### 2 Samuel

## Chapter 24

1Well thereafter, the anger of Jehovah started to burn in IsraEl, because David was moved to say, ‘Go and take a census of IsraEl and Judah!’  
  
2Yes, the king had said to JoAb (who was in charge of the army):  
  
 ‘Go throughout all the tribes of IsraEl and Judah from Dan to BeerSheba, and count all the men, so I’ll know how many there are.’  
  
3But JoAb said to the king:  
  
 ‘May Jehovah your God add to your people, and may you find that they’ve grown to be 100 times greater. However, my Lord the king; why would you want to do such a thing?’  
  
4But the king refused to listen to JoAb and to those who were in charge of his army, so JoAb and his men left the presence of the king and went to take a census of the people of IsraEl.  
  
  
5They crossed the JorDan and camped to the right of AroEr in the ravine of Gad and EliEzer... 6Then they went to GileAd and into the land of ThaBason (AdasSai)... And from there, they traveled to DaniDan and UDan, and they camped around Sidon... 7Then they traveled to MapSar of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites and CanaAnites; and finally, they went to the south of Judah, into BeerSheba.  
  
8So they traveled throughout the entire land, returning to JeruSalem at the end of 9 months and 20 days, 9and JoAb gave the numbers of the people to the king.  
  
Altogether, he found that there were 800,000 men in the armies of IsraEl who carried the broadsword, plus 500,000 warriors from Judah.  
  
10Well, after the census was completed, David [became ashamed] of what he’d done, and he said to Jehovah:  
  
 ‘I’ve really sinned by doing this thing... However, O Lord, please overlook this lawlessness on the part of your servant, for I was very foolish!’  
  
11But when David got up the next morning, [he found that] the Word of Jehovah had come to the prophet Gad (the Seer), who was told:  
  
 12‘Go and speak to David.  
  
 ‘Tell him that this is what Jehovah said:  
  
 ‘I’m giving you your choice of three [penalties]. You must choose the one you prefer, and I’ll then bring it against you!’  
  
13So Gad went to David and told him:  
  
 ‘Choose for yourself which of these is going to come upon you:  
  
 1. Three years of famine in our land,  
  
 2. Three months when your enemies will chase you and you’ll run from them, or  
  
 3. Three days of death in your land.  
  
 ‘Now, give me a reply for the One who sent me.’  
  
14And David said to Gad:  
  
 ‘Those are all tough choices, but of the three, I choose to put myself into the hands of Jehovah, because He’s very compassionate... He will never allow me to fall into the hands of [my enemies].’  
  
15So David chose the death.  
  
Now, it was the season of the wheat harvest when Jehovah sent death throughout IsraEl from the morning until dinnertime. Devastation started among the people, killing 70,000 men from Dan to BeerSheba.  
  
16Then the messenger of God turned his hand towards JeruSalem… To destroy it! However, [Jehovah then forgave] the evil that was done, and He said to the messenger that was destroying the people,  
  
 ‘That’s enough!’  
  
Well at the time, the messenger of Jehovah was at the threshing-floor of Orna the Jebusite. 17And David said to Jehovah (when he saw the messenger striking the people):  
  
 ‘Look… I was the one who did the wrong!  
  
 ‘Yes, I’m the shepherd who sinned, and these are just the sheep… What have they done? May Your hand come against me and the house of my father instead!’  
  
18Then Gad came to David that day and said to him:  
  
 ‘Now, go and erect an Altar to Jehovah at the threshing-floor of Orna the Jebusite.’  
  
19So, following the instructions of the prophet Gad, he did what the Lord told him to do. 20And when Orna saw the king and his servants coming towards him, he bowed before the king with his face to the ground.  
  
21Then Orna asked:  
  
 ‘Why is my lord the king coming to his servant?’  
  
And David replied:  
  
 ‘I’m here to buy your threshing-floor from you in order to build an Altar to Jehovah, so that He will stop destroying the people.’  
  
22And Orna said to David:  
  
 ‘Then, take it and offer it to Jehovah, my lord the king… Do whatever is good in your eyes!  
  
 ‘Look, here are some oxen to sacrifice as whole burnt-offerings… And use the wooden [ox-cart] and its wheels to burn [the sacrifices]!’  
  
23So Orna offered it all to the king.  
  
And he said:  
  
 ‘May Jehovah your God bless you.’  
  
24But the king said to Orna:  
  
 ‘No, I want to purchase it from you for a price, because I won’t offer a whole burnt-offering to Jehovah my God free-of-charge.’  
  
So, David bought the threshing floor and the oxen, paying for it with 50 large silver coins... 25And there he built an Altar to Jehovah, where he sacrificed whole burnt offerings and peace offerings.  
  
Then [later on], Solomon added to the size of the Altar, because it was small at first. But [Jehovah’s favor] returned to the land, and He ended the devastation that He was bringing upon IsraEl.

# 1 Kings

1 Kings is a history book.  
  
It’s part 3 of a 4-part history book (1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings). It’s usually pronounced as ‘First Kings,’ although some say ‘One Kings.’  
  
1 Kings covers the period just before King David’s death until the death of King JehoShaphat and the start of AhaziAh’s reign. It also includes the activities of the prophets EliJah and EliSha.  
  
We don’t know who wrote or complied this book. Jewish tradition says that it was written by the prophet Jeremiah. This could be true.  
  
  
Chronology problems  
  
The internal chronology of the book is, unfortunately, impossible for us to understand today. Why? Well, the methods used to count the length of a king’s reign evidently differed over the years, and we don’t know which method was used for which king.  
  
For example, some kings had their first few months before the new year counted as ‘1 year,’ while others didn’t. Also, there were certainly some gaps and overlapping between the reigns (for example, time before a son took over, or time when a son co-ruled with his father). None of these details are recorded in the text – probably because it was obvious to the people at the time (or you could get the details from another book), but all of this is long-forgotten today, and of all the other ancient books about the events are long-lost.  
  
Some modern scholars have tried to work out the chronology, but there’s no consensus. So all the BCE dates that you may see for their reigns are just best-guesses.  
  
Further, some of the numbers given by the Greek Septuagint text (which we use) are different from the numbers given in the Hebrew Masoretic text. Which one is right? Or do both have errors? We don’t know, but we’re usually inclined to follow the Greek text.