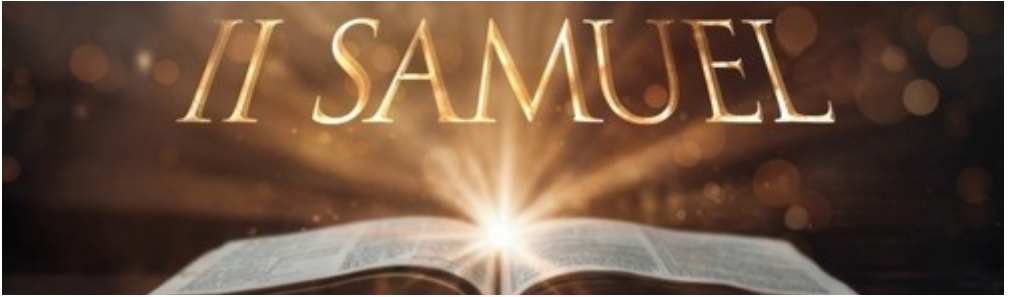


Let's Worship God

21st-26th September 2026

2 Samuel





Monday - 2 Samuel 24:1-17 - Trusting God When You Don't Understand

Are you willing to worship a God who you don't always understand? Are you willing to obey God even if you don't know why he asks you to do something? Those are questions we have to face up to as we come to this unexpected ending of 2nd Samuel. Because we have an event recorded here which seems utterly strange to us. David orders a census to see how many fighting men he can call on. Verse 9 makes it clear that he's counting men who can bear the sword, not just having a census of the population in general. And it's a wrong thing to do. Even though we're not told exactly why it was wrong. But we can probably accept that if God says it was wrong, it was wrong! That's not the hard bit. But what we do perhaps struggle with a bit more is that something which doesn't sound like a big deal to us, results in the deaths of 70,000 people. Some people say that the Biblical accounts of David are fictional accounts to make David sound a better king than he actually was. And yet the books of Samuel, which tells us more about David than any other part of the Bible, end with him sinning against God. And his sin is so bad, that it results in the deaths of 70,000 men. It's very hard for us to understand. But it's not that there was any great mystery for those in the story. When David commanded Joab, his army commander, to go and number the people in verse 3, Joab tried to talk him out of it. And that in itself should make us sit up and take notice. Because Joab isn't exactly known for having a tender conscience. He has murdered in cold blood before. But now, what David wants to do is so bad in Joab's eyes that he tries to talk him out of it! In fact, 1st Chronicles 21 tells us that the king's command was so abhorrent to Joab that he didn't actually count everyone. So both before and during the census, Joab is horrified and disgusted. After he does it, David himself is conscience-stricken. But the Bible itself doesn't actually tell us why it was wrong. Or why it deserved such a severe punishment. Most commentators conclude that David's sin in counting his men is that it will stop him relying on God. Once he knows how many are in the army he'll be able to think: 'Everything's going to be ok, because I have 1.3 million men who can fight if I need them to'. He'll be able to glory in his army. And so while we're not told why what David did was wrong, I don't think we'll be too far off if we conclude it was something to do with shifting his confidence from God to his army. That makes sense to us - but perhaps the punishment doesn't. The challenge for us is: are we willing to trust God, even when we don't understand him?

Question

1. What is hard to understand about this passage?

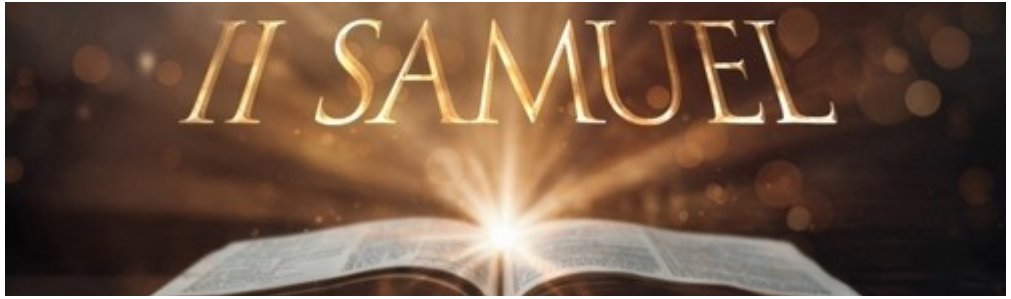
Prayer Points

1. Pray that you would trust God even when you don't understand.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great;" 2 Samuel 24:14b

Praise: Psalm 68:29-32 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Tuesday - 2 Samuel 24:1-4 - Trusting God's Character

A God who only ever did things we could understand wouldn't be God. There are some cultures where authority figures are never questioned. If your father, your mother, your employer, or your ruler tells you to do something, you do it, and you don't question why. It often leads to abuse and exploitation. In the West however, we go to the opposite extreme. In the West we say: 'If you're in authority over me, you're only there because I elected you. You're there by my leave. If you're going to tell me what I should do, I want to know why, and I want to think it's a good reason. If I don't think it's a good reason, I'm not going to do it.' And we can end up bringing that attitude to authority into the church. We can end up bringing it into our relationship with God. But the problem with that is that if God is God and we're not, then he's going to do things we don't understand. And our understanding can't be the judge of whether they're right or wrong. If you tell a child to do something, almost automatically they'll ask 'Why?' And good parents or grandparents, or aunts or uncles will try and explain why. But there are things that they're just not going to understand. And it's not because they're stupid. It's because they're 6 and you're 37. And they're not going to be able to understand. But they just need to obey. In that situation, no explanation is going to help. One day, they will understand, but not now. Reasons won't help them obey. But what will help them obey is if they trust you. That's a bit like God and us. When he says something is right or wrong, we need to believe him, because he is God. We need to trust him - and we **can** trust him, because we know his character.

And David realises that here. He knows enough about God to know what his character is like. Because when God gives David 3 options as to what punishment he can face, David says in v14: 'Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man.' I wonder if we tend to look on God's mercy as the exception rather than the rule? Not David. If it's a choice between the mercy of God and the mercy of man, David is choosing God's mercy every time.

Question

1. How can we trust God when we don't understand?

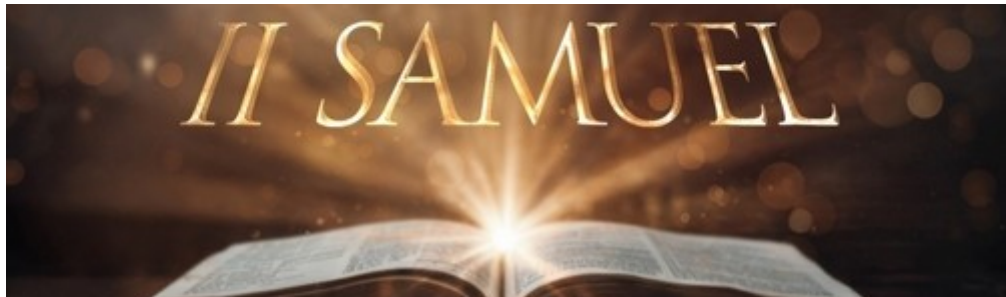
Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that God has shown us his character so we can trust him.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great;" 2 Samuel 24:14b

Praise: Psalm 40:1-5 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Wednesday - 2 Samuel 24:5-8 - Struck to the Heart

The turning point in this chapter is verse 10, when David's heart struck him. I said earlier that this chapter doesn't present David in a great light. But that's only partly true. David is being pictured here for us warts and all. This event seems to be towards the end of his life. And there's a warning here that it's possible for a believer to commit bigger sins later in life than they ever did when they were younger. Growth in grace doesn't automatically come with age. Yes we would expect and hope that people who have been Christians a long time will have a spiritual depth and maturity to them. But it's also possible that someone could have been a Christian for decades, and still be spiritually immature. I'm not saying that's the case for David. It isn't. I'm just saying we shouldn't assume that just because someone has been a Christian for a long time, that a path of action they're taking is wise or godly. And nor should we assume for ourselves that we are 'safe' from committing big sins once we get to a certain age.

Yet we do see a David here who has grown in his faith. Because he's now more aware of his own sin. What do you think of when you think of a spiritually mature Christian? Is it just someone who's been a Christian a long time? Is it someone who knows a lot, and can quote a lot of the Bible? Is it someone who can talk a lot about the sins of society? Why I say that David has grown as a Christian here is because do you remember what happened after he sinned with Bathsheba? And had her husband killed? He just got on with life. Nathan the prophet had to come to him and show him his sin in such a way that David was cut to the heart. But here, David's heart strikes him before the prophet comes. And he confesses his sin before it's exposed. What a mark of grace it is to confess a sin to God or another person before you're called to account about it, rather than after.

Question

1. Does getting older always result in spiritual maturity?
2. How did David show he had grown spiritually?

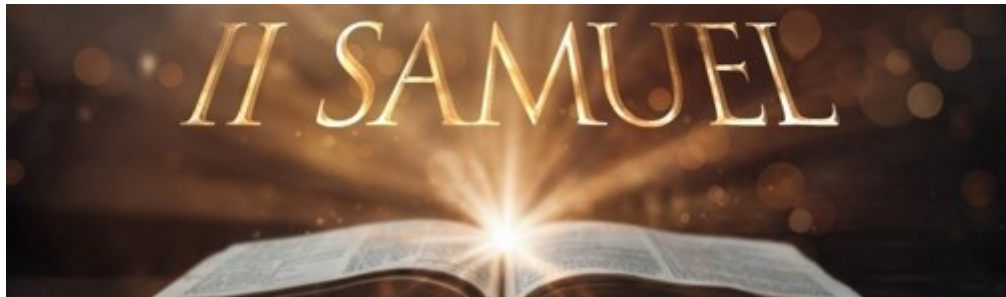
Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would grow as believers in Christ.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great;” 2 Samuel 24:14b

Praise: Psalm 40:6-10 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Thursday - 2 Samuel 24:9-12- Sin Has Consequences

While confessing our sin takes away guilt. It doesn't take away the consequences of our sin in this life. And here David is going to have to face consequences for his sin.

Although actually while we talk about David's sin here, the chapter starts with the explanation for all that follows, and that is that God is angry with Israel. And in his sovereignty, the way he decided to punish them was by inciting David to number them. Perhaps someone will say: 'I thought James chapter 1 says: 'Let no-one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no-one'. And that's true. So when we read here that God incited David against them, that's simply in the sense that God is sovereign over all things. And so when we have the same story in 1st Chronicles 21, we're told that Satan incited David. That's not a contradiction. It's just filling in the details. God, in his anger against Israel, let Satan incite David to go and number them. And if we struggle to get our head around that, that's ok. We are called to worship God even if we don't understand. We can trust him. And perhaps it helps us do that when we realise that the one man at the centre of all this - the man who is forced to make an invidious choice as to which punishment will fall on his beloved people - trusted God in the midst of all this. And if David was there. And if it was his people who were killed. And his sin being punished. And if he could trust in the midst of it all that God was more merciful than man. If he could trust in the midst of all this that God was good, then we can too.

It's not quite right to say that 70,000 people here die because of the sin of one man. 70,000 of the men of Israel die because God was angry with Israel. David's sin was just the background against which God brought down his punishment on them. What had Israel done to make God angry? Again we're not told. But back in chapter 15 we saw how they rejected God's choice of king and went after Absalom. In chapter 20 we saw another rebellion, when we're told that 'all the men of Israel withdrew from David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri'. In whatever way, that rebellious spirit must have manifested itself again. And so 70,000 men of Israel don't die because of David's sin. But they die because of their own sin, and the sin of their nation.

Question

1. Who has done wrong in this passage?

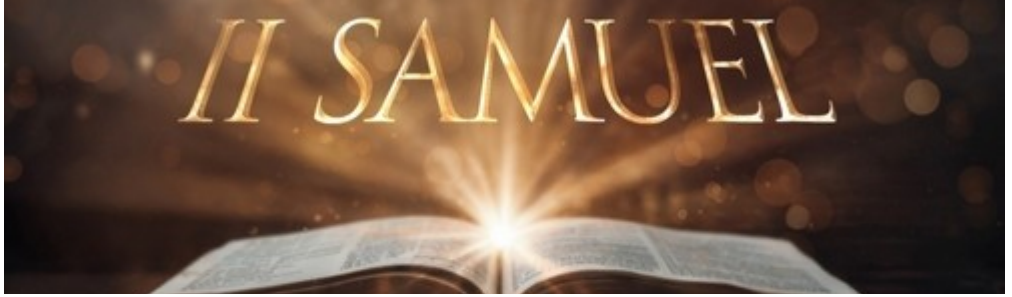
Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would have mercy upon our nation.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great;" 2 Samuel 24:14b

Praise: Psalm 40:11-15 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Friday - 2 Samuel 24:13-17 - Strike the Shepherd

David says in verse 17: 'Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done?' David can see his own sin more clearly than the sin of others. And that's the way it should be - but so often isn't. David here is willing to take more than his fair share of the blame. How often we try and do the opposite! Ever since the first sin, when Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent, we like to look for people to put the blame on. But David does the opposite. He wants to take the blame. 'These sheep, what have they done?' Do you hear what he's saying? He's saying: Strike the shepherd, not the sheep. Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may go free. Hold it against me, not them. 'Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house.'

It's an amazing request. David isn't alone here. Years before, Moses had asked if he could be blotted out of God's book, if the people could be forgiven instead. In effect these men were saying: Can a substitute not take the punishment instead? And can I not be that substitute? And with the New Testament in our hands we can see God's answer. Yes, a substitute could take the punishment instead. But that substitute could not be David. It could not be Moses. It had to be the Son of God himself. The shepherd was struck, that the sheep could go free.

If you're a Christian today, then you have a king who didn't simply want to take your punishment. You have a king who actually did take your punishment.

Questions

1. What is David willing to do?
2. How does this point us to Christ?

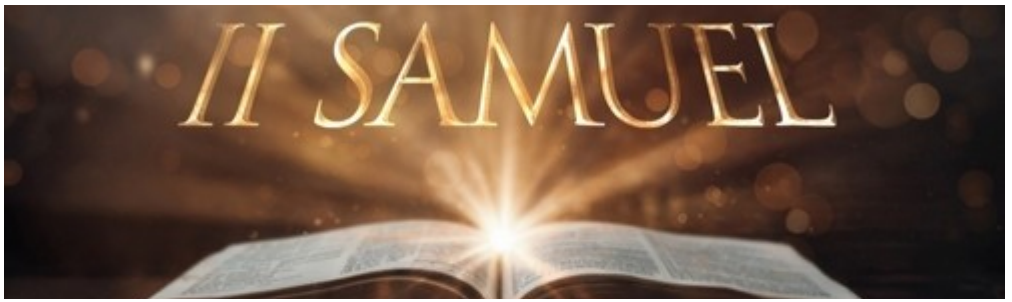
Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that Christ is our Substitute and Saviour.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great;" 2 Samuel 24:14b

Praise: Psalm 40:16-18 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Saturday - 2 Samuel 24:1-17 - The Seriousness of Sin

if you're not yet a Christian, the 70,000 dead bodies this chapter tells us about is a message to us that sin is far more serious than we realise. You may not think your sin is a big deal. But are you going to trust your fallen human mind on that over God? If you don't think your sin is a big deal, pray that God would reveal that to you. And actually, the biggest testimony to the seriousness of sin and the sinfulness of sin isn't 70,000 dead in Israel in the year 1000 BC. It's the Son of God himself hanging on the cross in 33 AD as the sin bearer. That's what it cost that our sin might be forgiven. 1000 years later, it wasn't a destroying angel coming to Jerusalem. But an angel coming to sustain the Lord as he went to the cross.

David loved his people. But his actions brought harm on them. As did their own actions. But David's greater son, the Lord Jesus, would instead come and bring salvation to his people. And so this story at the very end of 2nd Samuel, which seems so hard for us to get our heads round at first, which doesn't give us the triumphant end to David's life we might expect, actually points us forward to the Lord Jesus in a tremendous way. Which isn't surprising. Because that's the very reason God gave us the Bible in the first place.

Question

1. How does this passage show the seriousness of sin?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great;" 2 Samuel 24:14b

Praise: Psalm 33:9-13 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

**The goal of Let's Worship God is to
encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.**

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

**Let's Worship God is produced
by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.**

If you have any queries please contact - rpchurchscotland@gmail.com