

# Fire from Heaven: How to Obtain It

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**Series:** The Life of David

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**Introduction:** Open your Bible to 1 Chronicles 21. The title of tonight's Bible study is "Fire from Heaven: How to Obtain It".

I want revival in my life! I want a renewal in my life. How can you have it? How can I have it? There's only one way: God must deal with our sins. I'm not talking about through Calvary. No, Jesus paid it all. But if we are going to walk with a holy God, God must teach us the devastating effect of sin in our own lives and teach us to hate it. Only then can we have God's presence and His fire from heaven.

So let's come to our first point.

- I. If we are going to see God's fire fall on our lives, we must first **Awaken** to the **Danger** of satanic attack. Believers will struggle with temptation and indwelling sin until the day we die. **Verse 1** begins on a very dark note: "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." You ought to expect and avoid Satan's attack on your life.

Satan is going to use the Internet and the TV. He's going to use movies and video games to distract you. That is the great power of Satan today. He's got us laughing with the world. He's got us distracted with the world.

You must always resist Satan, and he will flee from you, so James says.

David says in **Psalm 101:3**, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me."

That doesn't leave much on TV to watch. I can almost guarantee that 50% of TV is going to be off limits if you just watch the commercials!

- A. Consider Satan's **motive**. He hates God. His goal is to get you to doubt God. Satan wants you to think God is less than **omnipotent**. He wants you to think that God needs your help. So David numbers the men of Israel (against even Joab's wishes), and they are 1,100,000 men! Judah had 470,000 men.
- B. Consider Satan's **method**. is often stirred up in our lives by the wicked one though seemingly **innocent** activities. It was not necessarily wrong to have census. Scripture did not forbid it, but this was a clear demonstration of **doubt** in David's heart. This census was wrong because it cause David to distrust God! It caused him to put His trust in armies.

**Application:** Are there “innocent” things in your life that would not be scandalous for anyone, but they are causing you to sin? Whatever is leading you to sin, you need to cut it off! Jesus said in Matthew 5:30, “And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.”

**Explanation:** God does not need your or my back up plan. It was a sin for David to make a census of the people because the census was David’s backup plan. God had promised Abraham He would multiply Israel as the sands of the sea, and David should never have questioned the accomplishment of that promise. The census was David’s backup plan.

God already knew how many people there were and He had promised Abraham to make them number more than the stars of the sky and the sands of the sea. It’s not by the power of a great army that saves! Zechariah would later say in **Zechariah 4:6**, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Remember what Jonathan had said earlier in their lives in **1 Samuel 14:6**, “there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.” David sinned because he followed through with Satan’s suggestion.

Asa would later say in **2 Chronicles 14:11**, “LORD, *it is* nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou *art* our God; let not man prevail against thee.”

- C. Consider Satan’s **muscle**. Satan has no power that you do not give him. He can destroy no one except by their own hands! So Satan’s power is only the power you give him through your pride.

Expect Satan to puff up your **pride** and trap you! Pride is blindness! Pride is a wide open door for the wicked one to tempt us. David was determined to number the people. This was evidence of the root of all sin in David’s heart—pride. Instead of trusting the Lord in every situation, David turned to the carnal security of the flesh. He wanted to rely on something his eyes could see in case God didn’t come through.

**Application:** If a work of Christlikeness will be done in us, it will be done by God’s power, not our own. Wake up! Satan is all around you to attack you. Wake up you who sleep! Christ will give you life! If you know Christ, you can no longer be lulled to sleep by the world’s **lusts**, the world’s **life**, and the world’s **laughter**.

- II. Accept God’s **Discipline** if you sin: Chastisement. God now had to discipline David. God disciplines every one of His children. **Verses 7-8**, “And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel. 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.”

We read God’s sentence of chastisement to David in **verses 10-12**,

- (1) Three years of famine (**verse 11**)
- (2) Three months of destruction by their enemies (**verse 12**)
- (3) Or three days of a pandemic (pestilence) from the LORD (**verse 12**).

Sin carries inevitable and serious consequences of God's loving hand of **discipline**, so we ought to always obey the Lord or quickly repent if we find ourselves caught in a sin.

A. **Explanation:** David accepted the Lord's chastening. Out of the three chastenings, David wanted to fall into the hand of the Lord. He says in **verse 13**, "Then David said... "I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great *are* his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man."" The word "strait" means distress, or a massive amount of unbearable pressure.

B. Scriptural **support**.

The psalmist wrote, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord" (**Psalm 94:12**).

Sometimes God's people will not obey His Word until they are severely dealt with by Him. The author of Psalm 119, traditionally David, said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word" (**Psalm 119:67**).

But those who are chastened by Him should remember to "despise not the chastening of the Lord: neither be weary of his correction: for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (**Proverbs 3:11-12**; cf. **Hebrews 12:5-8**).

C. **Application:**

1. **Search your life for sin.**

We have to admit that God chastens all of us. If you are His child, you do from time to time receive His chastening. In fact, when you sin, you should expect God to discipline you. He will put pressure on you from life in order to break your pride. He will break you until you cry out anew and afresh to Him.

Some of our hardships and turmoil are certainly common to man. But some of our difficulties and our times of brokenheartedness are due to our own sin, and we ought to zealously repent, like David did.

Be totally honest with yourself. Has the Holy Spirit been convicting you of sin in your life? Has someone confronted you with areas of compromise of God's Word and you rejected it? Have you been resisting the gentle promptings of the Spirit? You don't have to be guilty of some gross sin. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (**Romans 14:23b**) and "To one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin" (**James 4:17** NASB).

2. **Be Sensitive and respond to God's chastening.**

Our loving God chastens us in different ways.

First, we lose that innermost peace in our spirit, and we don't have a perfectly clear conscience. **Isaiah 26:3**, "Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on thee*: because he trusteth in thee."

When you begin to lose that happiness of your peaceful conscience, you know you have entered into sin. Is there any doubt about anything you are doing? Are you also going through hardships and trials while carrying these doubts. Be sensitive to God's chastening.

Jesus said it this way to one of His seven churches in **Revelation 3:19**, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

3. **Understand that the more knowledge you have the more you will be held accountable.** David's sins had great consequences. When leaders fall there are massive consequences. David brought a whole nation into his sin. David had a vast amount of knowledge, and so the consequences of his sin is astounding. **Verse 14** tells us that 70,000 died of the pandemic in Israel. God must demonstrate justice in the earth. God destroyed Sodom because their sins piled up to heaven. Sodom had very little of the truth. Only Lot was there. We ought to fear for our country. Sodom didn't have a Bible and they were judged. What about the United States of America?

The more knowledge you have the more responsible you are. God must chasten His children.

4. **Understand that God is merciful even in His discipline.** He did not take out the men of Jerusalem. And truly, none of us get anything close to what we deserve.

Accept God's chastening!

III. Abandon your sin in godly **Devotion**. This is what David did. He humbled himself. He abandoned his sin. What did that look like?

- A. **Sheer Awe** of God! **Verse 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 Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces."

We've got to see God in His majesty! We've got fall down before Him in awe at His great power and mercy. We deserve so much more than He gives, but Oh the power! Our Lord created the universe instantaneously! We ought to fear Him!

- B. **Sincere**, earnest **Acknowledgement** and ownership of sin. **Verse 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.*" You know when God is working because you are ready to bring all the sin out and deal with it.

- C. **Sacrificial Attitude**. **Verses 22-25**, "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. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> 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.*** <sup>25</sup> So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight."*

D. **Supernatural Answer!** Verse 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."

IV. Anticipate God's **Demonstration** of grace! Revival!