



Chronicles of Israel

A study on Israel, her kings, and truth versus consequence

Magnolia Bible Church Alexander Sunday Bible Study | Lesson #5 – August 30, 2026

A Census and Its Mixed Results (1 Chronicles 21:1 – 22:19)

Provided in the table below is a high-level overview of 1st and 2nd Chronicles. As we go through this series it will be useful to keep this overview in mind in relation to the overall framework of this study.

Chapters	Content	Significance
1 Chronicles 1 – 9	Genealogies, emphasis on tribes of Judah and Levi	Preparing the stage for the Kingdom of Judah and the priestly tribe
1 Chronicles 10	Reign of Saul	Transition to David's Kingdom; declaration that the throne belonged to the tribe of Judah
1 Chronicles 11 – 29	Reign of David	Phase 1 of the ideal Kingdom; detailed preparation for the Temple
2 Chronicles 1 – 9	Reign of Solomon	Phase 2 of the ideal Kingdom; construction and installation of the Temple
2 Chronicles 10 – 26	Kings of Judah	Succession of kings, all of whom were descended from David; implemented the standards of David and Solomon to varying degrees

This is the last of three lessons in this series focused on the reign of David. Approximately two-thirds of 1 Chronicles (chapters 11 through 29) are focused on David's reign. In this lesson we'll talk about a census that David took and the disastrous consequences. I have studied this text several times over the years, and I'll admit I have never fully understood why the Lord got so mad. Sometimes I think when we study the Bible it's difficult to understand the context behind certain events and what was really going through the minds (and hearts) of people and God's overall intention. **One thing is certain – we can rest assured God always knows what He's doing, especially when it involves understanding our intentions!**

There are three basic divisions in tonight's lesson:

- **David's unlawful census (1 Chronicles 21:1-7):** David, likely out of pride, elected to take a census of all "able bodied" soldiers to determine the potential size for a standing army. He was encouraged by his leadership team to not take the census.
- **David's repentance (1 Chronicles 21:8-17):** As was often the case with David, he was quick to recognize his sin. He did not make excuses for his sin, but asked God for forgiveness. Unfortunately, his sin still had consequences.
- **Altar on the Threshing Floor and Temple Preparations (1 Chronicles 21:18 – 22:19):** As part of David's forgiveness, in obedience he followed the orders given by the Lord to build an altar. Ironically, this would be the future home of the Temple where God's Name would be honored for generations to come.



Questions

1. Read 1 Chronicles 21:1-7 and Exodus 30:11-16
 - a. How many men were counted to be worthy of service according to this passage. Compare this number to our current active military that numbers at approximately 1.4 million.
 - b. In what ways did David violate the requirements outlined in Exodus?
 - c. Do you think David even knew about the stipulations outlined in Exodus?
 - d. What were some possible reasons David might have wanted to take the census?
2. Read 1 Chronicles 21:8-17.
 - a. What choices were given to David in terms of the consequences for his sin?
 - b. What did David choose, why, and what happened to Israel?
 - c. How would you feel if you had been in David's position?
3. Do you think there are times in our lives when we do not take sin seriously enough? What are the consequences for us, our family, and our nation when we do not view sin as God does?
4. Read 1 John 1:8-10 to provide context on God's forgiveness.
 - a. What factors lead us to commit sins that are often so self-destructive?
 - b. Why can it be hard for us to admit when we have sinned?
 - c. When we ask for forgiveness, what should we do in light of the 1 John passage?
5. Read I Chronicles 22. What advice did David give to Solomon?
6. Read Romans 8:28. In light of what we've discussed tonight, what were some of the positive outcomes that resulted from David's response and God's actions?

Next Meeting (Lesson #6, 9.06.26): In our next lesson we'll read 2 Chronicles 1:1 – 1:17 and discuss Solomon assuming the throne from his father.