

David's Sacrifice

Lesson Scripture: 1 Chronicles 21:1-22:1

Focus Scripture: 1 Chronicles 21:14-30

Key Verse: King David said to Ornan, "No, I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing." 1 Chronicles 21:24

1 CHRONICLES 21:14-30 (NRSV UE)

14 So the Lord sent a pestilence on Israel, and seventy thousand persons fell in Israel.

15 And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but when he was about to destroy it, the Lord took note and relented concerning the calamity; he said to the destroying angel, "Enough! Stay your hand." The angel of the Lord was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

16 David looked up and saw the angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces.

17 And David said to God, "Was it not I who gave the command to count the people? It is I who have sinned and done very wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Let your hand, I pray, O Lord my God, be against me and against my father's house, but do not let your people be plagued!"

18 Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to tell David that he should go up and erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

19 So David went up following Gad's instructions, which he had spoken in the name of the Lord.

20 Ornan turned and saw the king, and while his four sons who were with him hid themselves, Ornan continued to thresh wheat.

21 As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David; he went out from the threshing floor and prostrated himself before David with his face to the ground.

1 CHRONICLES 21:14-30 (KJV)

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

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 Ornan the Jebusite.

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.

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.

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.

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

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

22 David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of the threshing floor that I may build on it an altar to the Lord—give it to me at its full price—so that the plague may be averted from the people."

23 Then Ornan said to David, "Take it, and let my lord the king do what seems good to him; see, I present the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for the wood and the wheat for a grain offering. I give it all."

24 But King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

25 So David paid Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the site.

26 David built there an altar to the Lord and presented burnt offerings and offerings of well-being. He called upon the Lord, and he answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering.

27 Then the Lord commanded the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath.

28 At that time, when David saw that the Lord had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he made his sacrifices there.

29 For the tabernacle of the Lord that Moses had made in the wilderness and the altar of burnt offering were at that time in the high place at Gibeon,

30 but David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the Lord.

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.

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.

KEY TERMS

- **Araunah (Also Called Ornan)** – A Jebusite/Canaanite man who sold King David a threshing floor on which he built an altar. The Jerusalem temple was later built on this same site.
- **Gad (Hebrew: "good fortune")** – The prophet who confronted King David about the sinfulness of his actions in taking a

census for the wrong reasons.

- **Joab (Hebrew: "Yahweh is father")** – A military commander who served during most of King David's reign.

INTRODUCTION

King David is remembered as a man after God's own heart and one whom God said would carry out all of his wishes (Acts 13:22). This lesson will help us understand

why! Although he had eminent status as the king of Israel, King David accepted responsibility for his sinful behavior when he was confronted by the prophet, Gad. Having been tempted by Satan, King David, called for a national census to be taken (1 Chronicles 21:1-2). This decision was sinful because it resulted from pride. King David wanted to take pride in Israel's military strength. In doing so, the king was showing more dependence on military power than God and diminishing God's role in his successes. The census was not a sin; however, David's rationale conducting the census was a sin.

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

God was so displeased with David that he punished Israel (1 Chronicles 21:8). As a result, 70,000 Israelites died (2 Samuel 24:15).

King David repented and confessed to having "done very foolishly," and expressed feelings that he should personally be punished for his sin. Through Gad, God informed David of three available options for his punishment: Three years of famine, or three months of devastation at the hands of his enemies, or three days of punishment by God, including pestilence upon the land and destruction

throughout Israel. King David chose the third option, which was punishment by God rather than man (1 Chronicles 21:13-14). Obviously, King David was aware that God's mercy far exceeds that of humankind.

King David Repents and Builds an Altar, 1 Chronicles 21:15-27

These verses give detailed descriptions of God's original plans to destroy Jerusalem and the mercy he later showed by ordering the assigned angel not to follow through with

King David repented and confessed to having "done very foolishly," and expressed feelings that he should personally be punished for his sin.

the plan. These same scriptures also present detailed accountings of David's personal confession as well as his plea for God to punish him, and not the people of Israel (vs. 16-17). In response, the angel instructed God to tell David to make a sacrifice by first constructing an altar on Ornan's threshing floor.

Ornan's loyalty and desire to please the king are obvious in his offer to give the site to King David instead of allowing him to purchase it. We are privileged to see, again, why God considered King David to be a man after his own heart. King David refused to accept Ornan's offer! He insisted on paying Ornan "full price," because he refused to offer

either what belonged to Ornan or any burnt offering that cost him nothing. Of course, King David's obedience is also demonstrated in the fact that after completing his purchase from Ornan, he built the altar and presented burnt offerings and peace offerings. The Lord blessed him, in return, with "fire from heaven upon the altar" and commanded the angel to end his attack plans (vs. 26-27). In summary, King David understood and practiced beliefs that sacrifices should cost the giver. God rewarded him by noticeably accepting his sacrifice and ending plans for further punishment by the angel, who was standing by.

The Site for the Temple, 1 Chronicles 21:28

King David made his sacrifices at Ornan's threshing floor because "the tabernacle, which Moses made in the wilderness and the altar

of burnt offerings" was at Gibeon. Gibeon was about a two-hour journey northwest of Jerusalem. Overwhelmed by God's wrath, David did not go there. He was well aware of one person having died while moving the ark towards Jerusalem. Also, 70,000 Israelites had just died because of David's pride that led to the census. 1 Chronicles 22:1-5 explains that the site that was originally

Ornan's threshing floor became the site of the Jerusalem temple and that King David prepared for its building until he died. Of course, the temple was constructed by his son, King Solomon.

SANKOFA

As we reflect on King David's sacrifice, it becomes obvious that although he sinned, he loved God and wanted to please him. Offering the kind of sacrifice he made is not required of us. However, desires to

As we reflect on King David's sacrifice, it becomes obvious that although he sinned, he loved God and wanted to please him.

emulate King David's faithfulness suggest we should examine our own practices and the actions we take to show love and desires to please God. Tithing is one of our practices. *The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church* 2021 ed. defines tithing as "a biblical mandate governing the individual's support (10% of one's total income)

of the mission and ministry of the Church, symbolizing one's commitment to Christ and His Church." Sacrifice, in general, refers to "giving up or offering something of value." Tithing is different because we believe that all we have belongs to God. So, we are giving back to him, instead. Of course, we should tithe, and do so with gladness because "God loves a cheerful giver."

However, Jesus made it clear in his teachings that one cannot rely on tithing alone as a means to please God. He stressed the importance of mercy, faith, justice, and love of God (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42). In other words, as we learned from studying the ancient Hebrew system earlier, God wants circumcised hearts in addition to any material gifts we might offer. There are many other scriptures that speak to the significance of the heart, and while tithing is important, more is expected of disciples of Jesus Christ. In Matthew 9:13, Jesus declared "I desire mercy, not sacrifice," Romans 12:2-3, succinctly summarizes expectations for us "to present ourselves as living sacrifices"...We can conclude that just as God wanted David's heart and condemned the prideful actions he took, he wants first place in our hearts. Tithing is important, but not a substitute.

CASE STUDY

King David was a servant-leader, a trait in common with Jesus Christ, who said "I came not to be served, but to serve." King David's heart for the people of Israel was reflected in his pleas for God to hold him responsible

for his sins and not punish the people. Many servant leaders are identifiable in black history. One such leader was Dr. Ralph Bunche, who was born in August 1904 and died in December of 1971.

Dr. Bunche was a political scientist and conflict mediator, who was also the first African American to earn a doctoral degree in Political Science. Among many other phenomenal achievements, Dr. Bunche was also the first person of color to receive

We can conclude that just as God wanted David's heart and condemned the prideful actions he took, he wants first place in our hearts. Tithing is important, but not a substitute.

the Nobel Peace Prize. He is also noted to have been an advocate for civil rights, who actively participated in the Civil Rights Movement. Among his many other widely acclaimed achievements are his success with negotiating the 1949 Armistice Agreement in the Arab/Israeli conflict and the significant role he played in the creation and advancement of the

United Nations. Selflessness and putting the needs of others before himself, in his services to the United States of America and throughout the world, are traits for which Dr. Bunche continues to be celebrated. The totality of his contributions to the world are too numerous to cite here. However, much more information is available at <https://>


global.howard.edu.

LIFE APPLICATION

We are all leaders in some capacity – we influence the beliefs and behaviors of others, whether at home, in the church, the workplace, or elsewhere. Our behavior, including sins, impacts others. Regardless, King David is a role-model for all of us. We should also aspire to be men and women “after God’s own heart.”

We can’t afford to dismiss this lesson as being irrelevant because God doesn’t require us to sacrifice as King David did at Araunah’s threshing floor. Like King David, however, we are prone to sin (Romans 3:23). To please God, David demonstrated the necessity to humble ourselves, confess, repent, and ask for

forgiveness. God holds us responsible for the consequences of our sins, but as with David, God is merciful to us! So, let’s view Micah 6:8 as a bridge that connects us to King David. God requires the same of all disciples: “To do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.” Different practices may prevail, but the goal is the same for all.



To please God, David demonstrated the necessity to humble ourselves, confess, repent, and ask for forgiveness.

QUESTIONS

1. How does your leadership style compare with King David’s?
2. What new revelations do you have about the following: Giving of yourself, loving God, and humanity?
3. What relationships do you see between the sacrifices that King David made at the threshing floor and the sacrifices you

make to please and serve God?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Closing Song: “I Surrender All” (*AME Hymnal #251*)

Closing Prayer: Father God, we praise you today. Thank you for the hope that King David’s story brings us. We know that you don’t tolerate or condone sin, but you are a merciful God. So, we

believe that as you forgave King David for his sins, you will forgive us, also. The scriptures tell us that “the sacrifice you deem to be acceptable is a broken spirit and contrite heart.” So, we thank you for the presence of your Holy Spirit, who convicts us when we sin and stirs us to present ourselves to you with brokenness and contriteness as we seek your forgiveness and reconciliation. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS**May 5 - May 11**

Monday	Ezra 6:14-22 (A Joyful Celebration)
Tuesday	Psalm 18:1-12 (God Heard Me in My Distress)
Wednesday	Acts 7:2-16 (God in Mesopotamia)
Thursday	Acts 7:30-41 (God in the Wilderness)
Friday	Acts 7:42-50 (God Needs No Temple)
Saturday	2 Chronicles 6:12, 14-27 (Hear Our Prayers, O God)
Sunday	2 Chronicles 7:1-7, 11 (God's Glory Fills the Temple)