There is a lot to take away from the story of King David's census recorded in the Old Testament. In Second Samuel chapter twenty-four, we are told the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel and He incited David against them.
Here we understand that to build up or rely on the same kind of military might common to pagan nations is equivalent to repudiating God. Deuteronomy chapter seventeen strongly insists on this and Israel's history to that point proved it true.
We are also informed that seventy thousand people died as a result of this sin. It may seem unfair that the whole community should suffer because of their leader's choice, but it's obvious from context they were involved.
Finally, the fact that the parallel account in First Chronicles says it was Satan that incited David has caused some to disregard the whole narrative as error. But there is no contradiction. When the writer of Samuel says the anger of the Lord incited David to number his armies, he is simply saying that God sold them into the hands of the enemy.