

1 Chronicles 21:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Theological Analysis: This passage falls within the section on David's census and divine judgment. The Hebrew term חַטָּא (chet) - sin/offense is theologically significant here, pointing to Even godly leaders sin and face consequences. The Chronicler's narrative, while paralleling Samuel-Kings in places, offers a distinct theological perspective emphasizing temple worship, Levitical service, and covenant faithfulness.

Chronicles presents David not primarily as warrior-king but as worship organizer and temple planner. This verse contributes to that portrait by highlighting the spiritual dimensions of Israel's national life. The text demonstrates that true prosperity comes through proper worship and covenant obedience rather than merely military or political success.

Doctrinally, this passage teaches about Even godly leaders sin and face consequences. Cross-references throughout Chronicles connect David's reign to the broader redemptive narrative, showing how God's covenant promises advance through faithful human leadership while ultimately depending on divine grace and power. The messianic implications are profound: Christ bears judgment for sin on our behalf.

Historical Context

Historical Background: This section describes events from David's reign (c. 1010-970 BCE) but was written centuries later during the Persian period (c. 450-400 BCE). The Chronicler's selectivity in retelling David's story serves his theological purposes—he omits David's sins (Bathsheba, Absalom's rebellion) while emphasizing David's worship reforms and temple preparations.

The historical setting of David's census and divine judgment occurred during Israel's united monarchy, when the nation reached its territorial and political zenith. Archaeological evidence from this period shows significant building projects and administrative development. However, the Chronicler writes for a much smaller, struggling post-exilic community, using David's golden age to inspire hope for restoration.

Ancient Near Eastern parallels show that temple construction and royal sponsorship of worship were common across cultures. However, Israel's understanding of worship centered on covenant relationship with the one true God rather than manipulation of capricious deities. This theological distinctiveness shapes the Chronicler's presentation.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does this verse's emphasis on Even godly leaders sin and face consequences challenge or affirm your current spiritual priorities and practices?

2. What does Christ bears judgment for sin on our behalf teach you about Jesus Christ and His redemptive work?
3. In what practical ways can you apply the principles of covenant faithfulness and proper worship demonstrated in this passage?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	דָּוִד יָד	אֶל	יֹאבָב	וְאֶל	שָׂרֵי י	הָעָם	לְכָל ו
said	And David	H413	to Joab	H413	and to the rulers	of the people	H1980
H559	H1732		H3097		H8269	H5971	
סָפְרוּ	אֶת	יִשְׂרָאֵל	מִבְּאֵר	שֶׁבַע	וְעַד	דָּן	
number	H853	Israel	H0	from Beersheba	H5704	even to Dan	
H5608		H3478		H884		H1835	
וְהָבִיאוּ	אֵלַי	וְאֵדַע	הֵם	אֶת	מִסְפָּרָם:		
and bring	H413	of them to me that I may know	H853	the number			
H935		H3045		H4557			

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org