provides Israel with a blueprint of how to restore their relationship with God (2 Chr. 7:12b-16a). At first sight it might seem strange that the Chr omitted any mention of David’s positive and exemplary behavior (1 Kgs. 9:4). Does this mean that the Chr has actively tried to de-emphasize David? Surely, the Chr is not anti-David. Following the illicit census narrative, it would have been simple enough for the Chr to excise any positive statements of David if that was his purpose. Instead, immediately after the Chr outlines the blueprint of Israel’s path to restoration to God, he explicitly mentions David as a model of faithfulness to Solomon (2 Chr. 7:17-18). This hardly seems like an accident.

Furthermore, the Chr added text that enhanced God’s promise to David. God tells Solomon, “I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to rule in Israel’” (v.18). First, God refers to the Davidic promises as a covenant (v.18). Strangely, some scholars question or even deny this. Japhet says

that it could either refer to “כר"ת ברת” or it might simply be the result of a textual corruption.”<sup>242</sup>

But haplography seems unlikely given the evidence that the Chr refers to the Davidic promises as a covenant elsewhere (2 Chr. 13:5; 21:7).

Second, the Chr’s version is remarkably similar to Micah 5:2. Whether or not the Chr’s version represents a unique addition or merely an addition that was already present in his *Vorlage* is difficult to say (cf. LXX 1 Kgs. 9:5). As Myers suggests, “There is certainly a messianic overtone in the phrase ‘one who rules over Israel’ (Mic 5:2). The influence of the prophets is apparent here.”<sup>243</sup> Also, the language used here reminds the reader of language already used by the Lord when he spoke to David about his dynastic promises (1 Chr. 17:11). Whatever the case, the fact remains that the dynasty’s role is given greater significance in the Chr’s version when compared to its parallel source text (cf. MT 1 Kgs. 9:4-5). Lastly, there are many linguistic and thematic parallels employed by the Chr in order to connect this narrative to David’s illicit census narrative (2 Chr. 7-22; 1 Chr. 21-22:1). These parallels will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **Summary**

1. David’s legacy in Chr’s is enhanced in comparison to his sources (1 Kgs. 9:1-9).
2. The Lord’s acceptance of Solomon’s sacrifices is greatly emphasized (2 Chr. 7:1).
3. The Chr’s narrative about the consecration of the temple begins with fire coming down from heaven signifying the Lord’s approval of Solomon and the chosen temple site (v.1). This section of the narrative concludes by highlighting the success of Solomon’s building projects (v.11).
4. God assures Solomon that he has heard his prayers (v.12; 6:22-40).

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<sup>242</sup> Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, 353, see fn. 26. She says, “The covenant with David appears in two verses in Chronicles – one unique to the book and one transferred, in altered form, from Kings... It is possible that 2 Chr 7:18 belongs in this list. The text in Chronicles reads “then I will establish your royal throne, as I established/covenanted (כרתי) with David your father,” whereas 1 Kings 9:5 has “as I promised (דברתי) David your father.” It may be that the verb is used elliptically here to signify the standard כר"ת ברת, or it might simply be the result of a textual corruption; see Rehm, *Untersuchungen*, p. 121; Rudolph, *Chronik*, p. 217.”

<sup>243</sup> Jacob M. Myers, *II Chronicles: Introduction, Translation and Notes*, AYBC 13 (New Haven & London: Yale University, 1965), 44.

5. The Lord claims that he has “chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice” (v.12). This language alludes to God’s choice of the single central sanctuary (Deut. 12:5,11,14). This also parallels God’s choice of Ornan’s threshing floor as “the place” (בַּמָּקוֹם) for the altar of sacrifice (1 Chr. 21:15,18,25-26).
6. The Chr’s central theological conviction is discovered in 2 Chr. 7:12b–16a.
7. The Chr understands the Lord as the active agent, and possible cause of three specific national disasters including droughts, famines, and plagues (v.13).
8. The Lord does not punish without a purpose. Divine punishment is divine discipline aimed at drawing God’s people back to covenant faithfulness (v.14).
9. The Chr uniquely outlines the blueprint for how Israel can successfully avert these disasters saying, “If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land” (v.14).
10. The Chr employs covenantal language by referring to Israel as God’s people, called by his name (cf. Ex. 6:7; Lev. 26:12; Deut. 29:13; Jer. 31:33).
11. “Humbling” (כַּנּוּעַ), “praying” (פָּלַל), “seeking” God’s face (בִּקֵּשׁ), and “turning” from sin (שׁוּב) are all synonyms for repentance. These terms outline the Chr’s theology of retribution throughout the remainder of his work (2 Chr. 12:6-7,12; 32:26; 33:12,19; 34:27).
12. “Hearing” from heaven (שָׁמַעַ), “forgiving” sin (סָלַח), and “healing” the land (רָפָא) are all synonyms for divine acceptance and are presented as the effects of repentance.
13. God is claiming that he has chosen the temple site and will accept prayers and sacrifices offered there forever (vv.15-16). The Chr is communicating to his post-exilic audience that a restored relationship with God is possible through repentance, prayer, and sacrifice offered in the chosen temple site.
14. Then the Lord’s focus shifts, and he addresses Solomon directly (vv.17-18). Here David is explicitly made a role model for Solomon by the Lord.
15. The Chr also enhances the significance of the Davidic promises (2 Sam.7; 1 Chr.17) by referring to them in covenantal language (2 Chr. 7:18). The Chr references Micah saying, “You shall not lack a man to rule in Israel” (cf. Mic. 5:2), in a time when there is no Davidic king.
16. The Lord’s speech concludes by addressing an anonymous group in the second person plural. This group can include Solomon, his descendants, and Israel. By doing this, the Chr emphasizes the kerygmatic purposes of the text for his post-exilic audience.
17. The Lord warns everyone that disobedience leads to the covenant curses of exile and the destruction of the temple.
18. The Chr has warned against “forsaking” (עָזַב) God before (1 Chr. 28:9,20), and will continue to warn against this behavior (2 Chr. 12:1,5; 13:10-11; 24:18; 19:6-7).
19. The Chr is warning his audience of the covenant curses attached to *persistent* evil performed in stubborn disobedience.
20. This warning is not without hope since God is merciful to those who repent (v.14).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *The Impact of Including David's Illicit Census Narrative on David's Legacy*

#### **Introduction**

Even though Knoppers has demonstrated that David is portrayed as a model of repentance in the illicit census narrative, not all scholars agree that that was the Chr's intent. There seem to be two camps among scholars regarding this issue: those who claim that David's legacy is as a malefactor and those who view David's legacy as the model of repentance. It is necessary to analyze these claims in light of 1 Chr. 21-22:1, as well as 2 Chr. 7, in order to accurately determine what the Chr's intent was.

#### **David's Legacy as Malefactor**

Johnstone, Bailey, and Ristau are among scholars who argue that David is ultimately portrayed as a seriously flawed character beset with limitations and weakness in the illicit census narrative. Each of their claims are based off an interpretation of the concluding paragraph.

At that time, David saw that the Lord answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite and he sacrificed there. The tabernacle of the Lord that Moses made in the desert and the altar of burnt offerings was at the high place at Gibeon. But David was not able to go before it to seek the Lord because he was terrified by the sword of the angel of the Lord. David said, "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

Japhet accurately addresses the heart of the issue. She questions if the determination of the temple site should be viewed "as a divine choice and act of grace, or should it be regarded, as

in the parenthetical passage, as a concession to human limitation and weakness?”<sup>244</sup> She also accurately identifies the passage that seems most difficult to explain.

Verse 30 is the most difficult in this context. It attributes the sacrifice at the threshing floor to David’s fear, and from the literary point of view it regards the ‘sword of the angel’ as an independent element, completely detached from the metaphor of the plague, and somewhat reminiscent of the ‘flaming sword’ of Gen. 3:24.<sup>245</sup>

Japhet is not alone in seeing a connection between the conclusion of David’s illicit census narrative with the conclusion of Adam’s narrative in Gen. 3:24. Johnstone believes these narratives are intimately linked: David was debarred from the sanctuary in Gibeon just as Adam was prohibited from re-entry into Eden after he sinned. He opines, “[Whereas] David once enjoyed immediate access to the altar (1 Chr. 16:2); that old relationship of immediacy which David once enjoyed with the Lord is definitively and irreparably ruptured.”<sup>246</sup> For Johnstone, David and his sin was a means to an end. He concludes,

The new altar in Jerusalem is henceforth to be the substitute place, the definitive restart, where oneness between God and people is to be realized. As a consequence of David’s guilt (1 Chron. 21:3), a paradigm shift has taken place in the mode of Israel’s realization of itself as the people of God; a new balance in the respective roles of king and priesthood has been established.<sup>247</sup>

David is not a figure to be imitated but a figure to learn from since all those who sin are in need of atonement from God. Sin is the problem; the temple is the solution. The temple is now at the center of Israel’s existence.

Bailey also emphasizes David’s sin and seems to view that he is “the problem” in the illicit census narrative. Bailey struggles to reconcile the fact that David chose the temple site in fear saying, “It is not God’s command that determines the site; paradoxically, it is the fear of

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<sup>244</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 390.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Johnstone, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 237.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

God – not reverential fear, but terror (נִבְעַת).”<sup>248</sup> Bailey claims that this visceral reaction of terror is what causes David to flee from the presence of God. Therefore, “The census narrative ends where it began, with an implicit disharmony between David and his God.”<sup>249</sup> This makes David anything but a role model for Israel. In the conclusion, Bailey suggests that David’s enduring legacy in Chronicles is badly tainted saying,

The one who should faultlessly embody the theocratic enterprise and is incapable of it, in which case the punishment is not so much of David’s sin as it is an object lesson to David, and of David. It certainly anticipates the idea that no one is able to avoid sin (2 Chron. 6:36).<sup>250</sup>

Ristau also argues that David’s legacy in Chronicles is marked by disharmony. He believes that the Chr has demonstrated the breakdown of unity at every level in the illicit census narrative for David – in his relationship with the Lord, the people, and his army. He thinks that Knopper’s argument for David as model repentant sinner is important, but he claims that it “addresses one controversial aspect of the narrative and still aims at reconciling the difficulties of the text to a more characteristically Chronistic *Tendenz* (as that is defined by most scholars).”<sup>251</sup> The problem with Ristau’s critique is that it is made in isolation from the remainder of the book.

Other scholars have little difficulty explaining the last paragraph in the Chr’s narrative of David’s illicit census. David’s legacy becomes radically altered depending on one’s interpretation of this concluding passage. As already argued, the Chr is primarily discussing David’s choice *during* the census event. Therefore, the Chr’s mention of the angel’s sword is not completely detached from the metaphor of the plague (contra Japhet). Interpreted correctly,

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<sup>248</sup> Noel Bailey, “David and God in 1 Chronicles 21,” 357.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 359.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 340–341.

<sup>251</sup> See fn. 35. Ristau continues, “Of course, this does not invalidate the claim; it simply makes the point that recent scholarship tends to ignore the potential of the narrative to function as counter testimony to typical constructions of the Chronicler’s ideology” (“Breaking Down Unity,” 206, fn. 10).

David's enduring legacy in Chr is as a repentant sinner who received the grace of becoming the founder of Israel's temple site. Otherwise, it remains quite difficult to understand the Chr's repeated positive portrayal of David including his efforts to make him a paradigm for future kings throughout his work (2 Chr. 1:8-9; 6:6,16-17,42; 7:10,17; 8:14; 11:17; 17:3; 21:12; 28:1; 29:2; 34:2-3).

### **David's Legacy as Model Repentant Sinner**

Many scholars have noted the Chr's special portrayal of David as a model repentant sinner. Some scholars have also bolstered their claim by noticing similarities between the narratives of the Lord's second appearance to Solomon (2 Chr. 7) and David's illicit census narrative (1 Chr. 21-22:1). Indeed, there are many linguistic and thematic parallels between the two accounts, especially concerning the Chr's unique theological convictions. A summary of the current scholarship is necessary in order to determine how the two are related.

Selman observes how the Chr recognizes that plagues can be sent by God but "even when God is angry, the only effective way out is to turn to the same God for forgiveness (cf. 1 Ch. 21:13)."<sup>252</sup> He also identifies that prayer is used as "a plea for repentance" to God's people just as it was earlier for King David.<sup>253</sup> However, Selman does not exhaust the linguistic and thematic parallels between the two accounts.

Kelly strengthens the insight that these two narratives may be linked. He observes that the Chr emphasizes "the temple is to be the place of atonement and forgiveness for Israel's sin (2 Chr. 7:12-14), just as this site was for David. This point is underlined by the parallel fire-

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<sup>252</sup> Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 338-39.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 339.

theophanies on the altars of burnt-offering (1 Chr 21:26; 2 Chr 7:1).”<sup>254</sup> However, he also does not extract the many similarities from the two accounts, nor does he demonstrate how David is an exemplary figure for the Chr’s post-exilic audience.

Likewise, Tino also rightly acknowledges the connection between David as a model repentant sinner in the illicit census narrative and the Chr’s central theological conviction.

Referencing the illicit census narrative, Tino claims,

David’s penitent attitude is used, although not explicitly, in the programmatic text of 2 Chr. 7:12b-15 – the text unique to Chronicles – in which both YHWH’s dwelling in the Temple and the welfare of the nation are conditioned on repentance.<sup>255</sup>

However, he also does not extract all the linguistic and thematic likenesses between the two accounts, nor does he exhibit how David is the model of repentance for the Chr’s post-exilic audience.

Similarly, Boda asserts a link between the two narratives. He asserts, “While David’s example in 1 Chronicles 21 foreshadows the penitential agenda that the chronicler will develop in detail in the second half of his work, it makes its own unique contribution by emphasizing the ritual and especially sacrificial dimension of repentance.”<sup>256</sup> But this an understatement since David seems to do much more than foreshadow the Chr’s penitential agenda.

### **David’s Enduring Legacy in light of Narrative Parallels**

The Chr employs literary techniques, keyword repetitions, as well as thematic and linguistic parallels between the narratives of the Lord’s second appearance to Solomon and David’s illicit census. These narrative parallels will each be highlighted in separate sections.

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<sup>254</sup> Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles*, 50–51.

<sup>255</sup> Jozef Tino, *King and Temple in Chronicles: A Contextual Approach to their Relations* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 44. I am indebted to professor Ristau for this pivotal book recommendation in the early stages of my research.

<sup>256</sup> Mark J. Boda, ‘Return to Me’: *A Biblical Theology of Repentance*, ed. D.A. Carson (NSBT 35) (Downers Grover: IVP Academic, 2015), 138



The sections containing thematic and linguistic parallels will also include word charts in order to highlight their similarities.

### **Literary Technique: *Inclusio***

First, Solomon's consecration of the temple recounts the divine acceptance of Solomon's sacrifices as well as divine acceptance of the temple site (2 Chr. 7:1, 12-16). This forms a clear *inclusio* between this narrative and the previous narrative of David's illicit census (2 Chr. 7:1; 1 Chr. 21:26). Solomon acts as a priest-king offering acceptable sacrifices and interceding for Israel, just like his father had done at the site of the temple's inception.

### **Thematic Parallels**

Second, there are unmistakable thematic parallels. In each narrative God is mentioned as one capable of, or actually, sending a plague. The Chr chooses to directly connect Solomon's prayer (2 Chr. 6:26-30) with God's response (7:13ff). Also notice that the last scenario named by God was in regard to a census, "If I send a plague upon my people and my people who are called by my name humble themselves (כנע), pray (פלל), seek (בקש) my face, and turn (שוב) from their wicked ways then I will hear (שמע) from heaven, forgive (סלח) their sin, and heal (רפא) their land" (2 Chr. 7:13b-14). Thus, an obvious conditional statement is made: if X, then Y. God is saying, "If I send a plague, then repent." The only time God sends a plague upon Israel before Solomon's divine encounter was during David's illicit census narrative (1 Chr. 21-22:1).<sup>257</sup> Furthermore, David has been called and chosen by God (2 Chr. 7:14a; 1 Chr. 28:4; 2

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<sup>257</sup> Interestingly, the only time a plague is mentioned after David's illicit census and the Lord's second appearance to Solomon is during King Jehoshaphat's reign. He feared an invasion from the East, so he began to seek the Lord, he assembled Judah in the house of the Lord and prayed a prayer very similar to prayers made by David and Solomon

Chr. 6:5-6) and portrayed as the model repentant sinner through his confession of sin and his penitential actions. Finally, God shows clemency to David by healing the land.<sup>258</sup> This is exactly how God says he will show mercy to Israel if they are obedient to his word.

<b>Thematic Parallels</b>	2 Chr. 7:11-22	1 Chr. 21-22:1
“If I send a plague upon my people...”	v.13	v.12, 14
And they “Humble themselves”	v.14a	vv.8,16-17
“Pray and seek my face”	v.14a	vv.8,17
“And turn from their wicked ways...”	v.14a	vv.8,17
“[Then] I will hear from heaven”	v. 14b	vv.26-28
“Forgive their sin”	v.14b	vv.26-17
“And heal their land”	v.14b	v.15,27

### **Linguistic Parallels**

It is logical to conclude that the Chr is connecting the two narratives of David’s illicit census and the Lord’s second appearance to Solomon through the use these strong thematic parallels. If there is any doubt that this is the Chr’s intent, then one only needs to observe the Chr’s use of linguistic parallels in each narrative as well. Each explicitly references, “David,”

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in the past (2 Chr. 20:5-9; cf. 1 Chr. 16:8-11; 21:26; 22:1; 2 Chr. 6). He says, “If evil comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house, and before you, for your name is in this house, and cry to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save...” (2 Chr. 20:9; cf. 2 Chr. 6:24-30;7:13b-16).

<sup>258</sup> The Chr may have even used a slight wordplay between God’s command to the destroying angel to put down his lethal weapon when he says, “Enough, now stay your hand” (1 Chr. 21:15) and the description of God’s healing of the land from the plague. The word for “stay” (הִפָּקֵד) is a hifil imperative meaning, “relax, withdraw, or refrain” (BDB, 951). This could easily convey God’s intent to refrain from punishing Israel further with the plague. The word for “heal” (רָפָא) is spoken in the first person singular, future tense meaning “I will heal”. The Hebrew roots look very similar having the same letters in the first and second positions (“פ”, “צ”), but they contain a different letter in the last position (“ל”). Strictly speaking, there is no direct phonological connection between the two, but it is interesting to notice their similar meanings and their similar functions in this narrative.

“sin,” “plague,” “prayer,” “sacrifice,” and “the house of the Lord.” These parallels can be demonstrated best in the following chart.

<b>Linguistic Parallels</b>	1 Chr. 21-22:1	2 Chr. 7:11-22
David (דָּוִד)	1 Chr. 21:1-2,5,8, 10-11,13,16-17, 18-19, 21,26,28,30;22:1	vv.17-18
The Lord/God (יְהוָה/אֱלֹהִים)	vv.3,7-9,10-19, 22-24,26-30; 22:1	vv.11-12, 21-22
Sin (חַטָּא)	vv. 8,17	v. 14
Pestilence (דִּבְרָה)	vv.12,14	v. 13
Sacrifice (עֹלָה)	v.29	v.12
House/ House of the Lord (בֵּית יְהוָה)	22:1	v.11,16, 20-21

Moreover, the Chr *explicitly* highlights David as the model of faithfulness to God in each narrative. This is not the first time that the Chr has portrayed David this way either. The Chr also added in an entire narrative where David appoints Levites to sing a song of thanksgiving the day the ark of the covenant was placed in Jerusalem (1 Chr. 16:7-36; cf. Ps. 105:1-15; Ps. 96:1-13; Ps. 106:47-48). There David models faithfulness by appointing Asaph and other Levites to lead the people in worship and assist them in “seeking” (בִּקֵּשׁ) the Lord. They sing, “Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who *seek* (בִּקֵּשׁ) the LORD rejoice! Seek (שׁוּ) the LORD and his strength, *seek* (בִּקֵּשׁ) his presence continually” (1 Chr. 16:10-11).

Additionally, the Chr added David’s charge to Solomon and the leaders of Israel to build the temple after the illicit census narrative. Here, David specifically instructs them to “seek”

(בִּקֵּשׁ) the Lord saying, “Set your mind and heart to *seek* (בִּקֵּשׁ) the Lord your God. Arise and build the sanctuary of the Lord God, so that the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the holy vessels of God may be brought into a house built for the name of the Lord” (1 Chr. 22:19). David repeats this command in the sight of “all Israel” saying, “In the hearing of our God, observe and *seek* (בִּקֵּשׁ) out all the commandments of the Lord your God; that you may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever” (1 Chr. 28:8). Then, he directly addresses Solomon saying,

And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father, and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every plan and thought. If you *seek* (בִּקֵּשׁ) him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will cast you off for ever. Take heed now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong and do it (1 Chr. 28:9-10).

### **Preliminary Conclusion**

Although it cannot be proven that this theory is correct since David’s illicit census is not explicitly named in the Lord’s response to Solomon, given the context and the Chr’s use of language and literary techniques, it is not only possible, but it is highly probable that the Chr *intentionally* connected these narratives. Any argument that these parallels are invalid due to the Chr’s use of sources, need be reminded that even though 1 Chr. 21 corresponds very strongly to 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, it is not identical. Furthermore, 2 Chr. 7:11-22, particularly vv.12-16 have no parallel in the Chr’s *Vorlage*, MT 1 Kgs. 9:1-9, at all. Therefore, it is again safest to admit that the Chr used a text of Samuel close to 4QSam<sup>a</sup> when constructing his narrative about David’s illicit census; however, this by no means excludes the strong possibility that the Chr added unique and innovative ideas to shape the legacy of the Chr’s most influential king, King David.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *Conclusion*

After a thorough analysis of the text, it can now be said that the portrayal of David as the model repentant sinner is one of the main reasons the Chr included the illicit census narrative. It is also unmistakable that David's enduring legacy is as the model repentant sinner in Chronicles. This purpose has been discerned through the methods of narrative and comparative analysis between the synoptic texts (2 Sam. 24 and 1 Chr. 21-22:1 as well as 1 Kgs. 9:1-9 and 2 Chr. 7:11-22). Also, a consideration of the Chr's sources was made in comparing the textual witnesses of 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and 1 Chr. 21:15-16.

It was determined that it is safest to assume that the Chr used a source close to 4QSam<sup>a</sup> when constructing his narrative in 1 Chr. 21-22:1. However, the Qumran scroll 4QSam<sup>a</sup> offers limited textual evidence to observe other narrative similarities between the two. Furthermore, the LXX is supposed to resemble 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and 1 Chr. 21 but it omits details about the destroying angel, standing between heaven and earth (vv. 16b-17a). Therefore, the Chr's reliance on his *Vorlage* by no means excludes the possibility that he added innovative ideas to shape his narrative and to shape David's legacy. The Chr's purpose becomes most obvious when observing the tremendous differences between 1 Kgs. 9:1-9 and 2 Chr. 7:11-22 since the Chr drew on a text of Kings closer to the MT.

In order to discern the Chr's purpose for including David's illicit census narrative, many important questions needed to be answered concerning several key details. For example, who is satan and what is his function in the narrative (v.1), does David sin in taking the census, and if so, what is his sin? Does God strike Israel with a plague once, or twice (vv.7,14)? Why did the

Lord stop the destroying angel in Jerusalem (v.15)? How was the plague ultimately averted, and finally, how should the reader understand the Chr's conclusion (1 Chr. 21:28-22:1)?

It was determined that "satan" is best understood as an adversary much like the angel in Num. 22:21-35. Replacing "the anger of the Lord" (2 Sam. 24:1) with an adversary who carries out the anger of the Lord (Num. 22:22-23; 1 Chr. 21:1) reinforces that the Chr was uncomfortable with the theological implications of his source, and he took the opportunity to enhance the role of divine intermediaries in carrying out divine commands. Interestingly, this adversarial figure incites David to take a census, and David obliges without a fight.

According to the narrative, it is obvious that David sins in taking the census because he says so himself (1 Chr. 21:8,17, *contra* Wright). However, it is not obvious what his sin was precisely. Among all the various options, it is most convincing that David's illicit census sin was his negligence in enforcing the payment of the half-shekel tax required by Law (cf. Ex. 30:12-16). Concerning his army, David also should have trusted God's promise to Abraham more like Gideon did (Gen. 15:5; Judg. 7-8; 1 Chr. 21:3; cf. 1 Chr. 27:23). Ultimately, it seems that David was put to the test (1 Chr. 21:1; 29:17). Similar to the synoptic text 2 Sam. 24, David was incited to take the census, but that does not mean that he *ought* to have taken it. At the very least he should have consulted with God on the matter. Instead, David orders a census without following the Law for how to do so.

Furthermore, in comparison to the synoptic text, the description of David's sin is amplified and made worse in Chronicles. When Joab is given David's command, he questions it asking, "Why will there be guilt upon Israel" (v.3)? Then Joab takes an incomplete census, not counting the tribes of Levi and Benjamin, because "the word of the king was repulsive" to him (v.6). However, this does not mean the Lord reacts by striking Israel with a plague twice for

David's sin (vv.7, 14). Instead, verse 7 can be understood as a proleptic overview, an anticipation of what is to come, as well as an explanation for what motivated David's confession (vv.7-8). Therefore, in the Chr's version, David repents because God strikes Israel (vv. 7-8). Admittedly however, this does not make the Chr's version any smoother.

No sooner had David cried out to God in repentance, did the Lord send him a grim message through the prophet Gad. David is asked to choose from three grave punishments for Israel: three years famine, three months devastation by his enemies, or three days pestilence (v.12). David chose to command a census and now he must choose the punishment for it. Significantly, all three punishments have a covenantal basis to them (Lev. 26:14-39).

Despite David's sin, the Chr also stresses David's trust in the Lord's mercy (v. 13) as well as his total repentance from his sin (vv.16-17). When David sees the angel with a drawn sword, he immediately leads a group of elders in a penitential act putting on sackcloth and falling on their faces (v.16). Then David intercedes for his people and is willing to lay down his life for his sheep (v.17). This means that the Chr's version enhances David's sin and, even more, it enhances David's repentance.

Yet strangely, according to the narrative sequence the Lord halts the destroying angel *before* David repents (v.15). After investigation, it was determined that this verse also functions proleptically, a literary technique the Chr already used (v.7). Therefore, the remaining narrative explains what the Lord saw (vv.16-27) and the final verse in the third section is a fulfillment of what was to come (vv.15,27).

Finally, the plague is averted through David's prayer, repentance, and obedience in offering sacrifices at the designated temple site. This is clearly seen as the remaining narrative unfolds. After David's prayer and repentance (vv.16-17), he is told by the prophet Gad to build

an altar to the Lord at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (v.18). His obedience to the prophet's command, spoken in the name of the Lord, is unquestioning (v.19). David asks Ornan to give him "the place" (מָקוֹם). This is a loaded term used on purpose in anticipation of what the sacred place would become (1 Chr. 21:15,18,25-26; 22:1 cf. Gen. 28:17; Deut. 12). David also asks Ornan if he could purchase the threshing floor for "full price" (vv.22, 25), and this is an allusion to Abraham's purchase of the Cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23:9). Finally, David acquires the threshing floor of Ornan. Theologically speaking, this was the firstfruits of the temple, and here David also received the firstfruits of the Lord's mercy offered at the temple site (1 Chr. 21:24-27; cf. 2 Chr. 7:12-16). Ultimately, David successfully averts the plague by offering burnt offerings and peace offerings unto the Lord (v.26). Then, the Lord answers him with fire from heaven upon the altar, a clear allusion to Moses and Aaron's acceptable sacrifice (Lev. 9:22-24) as well as Solomon's acceptable sacrifice at the dedication of the temple (2 Chr. 7:1).

The entire illicit census narrative is a literary masterpiece with several allusions to important stories in Israel's history. Overall, the Chr employs significant allusions to Israel's history throughout this section of the narrative including references to Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac in the *ʿaqedah* (Gen. 22; 1 Chr. 21:15; 2 Chr. 3:1), Abraham's purchase of the Cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23:9; 1 Chr. 21:24), Jacob's dream about the ladder (Gen. 28:16-17; 1 Chr. 21:22,25), Moses and Aaron's acceptable sacrifice to the Lord (Lev. 9:22-24; 1 Chr. 21:26), the Lord's proclamation that he will choose a specific place in the promised land and make his name dwell there (Deut. 12:5-26; 1 Chr. 21:22, 25), and to Joshua's vision of the commander of the Lord's army before he successfully conquered the promised land (Josh. 5:13-16). It is fascinating to see how the Chr uniquely threads together so many elements of Israel's history –



from the patriarchal period to the entrance into the promised land, for the sake of his purposes. David is portrayed to be among a distinguished list of national heroes.

Lastly, it was determined that the final section of David's illicit census narrative acts parenthetically and as a postscript. These verses are an attempt to explain the apparent theological problem regarding why David does not go to the tabernacle of the Lord that Moses made in the desert and to the altar of burnt offerings at the high place at Gibeon (v.29). The Chr asserts that he does not go to Gibeon primarily because he was terrified of the threatening angel *during* the census event (vv. 16, 30). Finally, the Lord accepts David's sacrifice allowing him to proclaim, "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel" (22:1). For the Chr, the temple supersedes the tabernacle, Jerusalem supersedes Gibeon, and David becomes the founder of Israel's liturgical worship at the narrative's climax. Thus, the illicit census narrative was included for the two-fold purpose of portraying David as a model repentant sinner and as validating the temple site.

Yet it was worth considering, if one of the Chr's main purposes of including the illicit census narrative was to highlight David as the model of repentance, why did the Chr choose not to include the Bathsheba narrative as well (2 Sam. 12:13)? Perhaps it was left out since the Chr had the tendency to avoid the private affairs of David and the Davidic monarchs. Or perhaps the Chr did not want to taint his idealized portrait of the United Monarchy period. These may very well be accurate, but the Chr's editing purposes and narrative design include two more very important factors. The Chr is very careful to include narratives recounting David's successes, including his repentance from failures that have a liturgical aspect to them (cf. 1 Chr. 13 & 21).

In order to discern the impact of the inclusion of David's illicit census narrative on David's legacy, more important questions needed to be answered in 2 Chr. 7:11-22. It was

determined that David's legacy in Chr's is elevated and enhanced when compared to his sources (cf. 1 Kgs. 9:1-9). The Chr's narrative about the consecration of the temple begins with fire coming down from heaven signifying the Lord's approval of Solomon and the chosen temple site (v.1). This section of the narrative concludes by highlighting the success of Solomon's building projects (v.11). Then the narrative transitions into the Lord's second appearance to Solomon and the message contained in the Lord's divine speech (vv.12-22).

The Lord's second appearance to Solomon begins with God assuring him that he heard his prayers (v.12; 6:22-40). Then the Lord claims that he has "chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice" (v.12). This language alludes to God's choice of the single central sanctuary (Deut. 12:5,11,14). This also parallels God's choice of Ornan's threshing floor as "the place" (בְּמִקְוֹם) for the altar of sacrifice (1 Chr. 21:15,18,25-26). Then the reader discovers the Chr's central theological conviction (2 Chron. 7:12b-16a).

The Chr understands that the Lord is the active agent, and possible cause of three specific national disasters including droughts, famines, and plagues (v.13). However, the Lord does not punish without a purpose. Divine punishment is divine discipline aimed at drawing God's people back to covenant faithfulness (v.14). The Chr uniquely outlines the blueprint for how Israel can successfully avert these disasters saying, "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land" (v.14). "Humbling" (כִּנּוּעַ), "praying" (פִּלְלַל), "seeking" God's face (בִּקְשׁוּ), and "turning" from sin (שׁוּבוּ) are all synonyms for repentance. "Hearing" from heaven (שָׁמַעַתְּ), "forgiving" sin (סָלַחְתָּ), and "healing" the land (רָפֵאתָ) are all synonyms for divine acceptance, and these are presented as God's response to repentance.

God is claiming that he has chosen the temple site and will accept prayers and sacrifices offered there forever (vv.15-16). The Chr is communicating to his post-exilic audience that a restored relationship with God is possible through repentance, prayer, and sacrifice offered in the chosen temple site. Then the Lord's focus shifts, and he addresses Solomon directly (vv.17-18), explicitly making David a role model for Solomon. The Chr also enhances the significance of the Davidic promises (2 Sam. 7; 1 Chr. 17) by referring to them in covenantal language (2 Chr. 7:18). Then the Chr references Micah saying, "You shall not lack a man to rule in Israel" (cf. Mic. 5:2), in a time when there is no Davidic king.

The Lord's speech concludes by addressing an anonymous group in the second person plural. This group can include Solomon, his descendants, and the people of Israel. By doing this, the Chr emphasizes the kerygmatic purposes of the text for his post-exilic audience. The Lord warns everyone that *persistent* disobedience leads to the covenant curses of exile and the destruction of the temple. However, this warning is not without hope. God is merciful to those who repent. After all, the Chr already outlined the path for Israel to restore its relationship with God (v.14).

Finally, the parallel narratives (1 Chr. 21-22:1 & 2 Chr. 7) were taken into consideration in light of one another. It was determined that the Chr's use of *inclusio*, as well as linguistic and thematic parallels is evidence that it is not only possible, but highly probable that these narrative parallels were made by the Chr *intentionally*. Ultimately, if it was enough to connect David's illicit census sin to the Mosaic Law regarding the half-shekel tax based on context, thematic parallels, and linguistic parallels where *both* a plague *and* a census are referenced, then this comparison is no different. When wondering what impact the inclusion of the illicit census narrative had on David's enduring legacy, the reader encounters these parallel narratives which

reference *not only* David, the Lord, sin, plague, and sacrifice *but also* the house of the Lord which is a key element in each narrative and the essential component in the Chr's main theological conviction. David does more than foreshadow the Chr's penitential agenda, he embodies it. It is no mistake that David receives the firstfruits of the Lord's mercy at the exact location chosen for the temple (1 Chr. 21:26-27; 22:1; 2 Chr. 7:12,16). The Chr was trying to portray David, in no uncertain terms, as the model repentant sinner who makes sacrifices at the designated temple site in order to be a source of inspiration for his post-exilic audience to do the same.

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## תקציר עברי

מטרת תיזה זו להשיב על השאלות, לשם מה צירף מחבר דברי הימים את סיפור המפקד האסור לספר וכיצד זה השפיע על מורשתו של דוד. השאלה הראשונה היתה בגדר חיזה עבור חוקרים רבים, כי סיפור המפקד פוגם, לכאורה, בדמותו החיובית של המלך דוד בדברי הימים. במשך עשרות שנים, סברו חוקרים כי סיפור המפקד נכלל כדי להעניק תקף למקום המקדש בירושלים. ואולם, עמדה זו זכתה לביקורת במחקרו רב-ההשפעה של גארי קנופרס (1995), "Images of David in Early Judaism: David as Repentant Sinner in Chronicles". במאמר זה מסכם קנופרס ואומד אחדות מן ההצעות הרווחות לשאלה, מדוע כלל מחבר דברי הימים סיפור הנראה כמעמעם את מורשתו של דוד. טענתו, לבסוף, היא שדברי הימים א' כ"א היא "דוגמה של – ולא חריגה מן – האידיאליזציה של דוד מצד בעל דברי הימים", משום שדוד מוצג בו כמודל של בעל תשובה מחטאו. אמנם השפיעה הצעה זו רבות על המחקר המודרני, אולם קנופרס מתמודד אך ורק עם מטרתו של בעל דברי הימים בצירוף סיפור המפקד האסור. לפיכך, נותרת השאלה השנייה – כיצד משפיע צירוף הסיפור הזה לספר על מורשתו של דוד בסופו של דבר.

חוקרים רבים מכירים בכך כי סיפור התגלות ה' השנייה לשלמה לאחר חנוכת בית ה' הוא יסודי בתיאור התיאולוגיה של בעל דברי הימים. אולם, אך מעטים זיהו את הקשר החזק בין דה"ב ז' 11-22 ודה"א כ"א-כ"ב 1. סלמן (1994) מזהה כי התפילה משמשת בתור "בקשה לתשובה", וקלי (1996) מצביע על המקדש כמקום הכפרה והסליחה בשני הסיפורים. נקודה אחרונה זו מודגשת במבנה המעטפת (אינקלוזיו) הנוצר על ידי התגלויות האש על מזבח העולה בסוף ובתחילת הסיפורים (דה"א כ"א b26; דה"ב ז' 1). טינו (2010) מתקרב יותר מן האחרים, באמרו כי "גישתו מלאת החרטה של דוד משמשת – אך לא באופן מפורש – בטקסט הפרוגרמטי של דה"ב ז' 12-b15, סיפור הנמצא רק בדברי הימים, אשר בו הן שכיתו של ה' במקדש והן שלום האומה תלויים בתשובה". אולם, איש מבין חוקרים אלו איננו ממצה את ההקבלות הלשוניות והתימטיות בין שני הסיפורים הללו עד תמם. לפיכך, הם אינם מראים באופן מלא כיצד סיפור המפקד האסור משפיע על מורשתו של דוד עבור קהלו הבתר-גלותי של בעל דברי הימים.

כדי להראות באופן מלא כיצד סיפור המפקד האסור משפיע על מורשת דוד בדברי הימים, אבצע השוואה שיטתית וניתוח סיפורי מקיף של יחידות אלו (שמ"ב כ"ד ודה"א כ"א-כ"ב 1; מל"א ט' 1-9 ודה"ב ז' 11-22). בנוסף, אצביע על הקבלות ספרותיות ותימטיות שונות, וכן על מילות מפתח, בכל אחד מן הסיפורים. למשל, מילות המפתח, דוד, יהוה/אלהים, חטא, דָּבָר, עוֹלָה, ובית/בית יהוה תנותחנה, כמו גם התימות של להכנע, להתפלל, לבקש את ה', לשוב מחטא, שמיעת ה', סליחה ורפואה. בעקבות בחינה מדוקדקת, הסקתי כי הסיכוי גבוה לכך שבעל דברי הימים קשר במתכוון – ממניעיו שלו – בין דה"א כ"א-כ"ב 1 ודה"ב ז' 11-22. מבחינה תיאולוגית, דוד זוכה עתה לפרי הראשית של רחמי ה' בדיוק באותו מקום שנבחר עבור בניית המקדש (דה"א כ"ב 1; דה"ב ג' 1). בעל דברי הימים ביקש להציג את דוד כבעל תשובה אקזמפלרי המקריב קרבנות במקום המקדש המיועד כדי להיות למקור השראה עבור קהלו הבתר-גלותי, למען אשר יעשו גם הם כמוהו.

עבודה זו נעשתה בהדרכתו של

**ד"ר ליאור גוטליב**

מן המחלקה לתני"ך

של אוניברסיטת בר-אילן

אוניברסיטת בר-אילן

**מטרתו של סיפור המפקד בדברי הימים והשפעתו על מורשת דוד**

פיטר שאפו

עבודה זו מוגשת כחלק מהדרישות לשם קבלת תואר מוסמך

במחלקה לתנ"ך

של אוניברסיטת בר-אילן

תשפ"ב

רמת גן