

**“And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he – (i.e., Satan? to comport or agree with 1 Chron. 21:1) – (otherwise, the Lord) moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.”
2 Sam. 24:1.**

This is certainly an amazing story – a remarkable historical incident, told in words selected by the Holy Ghost, as they all appear with 100% accuracy in **Second Samuel chapter 24** and in **First Chronicles chapter 21**. There are lessons for us innumerable in this portion of the written Word of God – all pursuant to the *“exceeding great and precious promises”* – also written down and preserved for us just as though the apostle Peter were yet alive and speaking to us face-to-face today; to wit:

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Pet. 1:4)

And, just as though the apostle Paul were yet alive and speaking to us face-to-face today; to wit: *“For whatsoever things were WRITTEN aforetime were WRITTEN for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures”* – (i.e., God’s Elect derive supernatural LEARNING, supernatural PATIENCE, and supernatural COMFORT from diligent study of the WRITTEN Word of God, and therefore) – *“might have HOPE.” Rom. 15:4.*

The plain, simple, and brief opening or introduction to this sad saga signals fireworks ahead. Listen closely to the words of the **second Samuel** account; to wit: *“And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.” 2 Sam. 24:1.* Powerful, vital questions immediately present themselves – life and death, Heaven and Hell type questions. What has so kindled the anger of God against Israel that God would *“move”* or *“provoke”* – either directly or through Satan, the dark angel of death – David *“against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah?”* And what is so sinful about taking a census (i.e., numbering the men 20 years old and up) of David’s kingdom? And is God thereby provoking David to commit this dreadful sin, just so He can severely punish Israel for some other unnamed sin? To wit:

***“And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.”
(2 Sam. 24:1[a])***

Why was the anger of the Lord AGAIN kindled against Israel? To what does the word *“again”* refer to? There had been an earlier *“famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David enquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.” 2 Sam. 21:1.* The sense of this passage is that year after year, as the famine got worse, David’s fears and apprehensions also got worse, lest his own sins be the cause of this affliction upon the entire nation – which David had no doubt was directly from the Lord God. Similarly, the financial mess America is now experiencing – getting worse year after year – as the experts demonstrate for the world to see their stupidity and incompetence.

David had sense enough to seek the Lord as the undoubted author of the famine, – Who sent the famine to punish Israel as a nation – and Who alone held the rain in His hands for relief. This evil nation cannot seek the Lord for relief from the devastating financial famine that may indeed bring America to her knees and to her doom, because this evil nation is busy spitting in God's Face over the fag issue and the abortion issue and the persecution of God's Elect issue.

“Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh, but in vain.” (Psa. 127:1)

The Lord no longer builds the American house – instead He is blowing them away with His whirlwinds (aka, tornadoes and hurricanes), and He is sweeping them away in overwhelming floods; and the Lord is no longer keeping, guarding, protecting America from her enemies – indeed, the Lord IS now America's Enemy, America's Terrorist – fighting against America; to wit:

“Thus saith the Lord God... And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath...and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.” (Jer. 21:5-7)

Back to David and his three-year famine. David sought the Lord, Who told him that the famine was punishment for what Saul, Israel's King, had done AS THEIR KING and thus chargeable to the whole nation. It was the ordinary people – not the king and his government and the otherwise rich and powerful – who suffered during three years of famine. They deserve it. If they put up with him as their king, they deserve to suffer for his sins and folly. Even so, America. The evil people of this evil country are about to elect a gang of baby-killing, fag-loving, Bible-hating perverts to run America. Therefore, they deserve to suffer the wrath of God; to wit; *“David enquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites. And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them (in the days of Joshua – some 500 years earlier); and Saul sought to slay them (i.e., commit genocide on them, despite Joshua's oath to do them no harm and protect them) in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)” 2 Sam. 21:1-2.* The Gibeonites went to extraordinary lengths to make peace with Israel, and preserve themselves alive to live among them; and the Lord appears to have honored the league and oath between them, though achieved by wily Gibeonite deception; to wit:

“And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof; That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, WITH ONE ACCORD.” (Josh. 9:1,2)

That is, all with one accord, EXCEPT for one remarkable nation; to wit: The GIBEONITES. They refused to fight Israel, and there seems to have been a spiritual component to their refusal, somewhat like Rahab the harlot; to wit: *“I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.”* Josh. 2:9,10. Similarly, when Joshua demanded to know why the Gibeonites had deceived him and the princes of Israel, they gave a noble answer; to wit:

“And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us? ... And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the Lord thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.” (Josh. 9:22,24)

It is written that *“Gibeon was a great city, and all the men thereof were mighty.”* Josh. 10:2. All the other nations and kings of the Canaanites, led by Adonizedec king of Jerusalem, despised Gibeon for making peace with Israel; to wit: *“Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent unto (the other kings), saying, Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon; for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.”* Josh. 10:3,4. And the congregation of the children of Israel wanted to destroy Gibeon along with all the other nations of the Canaanites, but the princes of Israel forbade them; to wit: *“But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel: now therefore WE MAY NOT TOUCH THEM.”* Josh. 9:19. And so it appears that Israel’s oath to the Gibeonites was honored – and so it continued to be honored – until bloody king Saul came on the scene some 500 years later; to wit:

“And David enquired of the Lord (as to the cause of the three-year famine). And the Lord answered, IT IS FOR SAUL, and for his bloody house, because HE SLEW THE GIBEONITES...and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.” (2 Sam. 21:1,2)

When David asked the surviving Gibeonites what it would take to make the atonement and settle the matter, they said, *“Let seven men of Saul’s sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul,”* – (remember, Gibeah, infamous for their protection of fags? Judges, chapters 19,20,21) – *“whom the Lord did chose. And the king said, I will give them.”* 2 Sam. 21:6. Why would it take three years of famine and consequential suffering for the entire nation to get a little justice for the longsuffering Gibeonites?

What will it take to get the attention of this evil nation for their gross national sins of abortion, (the wholesale killing of millions of infants), adultery, (divorce and remarriage), same-sex marriage, (smash-mouth, in-your-face, insults and blasphemy to God)? Will anything short of the Great Day of Judgment and the fires of Hell get the attention of America the Ugly? When we preach to this evil nation that their sins brought down the towers on 9/11, they say no, the Islamic extremists drove the planes that brought down the towers on 9/11, and they hate us for telling them otherwise; and the same scenario goes for the killer tornadoes, Katrina-style floods, hurricanes, killer forest fires, schoolroom shooters, stock market crashes, and tragedies of any and every kind. But when and where did the massacre of the Gibeonites by king Saul take place?

Gill, typically, says, *“When this was done is not certain; the Jews commonly say that he slew them when he slew the priests at Nob, they being hewers of wood and drawers of water to them, and were slain with them.”* It is true that Joshua had made all the Gibeonites, in perpetuity, bond-slaves to the Israelites, especially to the priests, for ministering about the altar, as well as their private affairs; to wit:

“And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water (i.e., bond-slaves) for the congregation, AND FOR THE ALTAR OF THE LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.”
(Josh. 9:27)

Also, it was noised among them, that king Saul *“sought by divers means to destroy these people, and root them out of the land,”* despite full well knowing that Joshua and the princes of Israel had sworn not to harm them, but to give them protection from harm. Furthermore, the barbarous manner in which Saul massacred EIGHTY-FIVE priests that day in Nob, all in a dreadful rage, because Saul merely (and mistakenly) believed that the chief priest, Ahimelech, had sided with David in his dispute with Saul – makes it unlikely that Saul WOULD NOT have also slaughtered the Gibeonites who were then and there ministering about the altar and caring for the personal needs of the priests. The massacre very likely came down as follows: Saul was holding his daily “pity-party,” when a suckegg hound dog named Doeg, fed him some lies that Saul was soliciting – and his wrath grew; to wit:

“That all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that showeth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or showeth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he enquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father’s house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king. And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord. And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in

wait, as at this day? Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honorable in thine house? And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the Lord; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not show it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord. And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, CHILDREN AND SUCKLINGS, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword. And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. And Abiathar showed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard."

(1 Sam. 22:8-23)

Thus, you see that on one day, king Saul butchered 425 priests of the Lord, and their immediate families – (85 x 5 = 425) – plus many thousands of the citizens of the city of Nob – (from new born infants or sucklings to old people, men and women) – all innocent of any wrongdoing whatsoever – together with all their domestic animals. More importantly, David had full, and accurate, and contemporary, knowledge – to wit: the eye-witness account of Abiathar the son of Ahimelech the high priest – who escaped from Saul's slaughter and went straight to David with his report. Moreover, David had a daily reminder of king Saul's slaughter, because Abiathar joined David and his band in the wilderness bearing an ephod from a dead priest of the Lord whom Saul had slain; to wit:

"And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down WITH AN EPHOD IN HIS HAND." (1 Sam. 23:6)

Yet, there is no record that David ever took punitive action against the house of Saul for the Massacre at Nob as he did for the slaughter of the Gibeonites, by the hanging of seven sons of Saul, thereby ending the three-year famine. **2 Sam. 21:1,6,9**. Is this the cause that, ***"And AGAIN the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah?"*** **2 Sam. 24:1**. SOME SUCH SURELY IS THE CAUSE. David stubbornly insisted – over the passionate advice of ***"Joab and the captains of the host"*** that the people be numbered from Dan to Beersheba.

Gill says that ***"the Lord left him to the corruption of his nature, sometimes called Satan, 2 Cor. 12:7, which wrought powerfully in him, and stirred him up to take a step contrary to the interest of Israel, and what was prejudicial to them, as the event showed."*** Very mildly put. Some 70,000 men immediately died of a pestilence, and then:

“God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it. And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.” (1 Chron. 21:15,16)

The act of NUMBERING THE PEOPLE was thus seen to be a great sin in the eyes of God; to wit:

“And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel. And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing. So the Lord sent pestilence upon Israel; and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.” (1 Chron. 21:7,8,14)

At the beginning of this sermon, I put a rhetorical question; to wit: What is so sinful about taking a census? What’s wrong with NUMBERING THE PEOPLE? Well, Beloved. I believe I have read what many, or most, of the commentators have to say on the subject. Most, if not all, of them miss the mark by a country mile – in my humble opinion. And remember, I am in my 62nd year – without intermission – as a Bible preacher. Most, if not all, are insultingly trivial. John Gilpin said the deadliest sin for young preachers is fornication, that once you commit that sin, you are done as a preacher. That may be. But I point out to you that when the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel when the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab at Baal-peor, only 24,000 died in the resulting plague. **Num. 25:1,9**. But, when David NUMBERED THE PEOPLE, 70,000 died. **2 Sam. 24:15**.

I conclude that COUNTING NUMBERS is deadlier than fornication. Most preachers I’ve known are slaves to NUMBERS, and have long ago compromised away their doctrines to keep people from leaving their church, or to get people to come to their church in the first place. Everything important in their sad lives depends on how many people sit in their pews.

Oswald J. Smith, Founder and Pastor of The Peoples Church in Toronto, Canada, came to speak at Bob Jones Univ. when I was a young preacher boy in 1947 or so; and he and old Dr. Bob Jones got into a spirited dispute on the big stage at Rhodehaver Auditorium on BJU campus – and the dispute was over NUMBERING THE PEOPLE they could draw to their meetings. They both got mad and snapped at each other.

I concluded right then that those two birds would say or do just about anything for NUMBERS. Smith snapped, “Dr. Jones, I don’t believe in COUNTING NUMBERS.” Jones retorted, “Well, Dr. Smith, I do. They COUNTED NUMBERS in Bible days (pointing to **Acts 2:41 and 4:4**).” Smith could hardly get to his feet fast enough to answer, “Well, Dr. Jones, but in those two places, the Lord was doing the counting.” That brought down the house. Everything – and I mean EVERYTHING – from the size of the offerings, to advancement up the denominational ranks to larger churches, depends on NUMBERS in the pews. And that, Beloved, is why Gospel preaching has vanished from the American scene.

Amen.