Devotional Scripture: Ps 138:1-8

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Key Verse: 1 Chronicles 17:11-12
Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

God’s Rejection of David to Build (1 Chron 17:1, 3-4)

David realized the timing of the need (1)
- Realize there is a time for everything (Eccl 3:1)
- Realize God only does things at the proper time (Eccl 8:6)
- Realize that God acts when it is His time of favor (Isa 49:8)
- Realize that it is not for me to know God’s timing (Acts 1:6-7)
- Realize that at the right time God will provide (Rom 5:6)

God’s answer to the need (2)
- God fulfills needs according to His riches (Phil 4:19)
- God fulfills needs because He knows them better than we do (Luke 12:29-31)
- God fulfills needs because He is able (2 Cor 9:8)
- God fulfills needs through spiritual blessings (Eph 1:3)
- God fulfills needs through the power of Grace (Titus 2:11-12)

God’s rejection (3)
- Rejected because of rejecting God (Prov 1:24-28)
- Rejected because of bloodshed (Isa 1:15-16)
- Rejected because of iniquities (Isa 59:2)
- Rejected because of wicked wandering (Jer 14:10-12)

God’s Election of David’s Son to Build (1 Chron 17:11-14)

God’s election to establish (11-12)
- God’s establishment through the gospel (Rom 16:25)
- God’s establishment through reconciliation (Col 1:21-23)
- God’s establishment into faith (Col 2:7)
- God’s establishment in the truth (2 Peter 1:12)

God’s election to bestow mercy (13)
- Mercy because He loves us (Rom 5:8)
- Mercy because Jesus bore all of our transgressions (Isa 53:5-6)
- Mercy because God is faithful and righteous (Rom 3:3-5)
- Mercy because of grace (Eph 2:8-9)
- Mercy because it prompts God’s salvation (Rom 9:16)

God’s election of an enduring kingdom (15)
- God’s kingdom will endure all generations (Ps 145:13)
- God’s kingdom is an eternal kingdom (Dan 4:3)
- God’s kingdom will never end (Luke 1:32-33)
- God’s kingdom will be reigned by Jesus for ever and ever (Rev 11:15)
- God’s kingdom will be upheld and ruled with righteousness from now and forever (Isa 9:7)
- God’s kingdom belongs to God and along with it all the power and glory (Matt 6:13)

David Builds an Altar (1 Chron 21:18, 21-27)

God’s command to build an altar (18)
- An altar to honor God (Exodus 20:24)
- An altar so that God’s Name is called (1 Kings 18:24)
- An altar to demonstrate that the Lord is God (1 Kings 18:38-39)
- An altar to prompt God to stop the plague (2 Sam 24:25)

The need for sacrificial offering (21-25)
- An offering beyond ability (2 Cor 8:3)
- An offering that is all one has (Mark 12:43-44)
An offering that is given, even though it is the last (1 Kings 17:8-13)  
An offering of a life of service that is almost to death (Phil 2:29-30)

David’s obedience results in grace (26-27)  
Grace through sufficiency (2 Cor 12:9)  
Grace through God’s will and pleasure (Eph 1:5-6)  
Grace through mercy (1 Tim 1:13-14)  
Grace through justification (Titus 3:3-7)  
Grace that results in blessing after blessing (John 1:16)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable
Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Most of us have heard the saying, “When God closes a door, He opens a window,” or some variation of that. The specific origin of that popular proverb is unknown. Many know it from the movie The Sound of Music. The would-be nun Maria speaks the words to herself as she unexpectedly leaves the abbey to serve as a governess. The statement describes how, when one opportunity disappears, in time another opportunity will present itself. People of faith view these situations as much more than coincidence or luck. They see the sovereign hand of God at work to provide in His special and often surprising ways.

Last week’s lesson examined a psalm that David commissioned for use in celebrating the arrival of the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 16:8-36). The text does not indicate how much time passed between bringing the ark to the city and the events studied in today's text. David became troubled by a glaring discrepancy, which is the point at which today's text begins. The accounts in this lesson have parallel records in 2 Samuel 7 and 24. The first parallel, concerning David’s impulse to build a house, shows little variation between 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles 17. The second parallel, which follows David's taking a census in Israel (2 Samuel 24:1-17; 1 Chronicles 21:1-17), is more detailed in 1 Chronicles than in 2 Samuel. The details differ significantly.

Key Verse: 1 Chronicles 17:11-12

11 And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

17:1-15. After David’s palace was completed and he was living comfortably in it, he was struck by the disparity of his sturdy surroundings and the relatively flimsy temporality of the tent for the ark. Expressing a desire to provide the Lord with a temple (suggested by the word house, v. 4), David found Nathan the prophet to be encouraging at first (v. 2). But after the Lord appeared to Nathan in a dream and forbade such a project, David learned that God would build a house for David instead! (v. 10; cf. vv. 25, 27) “House” here means dynasty. The divine message to David through Nathan is almost identical here in its wording to 2 Samuel 7:1-17. Whereas 2 Samuel 7:15 refers to Saul by name, the chronicler simply called him David’s predecessor (1 Chron. 17:13). This may reflect a certain abhorrence toward Saul on the chronicler’s part. (For the content of Nathan’s message, vv. 4-14, see 2 Sam. 7:4-17.)

17:16-27. David’s prayer of response to the covenant promise is also virtually the same in Chronicles and Samuel (cf. 2 Sam. 7:18-29). Notable in Chronicles is an emphasis on David’s exalted position (1 Chron. 17:17), a theme which is in keeping with the general tenor of the book. (For the content of David’s prayer, vv. 16-27, see 2 Sam. 7:18-29.)

21:1-7. The chronicler did not state David’s motivation for taking a census of Israel except to say Satan... incited him to do so and David wanted to know how many... fighting men there were. In 2 Samuel 24:1, however, the historian revealed that the Lord was angry with His people and used David’s census as an occasion to punish him and them. No contradiction is here for the Lord simply let Satan tempt David to undertake the census, much as He permitted Satan to attack Job (cf. Job 1:12 and 2 Sam. 24:1-3). In His
sovereignty God’s ultimate authority extends even to the workings of Satan. David’s immediate purpose was to assess his military strength (1 Chron. 21:5). This incurred divine displeasure because it suggested that he was relying more on military capabilities than on God’s power. Probably that is why David admitted that his action was sin (v. 8). Joab, despite his objections to David’s edict (v. 3), had to undertake the census (v. 4) and reported the totals of 1,100,000 men of Israel and 470,000 of Judah (v. 5). Joab did not count the Levites or Benjamites, however, since Levi could not participate militarily (cf. Num. 1:47-49) and the attempt to complete the census was frustrated apparently before Benjamin could be counted (cf. 1 Chron. 27:24). Also David’s command was repulsive to Joab (21:6). The Samuel account indicates that 800,000 combat troops were available in Israel and 500,000 in Judah (2 Sam. 24:9). The NIV suggests that the 1,100,000 (in all Israel) included the 470,000 of Judah (1 Chron. 21:5), thus giving a total of 630,000 for Israel proper. The 800,000 of 2 Samuel 24:9 might then include an estimate of 170,000 Levites plus 630,000 other Israelites, though such a large number of Levites is difficult to imagine. The 500,000 Judeans of 2 Samuel could also include an estimated 30,000 Benjamites who were not counted by the chronicler. Another possible solution (cf. 2 Sam. 24:9) is that the chronicler’s grand total of 1,100,000 included a standing army of 300,000, thus reducing the total to 800,000 given in 2 Samuel. Also the 500,000 Judeans (in the 2 Sam. account) may have included the 470,000 of 1 Chronicles along with a standing army of 30,000 (2 Sam. 6:1).

21:8-15a. At some point David realized the evil of his project and sought the Lord’s forgiveness. This no doubt was granted but the purposes of the LORD had to be served—Israel had to be chastened. So the message came to David through the Prophet Gad that David was to choose one of three judgments God would bring on the people. There could be three years of famine, or three months of pursuit by the enemy, or three days of direct divine retribution by a plague (vv. 11-12). Rather than choosing one of the three options, David placed himself in God’s hands, who then destroyed 70,000 men by a plague. Satisfied, the LORD turned from His judgment.

21:15b-25. The Angel of the LORD, elsewhere identified with God Himself, was probably the preincarnate Christ (cf. Gen. 16:13; 18:1-2; 22:11-12; 48:16; Judges 6:16, 22; 13:22-23; Zech. 3:1; cf. Gen. 16:7). He appeared to David near the threshing floor of Araunah (cf. 2 Sam. 24:16; the Heb. in 1 Chron. 21:15 has the variant spelling Ornan; cf. NIV marg.) with a...sword in His hand. David and the elders repented publicly and David pleaded that the rest of the people might be spared and that further punishment be meted only to him and his family. The Angel then commanded Gad to tell David to...build an altar...on the threshing floor so he might offer appropriate propitiatory sacrifices. To do this it was necessary to acquire the threshing floor from Araunah, a Jebusite who lived just north of Jerusalem. Meanwhile Araunah had seen the Angel (v. 20) so when David approached him Araunah...bowed down and offered to give the threshing floor to David without price (vv. 21, 23). David refused his kind offer, however, and insisted that he could not offer anything to the LORD that had cost him nothing (vv. 22, 24). So the king paid Araunah 600 shekels of gold (ca. 15 pounds). However, according to 2 Samuel 24:24 David paid a much smaller amount (50 shekels of silver, ca. 1 pounds). This problem is explained by noting that the silver paid for the threshing floor and oxen (2 Sam. 24:24) and that the gold paid for the site, a large plot of ground apparently adjacent to the threshing floor.

21:26-22:1. After David built the altar he offered up burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, the former to plead God’s forgiveness of his sin and the latter to speak of the renewal of unbroken covenant relationship which would follow. God’s response was favorable as indicated by His answering with fire from heaven. It was too late to save the 70,000 who had perished (21:14) but Jerusalem itself was spared by David’s intercession (v. 27; cf. v. 16). The chronicler noted that David took this response from the LORD as a sign that that place was now one of special significance. As a result he began to worship there regularly instead of going to Gibeon where the Mosaic tabernacle was located (cf. 16:39). David did not go to Gibeon, the historian says, because he was afraid of the sword of the Angel of the LORD (21:30). This probably means that David, as a result of this whole experience, now knew that Araunah’s threshing floor, not Gibeon, was God’s choice for the location of central worship. This is confirmed by the next verse (22:1): David solemnly proclaimed that this new site would now be the house of the LORD. When Solomon later built the temple it was on this same piece of land (cf. 2 Chron. 3:1), a place hallowed also because it was the Mount Moriah on which Abraham offered to sacrifice his son (Gen. 22).
Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

God’s Rejection of David to Build (1 Chron 17:1, 3-4)

1 Now it came to pass, when David was dwelling in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord is under tent curtains."
3 But it happened that night that the word of God came to Nathan, saying,
4 "Go and tell My servant David, Thus says the Lord: "You shall not build Me a house to dwell in.

David realized the timing of the need (1)

Realize there is a time for everything (Eccl 3:1)
1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

Realize God only does things at the proper time (Eccl 8:6)
6 For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a man's misery weighs heavily upon him.

Realize that God acts when it is His time of favor (Isa 49:8)
8 This is what the Lord says: "In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances,

Realize that it is not for me to know God's timing (Acts 1:6-7)
6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

Realize that at the right time God will provide (Rom 5:6)
6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

God’s answer to the need (2)

God fulfills needs according to His riches (Phil 4:19)
19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

God fulfill needs because He knows them better than we do (Luke 12:29-31)
29 And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

God fulfill needs because He is able (2 Cor 9:8)
8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

God fulfill needs through spiritual blessings (Eph 1:3)
3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

God fulfill needs through the power of Grace (Titus 2:11-12)
11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,
God’s rejection (3)

Rejected because of rejecting God (Prov 1:24-28)
24 But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, 25 since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, 26 I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you — 27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. 28 "Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me.

Rejected because of bloodshed (Isa 1:15-16)
15 When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; 16 wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong.

Rejected because of iniquities (Isa 59:2)
2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Rejected because of wicked wandering (Jer 14:10-12)
10 This is what the Lord says about this people: "They greatly love to wander; they do not restrain their feet. So the Lord does not accept them; he will now remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins." 11 Then the Lord said to me, "Do not pray for the well-being of this people. 12 Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague."

23 Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, 24 "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. 25 Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.' "But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.' 26 "Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' 27 "But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!'

God’s Election of David’s Son to Build (1 Chron 17:11-14)
11 And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. 14 And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever."

God’s election to establish (11-12)

God’s establishment through the gospel (Rom 16:25)
25 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past,

God’s establishment through reconciliation (Col 1:21-23)
21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.
God's establishment into faith (Col 2:7)
7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

God's establishment in the truth (2 Peter 1:12)
12 So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have.

God’s election to bestow mercy (13)

Mercy because He loves us (Rom 5:8)
8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Mercy because Jesus bore all of our transgressions (Isa 53:5-6)
5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Mercy because God is faithful and righteous (Rom 3:3-5)
3 What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? 4 Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." 5 But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.)

Mercy because of grace (Eph 2:8-9)
8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Mercy because it prompts God's salvation (Rom 9:16)
16 It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

God’s election of an enduring kingdom (15)

God's kingdom will endure all generations (Ps 145:13)
13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.

God's kingdom is an eternal kingdom (Dan 4:3)
3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.

God's kingdom will never end (Luke 1:32-33)
32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

God's kingdom will be reigned by Jesus for ever and ever (Rev 11:15)
15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

God's kingdom will be upheld and ruled with righteousness from now and forever (Isa 9:7)
7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.
God’s kingdom belongs to God and along with it all the power and glory (Matt 6:13)

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’

David Builds an Altar (1 Chron 21:18, 21-27)

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.
21 So David came to Ornan, and Ornan looked and saw David. And he went out from the threshing floor, and bowed before David with his face to the ground.
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.

God’s command to build an altar (18)

An altar to honor God (Exodus 20:24)

24 "'Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you.

An altar so that God’s Name is called (1 Kings 18:24)

24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire — he is God." Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

An altar to demonstrate that the Lord is God (1 Kings 18:38-39)

38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. 39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The Lord-he is God! The Lord-he is God!"

An altar to prompt God to stop the plague (2 Sam 24:25)

25 David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

The need for sacrificial offering (21-25)

An offering beyond ability (2 Cor 8:3)

3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,

An offering that is all one has (Mark 12:43-44)

43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on."
An offering that is given, even though it is the last (1 Kings 17:8-13)

8 Then the word of the Lord came to him: 9 "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food." 10 So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" 11 As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread." 12 "As surely as the Lord your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread — only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it — and die." 13 Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son.

An offering of a life of service that is almost to death (Phil 2:29-30)

29 Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, 30 because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

David’s obedience results in grace (26-27)

Grace through sufficiency (2 Cor 12:9)

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Grace through God’s will and pleasure (Eph 1:5-6)

5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Grace through mercy (1 Tim 1:13-14)

13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. 14 The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Grace through justification (Titus 3:3-7)

3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Grace that results in blessing after blessing (John 1:16)

16 From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable

Verses 1-15

The promises of the Davidic Covenant (17:1-15)

The main reason God did not allow David to proceed with his plans to build Him a house (temple) was that God, not David, was sovereign. A secondary reason was that David was a man of war (1 Chronicles 22:8; 1 Chronicles 28:3). God reserved the right to choose who should build such a place, as well as when and where he should build it. It was inappropriate for David to decide these things, though his desire to honor God in this way was certainly commendable. David’s plans were premature and presumptuous (cf. Israel’s desire to have a king like all the other nations), though pardonable because he sought to glorify Yahweh.
"In Near Eastern thought there was a widely recognized relationship between the earthly kingship and the temple of the protecting deity of the city-state. The state was seen as a reflection of the cosmic reality of the divine government, which stood behind the state. The state, with its various hierarchies, culminated in the earthly kingship at its apex. This was thought to be parallel to a cosmic state of affairs with its own gradations in which the major deity headed a pantheon of lesser deities. The ultimate kingship of the protecting deity was thought to be expressed through, and paralleled by, the empirical kingship exercised by the ruler of the city-state on earth. This concept was given concrete expression in the relationship that existed between the temple of the city-state and the palace of the king of the city-state. The temple was the earthly residence of the deity, and the palace was the residence of the earthly representative of the deity, that Isaiah, the king." [Note: Thompson, p144.]

"Often we may have to accept that the work which we would dearly like to perform in terms of Christian service is not that for which we are best equipped, and not that to which God has in fact called us. It may be, like David’s, a preparatory work, leading to something more obviously grand. Recognition and acceptance of our true measure is the first and necessary step towards seeing the significance of what, in God’s purposes, we really can achieve and have achieved." [Note: McConville, pp55-56.]

God’s plan was that David’s son would build Him a house, and He revealed this to David (1 Chronicles 17:11-15). However, these words look beyond Solomon to One who would not fail to fulfill all God’s purposes as David’s descendant.

"This verse 13 along with Psalm 2:7; Psalm 2:12, is one of the major OT revelations on the deity of the Messiah. It foretells Jesus' being uniquely God’s son (Hebrews 1:5; cf. Acts 13:33; Hebrews 5:5), for it is not really applicable to Solomon (cf. comment on 1 Chronicles 22:10) or to any other of David’s more immediate successors ..." [Note: Payne, "1 , 2 Chronicles ," p396. Cf. 1 Chronicles 17:14.]

In 2 Samuel 17, the warnings of discipline if David’s descendants failed God focused attention on Solomon and the kings that followed him through Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. In 1 Chronicles 17 those warnings are absent. This fact probably indicates that the Chronicler was looking beyond the kings of Judah who had failed and died to the King who was yet to come. This king would carry out God’s will perfectly (cf. Isaiah 9:6; John 4:34). This would have given the restoration community renewed hope. [Note: For an examination of the Chronicler’s renditions of prophetic utterances, see Simon J. De Vries, "The Forms of Prophetic Address in Chronicles," Hebrew Annual Review 10 (1986):15-35.]

"Though there can be little argument that the covenant with David was unconditional both in its granting and in its perpetuity, the benefits of that covenant to David and to the nation depended on their obedience to the terms of the Mosaic Covenant within which the monarchy functioned. In this respect and only in this respect was the Davidic Covenant conditional." [Note: Merrill, "A Theology . . .," p171.]

God’s provision of a place for Israel (21:1-30)

Chapter 21 records the fulfillment of God’s second personal promise to David, namely, that He would appoint a place where Israel could dwell securely (in rest, 1 Chronicles 17:9). This was a promise of peace for Israel, but as the verses following 1 Chronicles 17:9 make clear, God had more than this in mind. He intended to dwell among His people in the house Solomon would build (1 Chronicles 17:11-12). God’s presence was the real source of Israel’s security. By giving Israel a place, God would provide for Himself a place where He would dwell, specifically the temple. Chapter 21 records God’s choice of the place where He would dwell, the site of the temple. There David’s successor would build a house for Yahweh (1 Chronicles 17:12).

"It may also be said that having empowered Israel to defeat their human foes, God provided a place of atonement and divine manifestation whereby they could defeat (or hold at bay) their nonhuman enemy, Satan." [Note: Thompson, p160.]

The writer gave much attention to detail and background events because of the importance of the temple site. All these events point to God’s ultimate purpose for the temple: that it would draw the Israelites and the Gentiles to Himself.

"Here, by divine command, is to be the site of the temple. It is a gift not from Ornan but from God. The grace of God, in giving this to His people as the place where ark and altar are to be brought together, is a thing to be wondered at." [Note: Wilcock, p95.]

Apparently David’s lack of faith in God’s ability to save His people led him to number the people (1 Chronicles 21:1-7). God did not approve of this attitude, and even though David confessed his sin and God removed his
guilt, the consequences of his sin followed (1 Chronicles 21:8-12). David’s words to Gad again model a proper response to God (1 Chronicles 21:13). By referring to Gad as a "seer," the writer implied that Gad served David primarily by getting divine revelation for him (cf. 1 Samuel 22:5; 2 Samuel 24:11-19). In contrast, the "prophet" Nathan’s primary role appears to have been announcing messages from the Lord to the king (cf. 2 Samuel 7:2-17; 1 Chronicles 17:1-15). [Note: See Leon J. Wood, The Prophets of Israel, pp169-257, for discussion of each of the prophets mentioned during Israel’s monarchy.] God’s compassion is also evident in His relenting and reducing His originally intended judgment (1 Chronicles 21:15; cf. Exodus 32:14; et al.). David volunteered to bear God’s judgment in place of the innocent Israelites (1 Chronicles 21:16-17). However, God instructed him to build an altar at the place of God’s judgment and to offer the sacrifice that the Mosaic Law required. That was the site God chose for His house (1 Chronicles 21:18 to 1 Chronicles 22:1). That place forever after, as long as Israel occupied the land, would be where the priests would atone for the Israelites’ sins by sacrifice. God demonstrated His approval of David’s offerings by sending fire from heaven (1 Chronicles 21:26; cf. Leviticus 9:24; 1 Kings 18:38). The primary reason for including this incident involving David’s sin was that it explains the site chosen for the temple. [Note: Thompson, p160.]

The Hebrew word transliterated "Satan" (satan; 1 Chronicles 21:1) means adversary. Adversary would be a better translation here. This is the first time in Scripture the word appears without the definite article as a proper noun. It seems that the adversary God permitted to worry David into numbering the people was a foreign enemy (1 Chronicles 21:12; cf. 1 Samuel 29:4; 2 Samuel 19:23; 2 Samuel 24:1-25; 1 Kings 5:4; 1 Kings 11:14; 1 Kings 11:23; 1 Kings 11:25). [Note: See Sarah Japhet, I & 2 Chronicles, pp374-75; Robert B. Chisholm Jeremiah, "Does God Deceive?" Bibliotheca Sacra155:617 (January-March1998):22-23; and Sydney H. T. Page, "Satan: God’s Servant," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society50:3 (September2007):449-65.] Of course Satan played a role in this temptation, but it was evidently fear of one of his neighbors that disturbed David’s mind. [Note: See John H. Sailhamer, “1 Chronicles 21:1-A Study in Inter-biblical Interpretation," Trinity Journal10NS:1 (Spring1989):42-43.]

"The major reason for taking a census in Israel was to lay the basis for levying taxes (Exodus 30:12; Numbers 3:40-51) or registering men for military service (Numbers 26:1-4)." [Note: Thompson, p160. Cf21:4-7.]

"The version of the incident in the Book of2Samuel [1 Chronicles 24:1] gives an underlying theological perspective, while the Chronicler simply describes what happened from a human perspective." [Note: The NET Bible note on21:1.]

David’s response to Gad’s instructions indicated his true repentance. He left the decision about punishment entirely in God’s hands and did not seek to control it.

"Perhaps the one thing that impresses more than David’s sins in his life are his repentances (cf. 2 Samuel 12:13 ff. and, associated in its heading with the same incident, Psalm 51). We do well to let his willingness to come fully to terms with his deficiencies inform our own responses to our moral failures before God." [Note: McConville, p71.]

Chapters17-21 give the writer’s first account of what God promised David in the Davidic Covenant. The things that God promised, He provided in David’s lifetime and shortly after that. They included victory in battle, expanded influence, and a glorious reputation. The record of this promise is in 1 Chronicles 17:8, and the fulfillment is in chapters18-20. The second promise was a secure, peaceful place for Israel that made necessary a place for Yahweh to dwell among His people in fellowship. The record of this promise is in 1 Chronicles 17:9-12, and chapter21 guarantees its fulfillment. These promises and their fulfillments would have given the original readers of Chronicles great confidence. They would have encouraged them that Yahweh would yet fulfill those promises in the Davidic Covenant that had not yet materialized but were still future for them. The record should have the same effect on us today.

(Adapted from URL:https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/1-chronicles-17.html)
**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

When God says no to something we propose to do, that answer can be devastating. Initially, David probably felt very good about his intended construction project. He had already brought the ark to Jerusalem. What better way to complete the task than to provide a dwelling place in honor of Israel's true king? But God had other plans. He denied the king's plan, but then proclaimed His choice of David to participate in the building of the temple in a very important way. What had begun as a terrible punishment for sin resulted in David's offering sacrifices and purchasing the place for his son to build the Lord's house (1 Chronicles 22:1). What was true with David applies to us as well: the Lord may reject what we have in mind, but that doesn't mean He rejects us. With the denial of David's desire came one of the most significant promises in all of the Old Testament: the Lord's promise to build a house for David. The advice of Proverbs 3:5, 6 remains sound: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” May we, like David, trust God in both His yes and no to use our lives to His glory.

**Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary**

Settling in Zion - King David lived in a magnificent palace in Zion made of the most exquisite materials available during his time. This bothered the king because God's ark resided in the same city in a lowly cloth tent. David desired to erect God a beautiful edifice.

The Desire to Build a Temple - David called for the prophet Nathan and shared his temple building idea. Nathan initially encouraged him to follow his heart's desire. He realized David's exceptional love and longing to do something special for Jehovah. However, later that night God spoke to the prophet. God intended for a temple to be erected, but not by David's hand.

The Eternal Dwelling - God instructed Nathan to share with the king that the temple building assignment belonged to David's son, Solomon. Though the Lord highly favored David, he was not the one to build God's house. Instead, God promised a "house" that would outlive an earthly monarchy. From David's descendants, God would bring forth the precious, promised Messiah—Jesus, Son of David.

The Earthly Temple - Though David would not build the temple, God showed him the exact place for the temple building: the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, near where Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac. David wanted to purchase the threshing floor, but Araunah offered to give David everything he needed for free. David insisted on paying him, and the king immediately built an altar to the Lord at the spot of the new temple.

Building God's Kingdom - David became God's instrument to begin making plans to build His earthly temple. However, more importantly, God brought His Son, Jesus, through David's lineage. David realized God's divine commitment to create a "house" for him had eternal significance and would far outlast a physical edifice. Similarly, Christians ought to focus on eternal values more than bigger church buildings and more programs, however good those may be. What's eternal is being wholly devoted to God, loving one's neighbor, and helping people understand and mature in the Gospel of Christ.