

You, I Can Trust!

Taken From 2 Samuel 24

Foundation

As you begin your time exploring today, ask God to give you a teachable heart. Come expectantly to His Word, eager to learn more about Him. He is a God who can be fully trusted.



Have you ever felt afraid of God?

It's been many years, David thought to himself, years full of both blessing and trials. David looked out his palace window at the city of Jerusalem. Many called it "The City of David." How well he remembered conquering the city and establishing it as the capital for the entire nation. With great shouts of joy David brought the ark of God to Jerusalem so the Israelites would once again have a central place of worship. Those had been glorious days—ones to look back upon and smile about. Yet, those accomplishments faded in significance when compared to everything else David had experienced.

He quietly remembered being anointed king by the prophet Samuel but having to wait patiently to actually sit on the throne. One by one, memories flooded David's mind: killing Goliath, being invited to live in Saul's palace and befriending Jonathan—then finding himself fleeing for his life and living secretly among the Philistines. *But the Lord brought me through it all and preserved my life! Even when I sinned against Him by taking Bathsheba and murdering her*

husband, God forgave me when I repented, David thought.

A cloud of sorrow suddenly rolled over David's emotions as he recalled the heartache he experienced in his family. One son, Absalom, had killed another, and then rebelliously tried to take the throne from David. Quickly David put these thoughts behind him. *But all is peaceful now, and we're no longer at war, he prided himself. I would have to say I've done quite well...*

David stepped away from the window and called for Joab, the commander of his army. He had a mission for Joab to accomplish—a mission David wanted done for personal reasons of pride. “Joab, I would like for you to go throughout all of Israel and count how many people are in my kingdom.”

Joab hesitated, not knowing how to respond. Even he knew it was a sin against God to do such a thing, for a census was taken when and only when God ordered it. David noticed Joab's silence. “Well?” he asked.

“I pray that the Lord will let you live until you see a hundred times more people as there are now,” Joab said, searching for the right words. “But—may I ask why you want to do this?” he finished, swallowing his concern.

King David only dismissed Joab's worry and insisted he do as commanded. Reluctantly, Joab left to accomplish what David ordered, traveling throughout the entire land. It took him nine months and twenty days before he returned to Jerusalem with his report.

“There are 800,000 men of military age in Israel,” he stated, “and 500,000 in Judah.” Although the numbers pleased David, his taking of a

The last time God ordered a census was when Joshua brought the Israelites into the land, in order to know how to divide the land appropriately!

Threshing floors are flat or level places where the kernel of the grain is separated from the stalk. This is done by either beating the grain on a rock or using oxen to walk over it. Araunah's threshing floor became the place where Solomon later built his temple!

census displeased the Lord—and that began to weigh heavily upon David's conscience.

"Please forgive me, Lord," David admitted before God. "My sin was no small thing, and it was wrong and foolish for me to do what I did."

The next morning, Gad the prophet came to David with a message the Lord had given him. "Because the Lord is displeased with the Israelites, and because of your sin as well, He has given you three choices. You may choose one of these punishments and He will do it," Gad informed. "Your choices are: three years of famine, three months of being pursued by enemies, or three days of devastating plague throughout your kingdom. Think upon these and let me know what answer to give the Lord."

David looked at Gad, then down at the ground. To him there was no question of choice. He would choose the one that came most directly from God's hand.

"I will trust the Lord to do with us what must be done, for He is merciful. Let's not leave ourselves to the control of men," David replied. He would wisely choose the three days of plague.

That morning, the Lord sent the plague on Israel for a three-day period, and 70,000 people from the northernmost parts of Israel down to Beersheba died. As the angel was preparing to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord stopped him, "That's enough! It's time for the punishment to stop!" The destruction stopped at the threshing floor of a man named Araunah.

That same day, Gad came to David and told him to go and build an altar at the sight where the plague stopped. Going to Araunah, David offered to buy his threshing floor, but Araunah would have no part of it. He had seen the angel of death stop there and desired that David have it as a gift.

"Take whatever you desire as a sacrifice to the Lord—take the oxen, and use their yokes for your wood," he generously offered. Although David understood his kindness, he refused to accept it. He desired to pay for the land in order to show his honor and love to the Lord.

"It's important that my burnt offerings to the Lord cost me something," David explained. He then paid Araunah, built the altar, and sacrificed to the Lord. David had personally trusted God—and God did not disappoint him.

Footwork

Look up 2 Samuel 24:14 and read it. What does it say? What was David's reasoning behind this? What would you have done?



David had great confidence in God because of his relationship with Him. He knew God was holy and had to punish sin, but he also knew God was just and faithful. The Scriptures say that David had a heart for the Lord. This doesn't mean David was perfect; it just means he confessed his wrongdoing and asked God's forgiveness for the times he made unwise choices. David's first desire was to know God and to be in fellowship with Him, and that gave him the foundation and courage to trust God all the more. Do you know God in this manner? If you don't, would you like to? If so, click to the section on this website titled "A Special Message Just for You." You can also ask your parents, your pastor, youth pastor, or someone you know who has a relationship with God about how you can come to know Him like this.