

1 Chronicles 21:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

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

אָמַר	וַיֹּאבָב	יֹסֵף	יְהוָה	עַל	עַם וְ	כָהֵם
answered	And Joab	so many more	The LORD	H5921	make his people	as they
H559	H3097	H3254	H3068		H5971	H1992

מֵאָה	פְּעָמִים	הֲלֹא	אֲדֹנָי	הִמָּלֵךְ	כָּל־
an hundred	times	H3808	are they not all my lord's	the king	H3605
H3967	H6471		H113	H4428	

אֲדֹנָי	לְעֲבָדָי	לְמָה	יִבְקֶשׁ	זֹאת
are they not all my lord's	servants	H4100	require	H2063
H113	H5650		H1245	

אֲדֹנָי	יְהוָה	לְמָה	לְאַשְׁמֵהוּ
are they not all my lord's	H4100	H1961	this thing why will he be a cause of trespass
H113			H819

לְיִשְׂרָאֵל:

to Israel

H3478

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 1:11 (References Lord): (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!)