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The Remaining Years of David's Rule
 2 Samuel 21:1-1 Kings 2:11

- David's mighty men 2 Samuel 23:8-38
 - The three
 - Earned this position by proven ability and dedication in battle.
 - Maintained their position in consistent and fierce loyalty and bravery.

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- David's mighty men 2 Samuel 23:8-38
 - The thirty
 - Leaders of divisions of the thirty: Abishai and Benaiah
 - Next below the three.
 - Earned their positions through proven ability and dedication in battle.
 - Abishai set as the overall commander of the 30 and Benaiah was over the division of the thirty designated as David's bodyguard.

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- David's mighty men 2 Samuel 23:8-38
 - The thirty
 - The last name on the list of the thirty is a chilling reminder of the damaging deceitfulness of sin as David sacrificed the life of one of his most loyal followers in a futile attempt to cover up his sin.

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- Law concerning census Exodus 30:11-16
 - Taking a census was not inherently wrong according to the law.
 - There were guidelines in the law to be followed with a corresponding warning of consequences when these guidelines were not followed.

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- Law concerning census Exodus 30:11-16
 - Joab's response to David's command for a census may indicate that this was either a matter of pride in David to revel in the magnitude of his kingdom or a trust in the number of his available fighting men over trust in God.

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- The Census
 - Joab and his commanders dutifully carried out the king's command.
 - The project took nine months and 20 days to complete.
 - Joab reported the number as 800,000 in Israel and 500,000 in Judah.
 - The description of those counted as those who "drew the sword" gives credence to the idea that the census was designed to assess military strength.

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- The aftermath of the census
 - David immediately became aware of the fact that he had sinned greatly.
 - He cried out to God to take away his iniquity.
 - God sent Gad, the prophet, with a choice of three judgments that would come on Israel.

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- A famine had already occurred due to the bloodguilt on Saul's house concerning Saul's actions toward the Gibeonites.
- David had been forced to flee during Absalom's rebellion which was a direct result of God's judgment on David's sin of adultery and murder.
- Although not thrilled with any of the options, David opted for the three days of pestilence.

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- The aftermath of the census
 - 70,000 people from every area of the kingdom died.
 - The angel carrying out the executions was stopped by the LORD from destroying Jerusalem.
 - The angel, made visible to David and others, stopped by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. (see 1 Chronicles 21:20)

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- The aftermath of the census
 - When David saw the angel, he cried out for God's mercy on the people and offered to fully take the guilt of his actions.
 - Gad came to David with instructions to build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah.

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- The aftermath of the census
 - David went to Araunah and expressed his interest in buying the parcel of land to raise the altar so the plague would stop.
 - Araunah offered to give David the land along with animals for sacrifice and wood for the burnt offering.
 - David refused this offer with the explanation that he would not offer to God that which cost him nothing.

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- The aftermath of the census
 - David purchased the land and animals and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.
 - The plague was over.
 - The significance of this story is provided by the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 22:1 where we are told that this is the location where the temple would be built.

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Lessons

- Authentic leadership is earned.
- Be a good steward of the loyalty people have toward you.
- Strength does not lie in the resources you have or the number of people on your side.
- God's mercy is great.
- God is worthy of any gift we could bring to Him.
- God is working in and through events to accomplish more than we could imagine.

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