**CHAPTER** **21**

*David’s sin in numbering the people is punished by a pestilence: which ceaseth upon his offering sacrifice in the thrashingfloor of Ornan.*

**1** And Satan rose up against Israel: and moved David to number Israel.

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

**3** And Joab answered: The Lord make his people a hundred times more than they are: but, my lord the king, are they not all thy servants: why doth my lord seek this thing, which may be imputed as a sin to Israel?

**4** But the king’s word rather prevailed: and Joab departed, and went through all Israel: and returned to Jerusalem.

**5** And he gave David the number of them, whom he had surveyed: and all the number of Israel was found to be eleven hundred thousand men that drew the sword: and of Juda four hundred and seventy thousand fighting men.

**6** But Levi and Benjamin he did not number: for Joab unwillingly executed the king’s orders.

**7** And God was displeased with this thing that was commanded: and he struck Israel.

**8** And David said to God: I have sinned exceedingly in doing this: I beseech thee take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done foolishly.

**9** And the Lord spoke to Gad the seer of David, saying:

**10** Go, and speak to David, and tell him: Thus saith the Lord: I give thee the choice of three things: choose one which thou wilt, and I will do it to thee.

**11** And when Gad was come to David, he said to him: Thus saith the Lord: choose which thou wilt:

**12** Either three years’ famine: or three months to flee from thy enemies, and not to be able to escape their sword: or three days to have the sword of the Lord, and pestilence in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying in all the coasts of Israel: now therefore see what I shall answer him who sent me.

**13** And David said to Gad: I am on every side in a great strait: but it is better for me to fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are many, than into the hands of men.

**14** So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel. And there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.

**15** And he sent an angel to Jerusalem, to strike it: and as he was striking it, the Lord beheld, and took pity for the greatness of the evil: and said to the angel that destroyed: It is enough, now stop thy hand. And the angel of the Lord stood by the thrashingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

**16** And David lifting up his eyes, saw the angel of the Lord standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand, turned against Jerusalem: and both he and the ancients clothed in haircloth, fell down flat on the ground.

**17** And David said to God: Am not I he that commanded the people to be numbered? It is I that have sinned: it is I that have done the evil: but as for this flock, what hath it deserved? O Lord my God, let thy hand be turned, I beseech thee, upon me, and upon my father’s house: and let not thy people be destroyed.

**18** And the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to tell David, to go up, and build an altar to the Lord God in the thrashingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

**19** And David went up, according to the word of Gad, which he spoke to him in the name of the Lord.

**20** Now when Ornan looked up, and saw the angel, he and his four sons hid themselves: for at that time he was thrashing wheat in the floor.

**21** And as David was coming to Ornan, Ornan saw him, and went out of the thrashingfloor to meet him, and bowed down to him with his face to the ground.

**22** And David said to him: Give me this place of thy thrashingfloor, that I may build therein an altar to the Lord: but thou shalt take of me as much money as it is worth, that the plague may cease from the people.

**23** And Ornan said to David: Take it, and let my lord the king do all that pleaseth him: and moreover the oxen also I give for a holocaust, and the drays for wood, and the wheat for the sacrifice: I will give it all willingly.

**24** And king David said to him: It shall not be so, but I will give thee money as much as it is worth: for I must not take it from thee, and so offer to the Lord holocausts free cost.

**25** So David gave to Ornan for the place, six hundred sicles of gold of just weight.

**26** And he built there an altar to the Lord: and he offered holocausts, and peace offerings, and he called upon the Lord, and he heard him by sending fire from heaven upon the altar of the holocaust.

**27** And the Lord commanded the angel: and he put up his sword again into the sheath.

**28** And David seeing that the Lord had heard him in the thrashingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, forthwith offered victims there.

**29** But the tabernacle of the Lord, which Moses made in the desert, and the altar of holocausts, was at that time in the high place of Gabaon.

**30** And David could not go to the altar there to pray to God: for he was seized with an exceeding great fear, seeing the sword of the angel of the Lord.