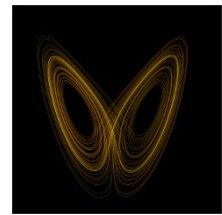


It's fun to watch a chain reaction like that. People have observed cause and effect for a long time. For example,

For want of a nail the shoe was lost;
For want of a shoe the horse was lost;
For want of a horse the battle was lost;
For the failure of battle the kingdom was lost; —
All for the want of a horse-shoe nail.¹

If you are a **person of science**, then there is the relatively new 'butterfly effect.' The **butterfly theory** says that *sometimes* the **cause and effect** are not instantaneous, *nor* is the causation clearly seen.²



We have been **going through David's life** and observed the effects of sin and the blessings of a passion for God.

- It is **amazing** how an adulterer, murderer, and man of such violence can be called 'A man after my own heart (Acts 13:22 NIV).'
- **Even though David** did a lot of bad things, **his heart was passionate for God**.

Today, David builds an altar of repentance that halts a plague.

David
Altar



David **made a mistake** *when* he should have known better. **Age and past victories** do *not* guarantee continued success.

- David is now **an old man**.
- Israel has just survived a **three-year famine** (2Sa 21:1).
- Just when things were **settling down**, the Philistines go to war against Israel (2Sa 21:15-22).

This would be **one of David's last battles**. It was like *deja'vu*.

- It was against the Philistines.

¹ Though Benjamin Franklin published that proverb in 1758, it was first published in 1640, [For Want of a Nail - Wikipedia](#), accessed 4-5-25.

² 1972, [Butterfly effect - Wikipedia](#), accessed 4-5-25.

- There was a giant. Only David is old and slow.

‘Once again the Philistines were at war with Israel. And when David and his men were in the thick of battle, David became weak and exhausted. ¹⁶ Ishbi-benob was a descendant of the giants; his bronze spearhead weighed more than seven pounds, and he was armed with a new sword. He had cornered David and was about to kill him. ¹⁷ But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David’s rescue and killed the Philistine (2Sa 21:15-17 NLT).’ In addition to Ishbi-benob, there were **four other giants** (vv. 20-22).

- It seems we always must deal with giants in our lives. Giants keep popping up when we least expect it.

David and Israel **won the battle**, **but after victory, David is vulnerable**; ‘that is when Satan sets his traps.’³ It is often **when we relax after success** that we are open to **Satan’s cruel temptations and attacks**.

Our story starts with uncertainty.

1. Census.

‘Once again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he caused David to harm them by taking a census. “Go and count the people of Israel and Judah,” the Lord told him. ² So the king said to Joab and the commanders of the army, “Take a census of all the tribes of Israel—from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south—so I may know how many people there are.” ³ But Joab replied to the king, “May the Lord your God let you live to see a hundred times as many people as there are now! But why, my lord the king, do you want to do this?” ⁴ But the king insisted that they take the census, so Joab and the commanders of the army went out to count the people of Israel ... ⁹ Joab reported the number of people to the king. There were 800,000 capable warriors in Israel who could handle a sword, and 500,000 in Judah (1Sa 24:1-4, 9 NLT)!”’

We are **not sure what caused God** to be angry; it is just not stated in the text.

- Sometimes we don’t realize **how our sin pains God**.
- **Israel did something** to make God mad and **He incited David to number the people of Israel**.
- David’s **sin leads to punishing** Israel.⁴

Our daily battle takes place in our minds, in our thought life.

- David was **out of touch** with God.

³ Charles R. Swindoll, *David: A Story of Passion & Destiny* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing, 1997), p. 273.

⁴ Parallel story in 1 Chronicles notes that ‘Satan rose up against Israel.’

- David was **unaccountable** to anyone around him. **Joab** asked David to reconsider, but David did not listen.

2. Conscience.

'But after he had taken the census, David's conscience began to bother him. And he said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly by taking this census. Please forgive my guilt, Lord, for doing this foolish thing (2Sa 24:10 NLT)."'

Why was the census wrong?⁵

1. Possibly a lack of faith in God (v. 9)?
2. Dependence on the army instead of God (v. 9)?
3. ½ shekel tax of the Torah ignored (Ex 30:12)? Moses was told by God, 'Whenever you take a census of the people of Israel, each man who is counted must pay a ransom for himself to the Lord. Then no plague will strike the people as you count them (Ex 30:12 NLT).'

We don't know why it was wrong. The **story does not state**, and **Joab's hesitation** gives us no clues.

- **It is important to remember that sin is sin; there is no ranking of sin.** We tend to rank sin, and this seems really minor to us – but more of what God dislikes, is just more is it not disliked more.

David's conscious bothered him because the **king is just not your average guy**. 'God ... **demands** that a human king *as his representative* be faithful to his commands.'⁶

- His sensitive heart **knows he messed up**.⁷

'The next morning the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, who was David's seer. This was the message:
¹²"Go and say to David, 'This is what the Lord says: I will give you three choices. Choose one of these punishments, and I will inflict it on you.'" ¹³So Gad came to David and asked him, "Will you choose three years of famine throughout your land, three months of fleeing from your enemies, or three days of severe plague throughout your land? Think this over and decide what answer I should give the Lord who sent me (2Sa 24:10-13 NLT)'"

⁵ David Toshio Tsumura, *NICOT The Second Book of Samuel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2019), p. 343.

⁶ Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, p. 345.

⁷ 'Deep inside David's inner man was a disturbing reminder of God's displeasure in what he had done', Swindoll, *David*, p. 275.

Famine, sword, and plague 'is a **well-known trio of disasters** ... probably the number of people who would die in each of these disasters would be approximately equal.'⁸

- David **does not even respond to the famine** because of what Israel had just been through.

'He considers that falling into the hand of a merciful Lord is much better than falling into the hand of man.'⁹

3. Plague.

"'I'm in a desperate situation!" David replied to Gad. "But let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great. Do not let me fall into human hands." ¹⁵So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel that morning, and it lasted for three days. A total of 70,000 people died throughout the nation, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south (2Sa 24:14-15 NLT).'

Wow. Instantaneous. **Direct cause and effect.**

- Paul wrote that, 'The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them (1Ti 5:24 NIV).'
- **If we could see the effects** of our sin, the ripples that go out from our selfish attitude and actions, we would sin less.

These **people paid the price** for David's sin. Perhaps **this is why David was not allowed to build** the Temple. God told David, 'Since you have shed so much blood in my sight, you will not be the one to build a Temple to honor my name (1Chr 22:8 NLT).'"

The consequences of our sins go out like ripples in the water.

This is where the story gets interesting a negative turns into a positive.

4. Jerusalem.

'But as the angel was preparing to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord relented and said to the death angel, "Stop! That is enough!" At that moment the angel of the Lord was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. ¹⁷When David saw the angel, he said to the Lord, "I am the one who has sinned and done wrong! But these people are as innocent as sheep—what have they done? Let your anger fall against me and my family." ¹⁸That day Gad came to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." ¹⁹So David went up to do what the Lord had commanded him (2Sa 24:16-19 NLT).'

⁸ Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, p. 345.

⁹ Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, p. 345.

We get a **rare behind the scenes** look into how the angels and God interact:

- **God Himself calls a stop** to the plague as it hits Jerusalem.
- We are told **the exact spot** where the angel was, 'the threshing floor of Araunah' the Jebusite. The Jebusites were **the original inhabitants** of the land.
- **This location is important.**

The **scene switches back to David** and his heart.

- David knows **this is because of his sin** and he begs God to take it out on him and his family. He takes **full responsibility**.
- He also **is humble, seeing himself only as a shepherd**.

This is the **only recorded altar** that David built. *Remember after he sinned with Bathsheba?*

Part of his repentance was a prayer for 'the recovery of the place of worship for the entire people'¹⁰ of Israel: 'May it please you to prosper Zion, to build up the walls of Jerusalem. ¹⁹ Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous, in burnt offerings offered whole; then bulls will be offered on your altar (Ps 51:18-19 NLT).'

He is representative of the country and Israel suffered because of his ...

- Sin with Bathsheba, 2Sa
- Absalom's rebellion, 2Sa 15-19.
- Sheba's revolt, 2Sa 20.
- And this sin - related to the census, 2Sa 24. Later, Israel will suffer because of ...
- Adonijah's self-coronation, 1Ki 1.

The **welfare of the country deeply** depends on the 'moral and spiritual relationship' between the king and God.

It is not by chance that David is instructed to **build an altar on this exact location**.

- David is directed to 'the very place of worship, where his son **Solomon** eventually **builds the temple for the Lord ... the place where the sinful people are invited by God's mercy to worship and have fellowship with God.**'¹¹
- This **exact location** is the place where sins are forgiven for hundreds of years.

David **throws himself on God's mercy** and *is the first* to receive God's grace.

¹⁰ Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, p. 347.

¹¹ Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, p. 348.

This is one of my favorite portions of scripture because it highlights sacrifice.

7. Altar.

‘When Araunah saw the king and his men coming toward him, he came and bowed before the king with his face to the ground (2Sa 24:20 NLT).’

We know that Araunah looked down to see the king coming.¹²

“‘Why have you come, my lord the king?’ Araunah asked. David replied, ‘I have come to buy your threshing floor and to build an altar to the Lord there, so that he will stop the plague.’”²² “Take it, my lord the king, and use it as you wish,” Araunah said to David. “Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and you can use the threshing boards and ox yokes for wood to build a fire on the altar.”²³ I will give it all to you, Your Majesty, and may the Lord your God accept your sacrifice.”²⁴ But the king replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on buying it, for I will not present burnt offerings to the Lord my God that have cost me nothing.” So David paid him fifty pieces of silver for the threshing floor and the oxen (2Sa 24:21-24 NLT).’

Just like **Abraham paid a fair price for the purchase of a place to bury Sarah** (Ge 23:3-16), **David pays the full, fair price for the land and sacrifice.**

I love David’s heart of sacrifice here. **One of our friends, an older missionary to Japan, told us the story of getting a box from supporters in America. In the box were all sorts of used clothing and even used tea bags, ugh! We should give God our best and not our leftovers.**

- Paul - ‘What do you have that you did not receive (1Co 4:7 NIV)?’
- David – ‘Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand (1Chr 29:14 NIV).’

‘David built an altar there to the Lord and sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings. And the Lord answered his prayer for the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped 2Sa 24:25 NLT).’

The consequences of our sins go out like ripples in the water; but an altar of repentance brings healing.

While **God’s punishment seems harsh** the *story ends with God guiding David to the place of worship and reconciliation* with God.

¹² ‘Threshing floors were usually on a high place so that the wind could blow the chaff away. The site of temple ... is the top of the hill’, Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, p. 349.

Here are our **takeaways** from David's story.

Takeaways ...

- We should take God seriously.
- Sin's consequences go out like ripples. 'Sin really is a selfish act.'¹³
- Unaccountable living is dangerous.
- Altars require sacrifice.
- God responds to our repentance with grace.

Conclusion.

If that young lady from our video had pulled out a domino or two the effects would have ended. In the same way, **repentance brings healing.**

The bible says, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness ... He (Jesus) is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world (1Jn 1:9, 2:2 NIV).'

The **consequences for our sin** are not always instant, it is difficult to see the effects of some of our sin, but it is there.

Jesus takes the effects of our sin upon himself and makes things new; brings healing.

The consequences of our sins go out like ripples in the water; but an altar of repentance brings healing.

Friday night we are going to meet with God.

- We will have some **quiet instrumental music** so that we can spend time individually in prayer around the altar.
- **Just as David was shown to a location for sacrifice and healing of the nation**, we are **going to gather here** and offer a sacrifice of our time and attention.
- We will pray as the Spirit leads us, but mostly we will spend time around the altar.

Pray.

¹³ Swindoll, *David*, p. 282.

Update.

1. General

A. Church Council.

- **Faith filled Church Council** meeting on March 18th.
- We had an opening on the Church Council. The CIC constitution empowers me to appoint Church Council members in the event of a vacancy. Usually, I wait until the next election and let the members decide, but this time I sensed we needed a full council as soon as possible.
- New Church Council member – Eduardo Senra. Therefore, **Eduardo Senra** will be filling the open slot until 10/2026. He served on the CC before and had the next highest vote in the last election.

B. Amplify Issues.

We have used a company called Elexio for many years. Over the years they bought other companies to enhance their product – streaming, app, volunteer scheduling, check-in, etc. Last year they merged all these components into one software. In December, we upgraded to this new software and experienced a lot of issues.

There are **5 or 6 items to be fixed**. **Three** of these items may affect you. Problems with software ...

1. Kidsmin Check-in system was just repaired. Please check your kids in every week. The number on the printed tag is your call number should your child need your attention.
2. Difficulties logging into the My Home Church app.
3. Two contribution emails (Elexio & Amplify).



I apologize for the issues this has caused. I am told that the programmers should fix our issues this month. The company has promised to reimburse us a significant amount for all the major issues we encountered.

C. Kidsmin Suite.

Seven years ago, we launched a **program to remodel** the lower level **into a dedicated Kidsmin area**. Unfortunately, it has **taken seven years** to move ministries around and

build two handicapped ramps. We will dedicate the one to the Gathering Place the last Sunday of the month.

We are **finally ready** to clean, update, and make modest changes downstairs.

- We are not going to move any walls, but we will make modest changes downstairs **as funds come in**.
- Update the Kidmin Suite as funds come in.
- There have been those who have supported this fund for many years. **Thank you**, we are almost there. Don't stop yet, we are finally in the home stretch.
- We will need volunteers to clean, paint, and update.
- I will be **looking for volunteers** who can help me upgrade things downstairs for the kids. You should notice changes soon.

2. Finance

A. Thank you & Welcome – Finance office.

About a year ago, we experienced changes in the finance office. First, I want to thank ...

- **Bob Truitt** for serving as an interim business manager. He is providing a steady hand for this season.
- Second, we are doing an internal audit that is almost complete. We will present a fuller picture at the Annual Meeting in October.
- **Sandra Bobola** is our new bookkeeper is. She brings over three decades of work in a bank to the job. She is a careful and meticulous handler of finances.

B. Finances - CIC

Tithes and offerings are on point.

Tithes and offerings.

Received: \$379,310.55

Budget: \$383,098.00

Difference: -\$3,787.45

Mission's giving, Faith Promise, is touch and go each month.

Faith Promise

Received: \$42,522.08

Budget: \$39,618.00
Difference: +\$2,904.08

Please be faithful as we go into the summer months. We had **considerable unbudgeted expenses** this year. There will be more detailed information at the Annual Meeting in October.

B. Business Manager.

- We conducted an **extensive search** in the area and SNEMN for an executive pastor (if they have a ministry credential) or business manager.
- In the past, this has **been a difficult position to fill**; however, God brought us several highly qualified candidates this time.

We are close to finalizing the selection. If all goes well, we should be making announcements in the next couple of weeks.

Announcements.

- **BGMC** – Total giving was \$1,181.46, the boys won with \$619.76 (girls \$561.70).
- **Easter** – Maundy Thursday - a one-hour prayer meeting and communion. Good Friday – a concert, *Worship at the Cross*. The main event is Easter Sunday.
- **5K** - \$10 challenge next Sunday – Bruce Stanford.
- **Friday Altar & Prayer**

Benediction - PJS