

**Being a Spiritually Minded Christian**  
**Part Thirteen**  
**Realigning Ourselves with the Will of God**

- *In Part Eleven we answered the question, “Why do we pray?”*
- *We looked at the purpose of prayer and why it is necessary to actually ask God to intervene in our lives although He already knows our needs and already wants to help us and meet our needs because He loves us.*
- *We learned that when God said, “let them have dominion over ... all the earth” it meant He gave man authority over all the earth. Therefore, authority over the earth does not lie with God or Satan, but with man and that has never changed! Our choices still matter!*
- *We also learned that there is a clear distinction and difference between authority and ability or the power to actually do something.*
- *Although God gave man authority over the earth it does not mean that God created man with the freedom or ability to carry out all that he wishes.*
- *Man is a limited, created being, meant to rely on God’s power and strength and the leading of the Holy Spirit.*
- *There is a distinct difference between authority and ability. Authority means one has the freedom to choose what one wants to do. Ability means one has the strength, power, and resources to carry out one’s choices.*
- *Therefore, God did not give man the power to do whatever he wants. He gave man “dominion over all the earth,” so he has the authority to choose whose power and plans will be manifest in his life and on the earth.*
- *The first choice made by man which is recorded in the Bible is in Genesis, Chapter 3, when Adam and Eve were confronted by the serpent. They had to choose whom they would believe and whose words they would act upon—God’s Word or Satan’s word.*
- *Unfortunately, Adam and Eve chose to agree with Satan’s words and gave him “building rights” to establish his kingdom on this earth. Without Adam’s choice to believe and act upon Satan’s words, Satan would have been powerless to do anything on the earth.*
- *We can see the importance of agreement and how that one choice changed the course of history for mankind with devastating consequences.*

- *From Genesis 22, we studied the significance of Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac as a whole offering.*
- *When Abraham took Isaac, his only son by his wife Sarah, and offered him up on Mount Moriah as a whole offering unto God, this was not only an act of faith and obedience. It was truly an act of worship and prayer before God.*
- *To fully comprehend the significance of what Abraham did we must understand that God did not just say, “because you had faith in Me all the nations shall be blessed” but “because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son.” (Genesis 22:16).*
- *“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” (Genesis 22:18). Abraham, in his act of worship and prayer, gave up not only his son Isaac, but dedicated all his descendants to the will of God which would ultimately result in the birth of God’s Son, Jesus, in the lineage of Abraham to be “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). Through Abraham’s obedience Jesus was able to come as the Son of Man to redeem mankind.*
- *The person referred to by God as “in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” is not Isaac but Jesus, just as Paul stated in Galatians 3:16. “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.”*
- *Unless Abraham had agreed with God’s will, Jesus could not have come into the world as the Son of Man through the offspring of Abraham. God would have had to find another person who would believe and agree with Him to surrender his descendants to the will of God. The authority over Abraham’s descendants did not belong to God, but to Abraham who chose to give his descendants into the hands of God.*
- *Throughout the Bible we read of men and women who surrendered to the will of God and came into agreement with God so His will could be done on earth. We can follow the stories of faithful men and women, such as Rahab, Ruth, David, and many others in the lineage of Jesus, who came into agreement with God, ultimately resulting in the birth of the Son of Abraham, the Son of David—the Son of God.*
- *In Part Twelve we looked at the role of two godly women, Mary and Elizabeth, who played an important part in God’s redemptive plan for mankind. Through Elizabeth’s many years of prayers for a child, God had her bear a son, John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way for Jesus’ ministry. Through Mary’s agreement with the Word of the Lord for her life she bore Jesus the Messiah, the Saviour of mankind.*
- *Today we are going to look at an event in the history of Israel—David taking a census of the population of Israel. Although interesting, its significance and the reason it is*

*included in Bible may seem obscure. Both the purpose of the story and its application to our lives may appear elusive.*

- *The importance of this event is emphasized by the fact that the story of David numbering Israel is recorded in two separate places in Scripture: 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21.*
- *Although the story of David numbering the people is recorded in two places in Scripture, and the two stories are very similar in many details, there are a few differences that are not only striking, but may appear contradictory.*
- *In 1 Chronicles 21:1 the story begins with the words, “Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel,” while in 2 Samuel 24:1 the story begins with the words, “Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, “Go, number Israel and Judah.””*
- *A good general rule when reading and studying the Bible is that when two verses appear to contradict each other, it means we do not understand either one or both Scriptures.*
- *The first thing we must realize when trying to decipher this apparent contradiction in this story is that Satan’s motivation is always destructive and God’s motivation is always redemptive. Therefore we must seek to understand God’s redemptive purpose for David and all of Israel in these events.*
- *The second thing we must understand is that while Satan is at work to destroy people's lives, in the very same circumstances, God is at work to bring redemption and salvation. Our response to God will determine which outcome will be manifest in our lives and in the lives of those around us.*
- *A wonderful example of this principle is seen in the life of Joseph. At the very same time that Satan was at work through Joseph’s brothers to destroy Joseph’s life and God’s purpose for him, behind the scenes God was at work to fulfill His purpose for Joseph’s life and to bring about His redemptive plan.*
- *Joseph’s brothers were motivated by their envy of Joseph and sought to kill him, but instead sold him into slavery which resulted in Joseph becoming a slave in Egypt. However, the ultimate outcome of all these events was that God exalted Joseph to the second most powerful position in Egypt. From his position of power Joseph was able to save his father, his brothers, and their families from a terrible famine that threatened to destroy them.*
- *God’s wonderful plan of redemption is seen in the story of Joseph on a number of different levels.*

- *Working through Joseph, God preserved the nation of Israel and consequentially the lineage that would result in the birth of Jesus the Messiah. Beyond the story itself is a beautiful prophetic picture of God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ's betrayal, suffering, death, and glorious resurrection.*
- *At the end of the story Joseph's brothers stood before Joseph, the one whom they had previously hated and betrayed. Now Joseph was the most powerful person in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. They heard him speak the most unimaginable gracious words possible. "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them."(Genesis 50:20-21).*
- *Satan's plan was to destroy Joseph through his brothers, but because Joseph yielded to God through painful and difficult circumstances it actually prepared and positioned him to be all that God had planned for his life. Through Joseph's obedience to God the lives of Joseph's brothers were actually saved!*
- *Another important biblical principle to understand is that we will all experience times of testing and temptation. Our response will determine if we will grow better or bitter, more spiritual or more carnal.*
- *The Greek words for test and temptation are actually the same word. Therefore, this Greek word can be seen in either a positive or negative light, depending upon the context, and depending upon our response.*
- *James 1:12 sheds some light as to how our times of testings or temptations can be used as a blessings. "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." God wants to use these times of testing as opportunities where we can respond faithfully to Him and receive "the crown of life," abundant overflowing joyful life.*
- *At the very same time Satan is seeking to bring destruction, Jesus is at work in our lives to actually give us a life that is overflowing with love, joy, and peace. "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10).*
- *The next two verses in James 1:13-14 provide additional insights into the nature and source of temptations. "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed."*
- *The first point we can learn from verse 13 is that we should never blame God when we are tempted. "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone."*

- *When telling the story of Abraham who offered up Isaac as a whole offering at God's command, Genesis 22:1 says, "Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham."*
- *The key to understanding James 1:13 correctly in the light of Genesis 22:1 is to recognize that "God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone." In other words, God never tempts anyone with evil nor does He tempt anyone to entice them to do evil. God tests us to give us an opportunity to choose to do good.*
- *At the very moment that Christians experience temptation, both Satan and God are involved. Satan is trying to lure us to give into the temptation and sin, while at the exact same moment the Holy Spirit is there to strengthen, encourage, and cheer us on to choose to resist the temptation, to put our trust in Christ, and to act righteously.*
- *When God spoke to Abraham about offering up Isaac as a whole offering, Satan was tempting Abraham to doubt God's goodness and faithfulness. However, the Holy Spirit was with Abraham to strengthen him so he could fully trust God. Abraham had to choose whom he would yield to and trust. He passed with flying colors and his name will be forever synonymous with faith. His faithfulness bore fruit as it made way for the birth of the Saviour of mankind, Jesus Christ.*
- *James 1:14 provides us with another reason that God allows us to be tempted. "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed."*
- *Sometimes there are areas deep within our hearts that we either have failed to deal with or are simply unaware. Times of testing reveal those issues so we can come to God and confess our sins and weaknesses to receive forgiveness and cleansing through the blood of Jesus. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9).*
- *Sometimes we think that we would be much happier and life would be much better if we did not experience times of testing and temptations, but the truth is that without times of testing important issues in our hearts that need to be dealt with would remain unresolved. This would result in us being robbed of the full blessings and the full reward that God desires to impart to us. "Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward." (2 John 8).*
- *Summarizing some of the reasons we as Christians can experience times of testing and temptations as seen in James, Chapter one:*
- *We can experience times of testing for us to have an opportunity to choose to trust God and have our faith shine brightly.*

- *We can experience times of testing in order for those harmful things hidden in our hearts to be revealed to us so we can confess them to God and He can forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- *However, there is a third reason that Christians can experience temptation. It is when we walk in disobedience and expose ourselves to things we ought not to, which results in needless temptations. For example, if we pursue covetousness it will result in needless temptations that will ensnare us. “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.” (1 Timothy 6:9).*
- *As we read the story of David numbering Israel we will recognize that God was at work on many different levels. He was working in the hearts of many people and for different reasons. God’s economy is the most efficient and He is able to accomplish many things in many different people and for many different reasons—all in the same event.*
- *One more piece of the puzzle we need to understand in the story of David numbering Israel is that when we belong to God, then Satan can do nothing against us unless God allows it. Satan can do nothing in our lives unless God has a redemptive purpose.*
- *An example of God’s sovereignty and protection over the life of a Christian can be seen in the life of Peter when Jesus said to him, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.” (Luke 22:31). Satan had to ask God for permission to test and sift Peter!*
- *Although Satan’s motivation was to destroy Peter, Jesus was going to use it to purify and strength Peter by exposing things in his heart that were stumbling him. “But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” (Luke 22:32).*
- *At this point in Peter’s life he was totally unaware of those things and had an over inflated view of himself and his commitment to Christ. “But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.” (Luke 22:33). Without Peter having gone through this difficult and painful time when his pride and unfaithfulness were exposed and dealt with, he could never have become the faithful and powerful apostle who God used to establish the Church.*
- *As we look at the story of David numbering Israel, it is evident from 1 Chronicles 21:1 that Satan moved David to number the people. However, by God allowing Satan to move David to number Israel, God indirectly was the One who moved David to take the census.*
- *Although it is self evident that Satan’s motivation was purely for the purpose of withstanding Israel in order to destroy her, the question remains: What was God’s purpose?*

- *In 2 Samuel 24:1 there are a number of details that are very significant in understanding the rest of the story. “Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, “Go, number Israel and Judah.””*
- *First, it says specifically that “the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel.” The curious thing about this is that it does not say the Lord was angry at David, but against Israel. However, rather than God dealing with Israel’s sins directly, He aroused David to sin by numbering the people. This raises the question, “Why did God find it necessary to have David sin in order to bring punishment upon Israel?” As we continue to study the story the answer will become apparent.*
- *Another important point about God’s anger against Israel is that it says that He was angry against Israel “again” implying that Israel had repeatedly sinned and rebelled against God. In studying the history of Israel we learn that from the time when God delivered them out of Egypt by His gracious and powerful hand, they had repeated complained, murmured, rebelled, and forsook God’s ways. One act of rebellion that stands out is their rejection of God as their king, when they asked for an earthly king to reign over them.*
- *In the light of their numerous acts of rebellion and sin against God and His Laws one could rephrase 2 Samuel 24:1 and say, “Again and again and again the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel.” Under the Law when one transgressed the Law of Moses what ultimately awaited them was God’s judgment and ensuing destruction.*
- *What was in David’s heart that caused him to want to number the people? Pride. David desired to see how great he was and to measure the greatness of his kingdom. David had forgotten that the people of Israel were God’s people and that he was placed there by God to be their shepherd. David’s responsibility as king was to care for Israel and to lead them in the ways of God so they could receive God’s blessings and protection and be a light to the other nations.*
- *David had become spiritually backslidden and he was unaware of the pride and desire for self-exaltation that had developed in his heart. Satan did not place pride in David’s heart, all Satan did was arouse the pride that was already in David’s heart, and tempted him to act according to his pride. David, full of pride and self-will gave the command, “Go, number Israel and Judah.”*
- *Even Joab, the commander of the army clearly warned David. “May the LORD make His people a hundred times more than they are. But, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? Why then does my lord require this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt in Israel?” (1 Chronicles 21:3). Although Joab was not the best example of a godly man, he had enough discernment to know that what David was about to do was wrong and would result in guilt coming upon Israel.*

- *Although David was clearly warned that what he was about to do was sin, he was so blinded by pride that he failed to heed the warning. “Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came to Jerusalem.” (1 Chronicles 21:4).*

## 2 Samuel 24:8-10

8 So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

9 Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to the king. And there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

10 And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, I pray, O LORD, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

- *Once the census was delivered to David, immediately his conscience was awakened to the sin of pride that had been hidden in his heart and the foolishness of his actions. “Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to the king.” “And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, I pray, O LORD, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly.””*
- *Only when David recognized the pride that had been lurking in his heart, do we see the first aspect of God's redemptive purpose in this story. David was convicted of his pride, foolishness, and sin. “And David's heart condemned him” and “I have sinned greatly in what I have done...for I have done very foolishly.” David was awakened to and took responsibility for his own backslidden condition.*

## 1 Chronicles 21:9-12

9 Then the LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying,

10 “Go and tell David, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: “I offer you three things; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do it to you.”’”

11 So Gad came to David and said to him, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Choose for yourself, 12 either three years of famine, or three months to be defeated by your foes with the sword of your enemies overtaking you, or else for three days the sword of the LORD—the plague in the land, with the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.’ Now consider what answer I should take back to Him who sent me.”

- *The second aspect of God's redemptive purpose occurred when David received the consequences of his sin and pride. Only when David saw both his sin and the consequences of his sin could he seek and receive forgiveness and redemption.*
- *Only when Gad spoke did David understand the terrible consequences he and the nation of Israel faced—the very people he had been entrusted to guide and protect. Our wrong choices often affect others, whether we mean them to or not.*

- *David had sinned and now God was giving him the choice as to what form the consequences of his sin would take. “Choose for yourself, either three years of famine, or three months to be defeated by your foes with the sword of your enemies overtaking you, or else for three days the sword of the LORD—the plague in the land, with the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.”*
- *One may ask, “Why would God punish Israel for the sin committed by their king?” The answer is simple; the people didn’t want God as their king. They wanted a man to rule over them as their king. Therefore, they were subject to the choices of their king—whether good or bad. If their king sinned then the kingdom would suffer the consequences. They received exactly what they had chosen. This underlines one of the main reasons God was angry with Israel, they had rejected Him as their king.*
- *As God spoke through the prophet Gad, the weight of David’s sin and the consequences about to befall Israel were reinforced with the closing words of the prophet. “Now consider what answer I should take back to Him who sent me.” David was in a real bind, he had chosen to sin and now David had the terrible responsibility to choose which consequence would befall Israel.*
- *As the full weight of the burden of his sin came upon David, he made an important decision. David recognized that the Lord is merciful and only with Him is there hope. He decided to fall into the hands of the Living God, and allow God to make the decision. “And David said to Gad, “I am in great distress. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are very great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man.”” (1 Chronicles 21:13).*
- *David realized that redemption and salvation were not to be found in his own self effort or by turning to man, but only in God. David’s decision to fall into the hands of the Lord and fall upon God’s mercies opened the door of redemption for both himself and Israel.*

#### **1 Chronicles 21:14-15**

**14** So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell.

**15** And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As he was destroying, the LORD looked and relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying, “It is enough; now restrain your hand.” And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

- *The terrible consequences of David’s sin began to be manifest as the plague killed seventy thousand men. However, as the angel of the Lord stood poised to strike Jerusalem, the heart of God was moved by His mercy and He spoke to the angel, “It is enough; now restrain your hand.”*

#### **1 Chronicles 21:16-17**

16 Then David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. So David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces.

17 And David said to God, “Was it not I who commanded the people to be numbered? I am the one who has sinned and done evil indeed; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued.”

- *While God stayed the hand of the angel, He opened David's spiritual eyes and he “lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem.”*
- *As David beheld the terrifying sight of the angel of the Lord holding the sword of the Lord's judgment over Jerusalem, he and the elders fell down on their faces. David cried out for mercy, not for himself but for the people he had been entrusted to shepherd. “Was it not I who commanded the people to be numbered? I am the one who has sinned and done evil indeed; but these sheep, what have they done?”*
- *David had finally come to a full realization that he had failed in his duties as king.*
- *Not only had David failed through his sin of pride by numbering Israel, he had failed to care for the spiritual welfare of Israel. He had put his own desires and vanity before God's purposes for making him king.*
- *As David realized how grievously he had sinned and failed both God and Israel, he willingly took upon himself and his father's house the judgment that had fallen upon Israel. “Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued.”*
- *It was this last statement that David made, “Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued” that God had been waiting for David to make for many years. It was David's willingness to have God's judgment come upon him and his father's house that would stop the judgment of God, not only for this time, but eternally.*
- *Finally, David's concern for God's people outweighed his concern for himself. At last David remembered that a ruler is to serve his people, not the other way around.*
- *When David spoke the words, “Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house,” God used David's words to move His plan forward one more step—to bring Jesus, the Saviour into the world through David's descendants.*
- *When Abraham willingly offered up Isaac, this made the way for the Messiah, the Saviour of the world to come as the Son of Abraham. When David said, “Let Your hand be against me and my father's house” that opened the door for Jesus the*

*Messiah to be also the Son of David, “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.” (Matthew 1:1).*

- *In the New Testament Jesus is continually referred to as the Son of David because the Jews knew that the Messiah would come from the lineage of David.*
- *For generations the Jews were waiting for the Messiah who would come and deliver them from their enemies. What they failed to understand was what they needed to be delivered from. In the times of Jesus, the Jews thought they needed to be delivered from their Roman occupiers. What they truly needed to be redeemed from was their sinful nature and the guilt and consequences of their sins.*
- *The Jews thought the Messiah would come as a king to lead Israel to military victories over their enemies. Little did they understand that Jesus Christ would come and redeem them from their own sins and rebellion through His own sacrificial death and glorious resurrection, fulfilling the words that David had prophetically spoken. “Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued.”*
- *When Jesus entered Jerusalem a few short days before His crucifixion He was greeted by the cheering multitude as the Son of David as they looked to Him to deliver them. “Hosanna to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ Hosanna in the highest!” (Matthew 21:9). A few days later Jesus, the Son of David, would be given into the hands of the Romans to die for their sins as they cried out, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” (Luke 23:21).*
- *When David saw the destruction that was about to befall Jerusalem and he cried out, “Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued,” he was really expressing God's heart of mercy for Israel and all mankind. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16).*
- *When David committed adultery with Bathsheba he was carnally minded because he was motivated by lustful impulses.*
- *When David numbered Israel he was naturally minded because he was motivated by pride and worldly ambition.*
- *When David saw the plight of Israel and cried out to God, “Let Your hand be against me and my father's house” he was spiritually minded and reflected God's heart of mercy for mankind.*
- *Therefore looking back at 2 Samuel 24:1 in the light of what we have just learned, it becomes clear what God's motivation was and how He accomplished it.*

- **“Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, “Go, number Israel and Judah.”” *God was angry at Israel because of their many sins and rebellious acts, but because He is merciful and loving He did not want to destroy them, but to save and redeem them.***
- ***God allowed Satan to arouse David’s pride to number Israel so that David would see his true plight and the plight of Israel. God wanted to use David’s descendants to bring forth Jesus Christ to take away the sins of the world. But God needed David to yield both himself and his descendants for this to happen.***
- ***When God allowed Satan to stir up David’s pride so he sinned and Israel bore the consequences, David’s heart was convicted of his sins and his heart was moved by the plight of Israel. This resulted in David crying out to God for mercy for Israel. He asked that he and his father’s house would bear the consequences and the sins of the people. David’s petition to God would culminate in the birth of Jesus Christ as the Son of David, who would bear the sins of all mankind.***
- ***We earlier raised this question: “Why did God find it necessary to allow Satan to arouse David to sin in order to bring punishment upon Israel?”***

*The answer is evident on two levels.*

- ***First, Israel had rebelled against God ruling over them and instead they wanted an earthly king. God is the perfect king but earthly kings are imperfect and often act unrighteously and selfishly. Israel and David himself came to realize how foolish and destructive their choices had been.***

They wanted an earthly king and so they got an earthly king and the consequences of his choices.

- ***Second, God wanted David’s heart to be awakened and truly moved by such a deep sense of compassion for the plight of the people that he would lay aside his own life and that of his father’s house to see God’s judgment removed from Israel. Through David’s intercessory plea the way was made so that Jesus Christ could be born of the seed of David to redeem not only Israel but all of mankind so that “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13).***

### **1 Chronicles 21:18-19**

**18 Therefore, the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.**

**19 So David went up at the word of Gad, which he had spoken in the name of the LORD.**

- ***When David said “let this sin be upon me and my father’s house,” God did not demand that David die or suffer some horrible plague. He simply asked David to go to the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite and erect an altar and make a sacrifice.***

**1 Chronicles 21:22-27**

**22 Then David said to Ornan, “Grant me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build an altar on it to the LORD. You shall grant it to me at the full price, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people.”**

**23 But Ornan said to David, “Take it to yourself, and let my lord the king do what is good in his eyes. Look, I also give you the oxen for burnt offerings, the threshing implements for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; I give it all.”**

**24 Then King David said to Ornan, “No, but I will surely buy it for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings with that which costs me nothing.”**

**25 So David gave Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the place.**

**26 And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the LORD; and He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering.**

**27 So the LORD commanded the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath.**

- *As David went to Ornan to acquire the threshing floor and erect an altar to the Lord, David’s heart toward God is seen once again. Ornan offered to give David everything from the threshing floor itself to the animals that were to be offered. But David’s response reflects how much he honoured and valued the Lord. “Then King David said to Ornan, “No, but I will surely buy it for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings with that which costs me nothing.”*
- *David’s heart was filled with gratitude to God and he wanted to make restitution himself for his own sins. Restitution will always cost us something. In David’s case a very small price considering the whole of what God had forgiven and the immensity of David’s sins and those of Israel. The reason it cost David so little to make restitution, even though his sins were so great was because God was going to pay the immense price through the sacrifice of His Only Begotten Son Jesus.*
- *The spiritually minded Christian sees the value of knowing and serving Christ and is willing to gladly lay down everything for Him. “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” (Philippians 3:7-8).*
- *The conclusion of the story is that David called on God and offered whole offerings and peace offerings unto the Lord at the place prescribed by God. Wonderfully and graciously God responded by sending fire from Heaven to consume the sacrifices. Then, as the final sign that David’s sacrifices to God were both acceptable and pleasing to Him, “the LORD commanded the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath.”*
- *“Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued.” What was the significance*

*of God commanding David to erect an altar to Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite in light of what he had just prayed?*

- *It's interesting that the threshing floor David purchased would one day be the site of the Temple in Jerusalem. "Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite." (2 Chronicles 3:1).*
- *One more very important fact about the location of the threshing floor of Ornan is that it was the same place where God had commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac as a whole offering. "Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." (Genesis 22:2).*
- *The location where God commanded Abraham to offer up Isaac was the identical location where God commanded David to build an altar and make a sacrifice. Moriah in the Hebrew means "chosen by Jehovah." God had prepared the plan of redemption. Both Abraham and David came into agreement with God's plan and offered sacrifices on Mount Moriah.*
- *Through David's willingness to humble himself and repent of his selfish and rebellious ways and to put God's purposes before his own and give over his life and his father's house into God's hand, not only did the Redeemer, the Messiah come into the world as the Son of David, but through the incarnation of Jesus, Israel one day will once again have their rightful king ruling over them—Jesus Christ, the King of Israel, the King of Kings!*
- *What can we learn from this story that we can apply to our lives?*
- *As Christians, there may be times in our lives when we either forget or neglect one of the main purposes the Lord has for us to be in this world, to be light and salt **to** those who do not know Christ and to encourage and strengthen those who do.*
- *However, while we are still living in these mortal bodies we can turn to Jesus in repentance and become living sacrifices so our lives can count for eternity. Just as Abraham and David made sacrifices at Mount Moriah we can take up our cross and follow Jesus. Abraham struggled with doubt and David with pride but God gave both of them victory so His redemptive purposes could be manifest.*
- *Christians enjoy hearing sermons about Heaven, but sermons about Hell are equally important. Hell is a real place and a reminder of what Jesus has saved us from, and about which we should warn unbelievers. Beyond being thankful for our salvation, our hearts should be moved with compassion and urgency for the plight of those who have not yet received Christ.*