

DAVID NUMBERS ISRAEL

BIBLE TEXT : II Samuel 24:1-25

LESSON 247 **Senior Course**

MEMORY VERSE: "There *is no* king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength" (Psalm 33:16).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

2 Samuel 24:1-25 (KJV)

¹ And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

² For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which *was* with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

³ And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see *it*: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?

⁴ Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel.

⁵ And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that *lieth* in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer:

⁶ Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtimhodshi; and they came to Danjaan, and about to Zidon,

⁷ And came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, *even* to Beersheba.

⁸ So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Reasons for David's Act in Numbering Israel

- 1 God's anger was kindled against Israel, possibly because of another lapse into idolatry, II Samuel 24:1;

Judges 2:14 (KJV)

¹⁴ And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

Judges 2:20 (KJV)

²⁰ And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;

Judges 3:8 (KJV)

⁸ Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years.

Judges 10:7 (KJV)

⁷ And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon.

- 2 David was used by God as an instrument to punish Israel, while David was also being punished by God, II Samuel 24:1, 2;

1 Chronicles 21:1-3 (KJV)

¹ And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

² And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know *it*.

³ And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they *be*: but, my lord the king, *are* they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?

Matthew 18:7 (KJV)

⁷ Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Deuteronomy 28:50 (KJV)

⁵⁰ A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:

Judges 3:12 (KJV)

¹² And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.

Jeremiah 5:15 (KJV)

¹⁵ Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it *is* a mighty nation, it *is* an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say.

- 3 God sent a warning to David, which he disregarded, so he was with out excuse, II Samuel 24:3, 4;

months and twenty days.

⁹ And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thousand men.

¹⁰ And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

¹¹ For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

¹² Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three *things*; choose thee one of them, that I may *do it* unto thee.

¹³ So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.

¹⁴ And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies *are* great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

¹⁵ So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men.

¹⁶ And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is

1 Chronicles 21:3-4 (KJV)

³ And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they *be*: but, my lord the king, *are* they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?

⁴ Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.

Proverbs 12:15 (KJV)

¹⁵ The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel *is* wise.

Proverbs 15:22 (KJV)

²² Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

Proverbs 29:1 (KJV)

¹ He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth *his* neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

- 4 The census taken was of the military strength of the nation, indicating a possible reason for its being taken, II Samuel 24:5-9;

1 Chronicles 21:5-7 (KJV)

⁵ And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all *they of* Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah *was* four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword.

⁶ But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab.

⁷ And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel.

Psalms 20:7 (KJV)

⁷ Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

Matthew 7:26-27 (KJV)

²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Psalms 33:15-16 (KJV)

¹⁵ He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

¹⁶ There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

Hosea 1:7 (KJV)

⁷ But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

Haggai 2:22 (KJV)

²² And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.

II God's Punishment for Sin

- 1 David repented of his sin, making full confession for it, and asked for forgiveness, II Samuel 24:10, 17;

1 Chronicles 21:8 (KJV)

⁸ And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

1 Chronicles 21:16-17 (KJV)

¹⁶ And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over

enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.

¹⁷ And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

¹⁸ And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite.

¹⁹ And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.

²⁰ And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

²¹ And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

²² And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him: behold, *here be* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood.

²³ All these *things* did Araunah, *as* a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.

²⁴ And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of *Israel*, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

¹⁷ And David said unto God, *Is it not I that* commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but *as for* these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.

Psalms 34:18 (KJV)

¹⁸ The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalms 51:17 (KJV)

¹⁷ The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

2 Corinthians 7:10 (KJV)

¹⁰ For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

- 2 God gave David an opportunity to show the basis of his trust for deliverance, II Samuel 24:11-13;

1 Chronicles 21:9-12 (KJV)

⁹ And the LORD spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying, ¹⁰ Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three *things*: choose thee one of them, that I may do *it* unto thee.

¹¹ So Gad came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Choose thee

¹² Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh *thee*; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.

- 4 David demonstrated that God was his trust and place of refuge, II Samuel 24:14; I Chronicles 21:13;

Psalms 46:1 (KJV)

¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Psalms 118:8-9 (KJV)

⁸ *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

⁹ *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.

Proverbs 3:5 (KJV)

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Isaiah 2:22 (KJV)

²² Cease ye from man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

Habakkuk 2:4 (KJV)

⁴ Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Hebrews 10:38 (KJV)

³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

- 5 The plague's ravages destroyed the accuracy of the census, II Samuel 24:15;

1 Chronicles 21:14 (KJV)

¹⁴ So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.

- 6 The plague was stopped by God at Jerusalem, II Samuel 24:16, 17;

1 Chronicles 21:15 (KJV)

¹⁵ And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of

²⁵ And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

Ornan the Jebusite.

1 Chronicles 21:20 (KJV)

²⁰ And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat.

III The Offering at the Threshing Floor

- 1 God required David to make sacrifice to Him, II Samuel 24:18;

1 Chronicles 21:18-19 (KJV)

¹⁸ Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

¹⁹ And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the LORD.

Romans 12:1-2 (KJV)

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*

² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Exodus 32:29 (KJV)

²⁹ For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

- 2 David's insistence on paying for the sacrifice and the place of sacrifice, is indicative of deep consecration, II Samuel 24:19-25;

1 Chronicles 21:21-27 (KJV)

²¹ And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshingfloor, and bowed himself to David with *his* face to the ground.

²² Then David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of *this* threshingfloor, that I may build an altar therein unto the LORD: thou shalt grant it me for the full price: that the plague may be stayed from the people.

²³ And Ornan said unto David, Take *it* to thee, and let my lord the king do *that which is* good in his eyes: lo, I give *thee* the oxen *also* for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat offering; I give it all.

²⁴ And king David said to Ornan, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take *that which is* thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings without cost.

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

²⁶ And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering.

²⁷ And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.

Philippians 3:7-8 (KJV)

⁷ But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

⁸ Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

Matthew 16:24 (KJV)

²⁴ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

- 3 The place of David's sacrifice eventually became the Temple site,

1 Chronicles 21:28-30 (KJV)

²⁸ At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there.

²⁹ For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, *were* at that season in the high place at Gibeon.

³⁰ But David could not go before it to enquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

1 Chronicles 22:1-5 (KJV)

¹ Then David said, This *is* the house of the LORD God, and this *is* the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.

² And David commanded to gather together the strangers that *were* in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.

³ And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings; and brass in abundance without weight;

⁴ Also cedar trees in abundance: for the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David.

⁵ And David said, Solomon my son *is* young and tender, and the house *that is* to be builded for the LORD *must be* exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will *therefore* now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.

2 Chronicles 3:1 (KJV)

¹ Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where *the LORD* appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

NOTES:

The Man, David

David, the king, was advancing in age. His life had been a busy one, military engagements occupying a great deal of his time and attention. But he had been able, through the help of God, to bring a great deal of territory into his realm. Under his reign and that of Solomon the nation of Israel was made possessors of the land promised them by God.

In the past David had sinned. He had made mistakes. But he had fully repented of them and had found forgiveness. One of his constant prayers was that he might not be guilty of sinning presumptuously against the mercy of God — which sin he classified as the great transgression. And because of this purpose in his heart he had been mightily used by God during his lifetime.

Through this man of God we have received many revelations of the plan of God, demonstrated in the ways God dealt with him. Such truths are also taught to us in the many Psalms which came from David's pen. He had held, at all times, a high regard for God and for God's anointing. He had waited God's time in most of the things which he felt were God's will for him, and had thereby saved himself much suffering and anxiety. He had been a faithful servant of his God and had lived close to his God.

We might think, then, that it would be much better if this particular chapter of David's life had not taken place. It is another sad and regrettable incident. But, because of the purpose in David's heart, the incident ended with victory; and

through his repentant attitude not only David but all of us have received spiritual lessons and benefits.

We are not told all the details of this incident. We are not told just what was the motive behind the act, or all that took place because of that act. But we are told enough to show us clearly the spiritual lessons God would have us receive. It is these known facts that we shall consider when studying this lesson.

The Condemning Sin

Scripture tells us very little about God's prohibition against the numbering of Israel. It was, however, a very unwise thing for David to do. The fact is borne out by several statements, all clearly made in the lesson text. First, the command was obnoxious even to the usually unprincipled military man, Joab, who ordinarily seemed to have little regard for the right and the wrong of issues when they ran athwart his desires. Joab protested to David, and later events clearly demonstrate that David was wrong in ruling against the opinions of his military leader.

The second and real proof of the error is found in the words of God, through His Prophet, and the punishment that came because of David's willful act.

The fighting men of Israel were numbered at only two other times in their history, so far as we know from the Scriptures. But in these two other times it was at the word and command of God. This incident was David's idea, instigated by Satan, and may have been a part of a plan in his mind concerning some future military ventures. This action by David was used by God, however, as a means of bringing judgment upon Israel. The reason for this judgment is not told us, either; but perhaps it was because of another lapse into idolatry, as was the usual pattern of failure on the part of the Israelites.

The value of the census was brought to nothing by a single stroke of divine justice, for the pestilence followed the same route as the census takers and left many dead in its wake. If David's sin was the putting of his trust and reliance upon the strength of his people — upon the arm of flesh — he had no statistics upon which he could take pride after God's judgment-hand had struck. The nation was terribly and tragically weakened in a few short hours.

On the other hand, if David's sin was the deliberate making of a plan to undertake some venture that was not in accord with God's will, he was held back from this foolish thing by the hand of God. After the pestilence David had nothing that is ordinarily thought of as security. He was forced, by divine mercy, to depend upon Almighty God. The necessity of his walking by faith and in obedience only to the voice of God was brought to his attention by this series of terrifying events that have known no equal in either sacred or secular history. Finally, if David's sin was that of pride, then he could have been grateful to God that that heinous sin was exposed so he could rid himself of it before it was too late. Satan uses pride most often in his attempts to entrap men. But God hates this sin and He punishes it most severely. We can well guard against every entrance into our heart and nature of this soul-destroying sin.

David's Wise Course When in Trouble

We can see, from the account, that God spoke at first through David's conscience. God brought to his mind and heart the knowledge of the sin he had committed; and David cried to God for deliverance. We read that our merciful God forgave him.

But David had conditions to meet before the forgiveness was made complete. With most individuals these conditions will be the making of restitution — righting those wrongs where they have in some way injured someone else. God does not fully forgive sin that we can make right ourselves. Both the Law and the Gospel teach the necessity of restitution if we are to be forgiven by God. However, there are some sins against man for which amends cannot be made. Slandered, or otherwise gravely injured, persons may have died before the sinner comes seeking pardon from God. Forgiveness can no longer be secured from them, and in these cases God forgives the offender.

There are definite results' that inevitably follow a life of certain kinds of sin, even though the guilt of that sin is removed and the person is fully justified before God. Sometimes a certain degree of these results is left to remind the pardoned individual of the pit from whence he was digged. Sometimes the results that follow a life of sin are physical infirmities or deformities brought on by the life of sin. And sometimes these results are chastening judgments allowed or sent by God to remove some other bit of dross or spiritual impurity from the life of the born-again person. David found that seeking forgiveness from God at this time was not all that he must do. He was given the choice of three possible judgments against him and the nation.

In making his choice we can see that David acted very wisely and as a man should act. He chose to fall into the hands of God, for he said, "Very great are his mercies." He did not ask for an escape from the punishment that was justly his. He chose no easy way for himself. He only wanted his punishment to come direct from God and not through man. David knew the love and mercy of God, and he also knew the unprincipled hatred and jealousy of man. He was extremely wise in preferring the chastisement of the Lord.

If David had chosen war, he, personally, would have been safe, since the people had already passed an ordinance forbidding him from going to the battle any more. Had he chosen famine he would not have suffered, for many of his loving subjects would rather have suffered, themselves, than to see their king do so. Also, he was a wealthy man; and even if food were not given him, he would have been able to purchase it. But he showed the greatness of his heart and mind in choosing to fall into the hands of God and suffer the effects of the pestilence.

David knew that God does not have respect of persons in His judgments and would direct the punishment where it should go. He knew that no human hand or palace wall could stop God's judgment-hand, to safeguard him or his family. David voluntarily placed himself on an equal basis with the humblest of his servants, so far as God's judgment is concerned, by acting in this manner. There is no doubt that God saw and noted this attitude on the part of His repenting servant.

Trust in God or Man

David's secret, in choosing to fall into the hands of God, was a dependence on and trust in the living God. There are many people who would rather fall into the hands of man than to trust God when a crisis comes into their lives. They never see the countless thousands of people whom God comforts, heals, saves, and delivers. They see only the ones who fail to receive some of these blessings from God. Those who depend upon the arm of flesh never see the formerly lame man leaping and praising God. They see only the occupied bier or some suffering one who has not received that which God has to give. They also fail to look on

the other side of the picture, to see the parade of miserable victims of human error and short sightedness — products of experimentation and perhaps well-intentioned but nevertheless fatal or crippling mistakes.

Human mercy and consideration possessed by even the greatest and most honorable individuals can certainly not compare with the infinite mercy and love of our God. Earth has no sorrows that Heaven cannot heal; but earth has many sorrows that have been, and are, aggravated by the best efforts of well-meaning finite man. Let us be like David, who preferred rather to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of man, and to trust in the deliverance of God rather than in his own ingenuity or sagacity.

David's Attitude Toward God's Plan

David kept his heart directed toward God, even when he was in the depths of remorse and trouble as at this time. This was the great difference between him and his predecessor, Saul. The mercy of God was taken away from Saul because he utterly forsook God and turned away from Him. In his time of need, toward the end of his life, Saul sought God only in a nominal sense and he died the death of a complete apostate.

On the other hand, when David was in a crisis he never forsook his God but, instead, ran to Him. God was his refuge in time of trouble. God was the first one to whom David went to acknowledge his sins, and the first one to whom he went for help and deliverance. David backslid, but he was restored because he repented and threw himself upon God's mercy. Saul apostatized and was lost forever because he forsook God and refused to repent of his sins and rebellion.

David did not reject God as did the Jews of Christ's day. He did not want to do a thing that would thwart or hinder God's plan. "Thy will be done" was the spirit, if not the actual words, of his prayers. And this time was no exception. He saw the terribleness of his sin and told God to let His hand of judgment be against him and his father's house. That meant that David's brothers and sisters were to share with him the punishments by God.

How unusual that request! The Jews of Christ's day had quite a different prayer. They requested that "His blood be on us, **and on our children.**" They had no interest in God's plan for them as a nation. They wanted no part in the will of God concerning them. They cared not if their children were placed under a curse and rendered unfit for carrying out God's plan. They chose for themselves and for their children the guilt of a capital crime — a crime of infinite extent since it was the rejection and condemnation to death of the Son of God. This curse and guilt brought dispersion and complete defeat to their nation.

But we can see here that David guarded the will and plan of God very carefully. God had said that from David's house the eternal Kingdom would spring. For him to have said, "Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my house" — the prayer one might expect instead of that which David prayed — would mean that he was withdrawing from the covenant that God had made with him concerning his house. It would have meant that God's plan would have been hindered — or diverted to another avenue, if not actually hindered. The correctness of his attitude is demonstrated in the fact that God heard his prayer and kept the covenant that stated David's kingdom would be that Kingdom which will never end.

The Devout Jebusite and David's Sacrifice to God

We can now see also the wonderful traits of another man who was interested in the proceedings. No doubt there were several reasons why Araunah made his offer to David: He feared for David the king; he felt for the people; he was anxious for his own personal safety; and he, too, manifested a concern for the honor of God. Araunah was willing to make a huge and costly sacrifice. He was willing to do his share — and more than his share. He was willing to give up his all to save both his life and the lives of others of Israel.

But the events demonstrated the character of David's heart. He would not offer to God something that had not cost him anything. If he had accepted Araunah's offer, the sacrifices would then be Araunah's and not his. God had asked that David make the sacrifice, and David was not interested in looking for any other way but God's way in the matter. He was willing to pay the entire price.

Any other course would not have been pleasing to God, who expects implicit obedience to each of His commands. As it was, even though David paid the full price for the land and the sacrifice, there was still a sacrifice made by Araunah. He was deprived of his homestead, and the livestock that he had used and depended upon. He had to start his life anew in some other place. But he surely would have considered his sacrifice more than worth while if he lived to see the day in which was revealed God's plan for that particular plot of ground.

It has been said that the "place of deep consecration will become the temple of the living God." This is true in a spiritual sense as well as in this literal, earthly sense. The place where this sacrifice was offered was Mount Moriah where the Temple was later built by Solomon. This place of sacrifice became the place where countless thousands of people prayed and received an answer to their prayers.

Think of the hundreds of thousands of sacrifices that were brought there, and received there by God! Think of the" countless thousands of people who felt their sins forgiven there! Think of the many who were sanctified! Think of the many who were blessed! Ample payment, indeed, for the sacrifice made by both Araunah and David that a place might be provided for the worship of God.

God's fire fell from Heaven on the offering David made there. The sacrifice was accepted. Forgiveness was complete. The plague was stopped there. God's peace and approval was once again upon the nation, Israel, and upon their king, David. How wonderful the forgiveness and mercy of our God!

QUESTIONS

- 1 What sin did David commit at the time of this incident?
- 2 What motives were probably behind that sin?
- 3 How many times does Scripture record that a numbering of this kind was undertaken in Israel?
- 4 How did the hand of God change and render ineffective any false trusts that may have been David's?
- 5 How was the sin punished?
- 6 What supernatural things took place concerning the punishment?
- 7 What traits of David's character are shown in his choice of the methods of judgment?
- 8 Contrast the attitudes of David and Saul when they were each in trouble.
- 9 What commendable traits do you see in the attitude and conduct of Araunah?
- 10 Name two other events that took place on Mount Moriah, and tell what spiritual significance the three have.