



FEED MY SHEEP

PUBLISHED BY JAMES W. BRUGGEMAN
STONE KINGDOM MINISTRIES
P. O. BOX 5695
ASHEVILLE, NC 28813 U.S.A.
www.stonekingdom.org

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The Revealing of the Site of the Temple

Our study of character in the lives of Kings Saul and David has brought us to a discussion of David's grievous sin in improperly taking a national census. Through David's seer, Gad, Yahweh offered David his choice of punishments. David chose a three-day plague in which 70,000 men in Israel died.

To elaborate on this difference between a Saul type and a David type, between the sinner of the wheat company and a barley sinner—a sinning overcomer: The Saul type, the wheat sinner, *never fully* acknowledges his guilt and he runs *from* God. The David type, the sinning overcomer, may also exhibit stubbornness for a time, but he *does truly* repent. When he does, he runs *to* God, seeking His face, and trusting in His forgiveness and bountiful mercy. The overcomer-sinner doesn't try to *fool* God, shifting the blame to others. Instead, the David type is honestly and sincerely willing to bear the *full* brunt of punishment upon himself.

2 Samuel 24:18 And Gad came that day [Note that, dear reader, what day? This is the *third* day of the plague] to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite. [Alternate name: Ornan]

19 And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.

20 And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

21 And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the

people.

22 And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him: behold, *here be* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood.

23 All these *things* did Araunah, *as a king*, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, the LORD thy God accept thee.

24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

25 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

Notice that in verse 23 the word "as" is in italics, indicating it was not in the Hebrew. If we leave it out, it means that Araunah was a king. Yet we know that David conquered the Jebusites, so what gives? Well, Araunah/Ornan could have been the heir to the Jebusite throne who is merely called a king here even though he was in fact just an ordinary citizen now. But I think there is prophetic significance here and we will return to that idea at the end of this issue.

There is a lesson which we can draw from verse 24 and it is applicable to every believer in every age. In our tithes and offerings, in our gifts and sacrifices to God, we should always remember that God looks at our heart. If our "sacrifice," if our "gift" doesn't *cost*

us anything, then it is really *not* a sacrificial gift, is it? Jesus Himself took notice of this principle when he taught about the widow's mite (Mark 12:41-44).

I, being in ministry work and thus being dependent upon the tithes and offerings from you readers and listeners, am automatically placed in a position like Jesus was; namely, of seeing what people give. It is quite revealing as to the character of people, but it has also afforded me opportunities for spiritual growth.

For example, early in my ministry career, I used to get upset when I would periodically review the records and notice how some people would take advantage by receiving our tapes and/or printed teaching material and give very little or nothing in return. In effect, they were stealing. Now, whenever that periodic review time comes up, I just thank God for the supporters we do have and pray that God will bless the non-supporters, too. Of course, we still must delete them from the mailing lists or else we would go broke. It is also unfair to those who do support us, to use their gifts to subsidize the freeloaders.

Sacrificial giving is truly one of those places where the old adage holds true of putting your money where your mouth is. Because if someone claims to be a Christian and does not give of his substance to further the teaching of the Word, then what good is he? He is as if David had accepted the gifts from Ornan/Araunah and then turned around and considered it his gift to God.

God, through the prophet Malachi, condemned believers back then for offering blind or lame animals as their gifts to God. It would be like today if you were cleaning out your garage or attic and you collected all the ratty old junk that was no good to anybody, and then gave that as a sacrificial offering. Who would do that, you ask? Well, again back in the early years of this ministry, we were actually the recipients of some junk like that. I suppose the giver might have thought they were really doing us a favor and blessing us—you know, "Take what you can use"—but my wife and I were highly offended. What an opportunity that was for forgiveness! Except I did not really understand much about true forgiveness back then. Consequently, I held unpleasant thoughts of them for many years. I can laugh about it now and thank Father for it, but at the time it was a very insulting pill to swallow.

As I said, it is an interesting part of the job to see how people give. We have several people who send us one dollar every month. Am I insulted? No. Fifteen years ago I might have been, but now I just thank God for it and for them. I do not know these givers so I give them the benefit of the doubt and assume that this represents a true widow's mite for them. Now let us read the parallel passage.

1 Chronicles 21:18 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.

This is new—that Ornan saw the angel hovering there in the air over their threshing floor with his sword stretched out over Jerusalem. The historian that wrote 2 Samuel had not revealed that to us. Of course, the other little detail given in this verse is not without special significance also. Ornan was threshing wheat, which tells us this incident is associated prophetically with Pentecost.

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

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.

Oh no, not another "God goofed!" The historian reported that David paid 50 shekels of *silver* but the chronicler says 600 shekels of gold. That is a huge

difference! We will not take the space here but, believe me, the explanations are not grasping at straws to try to rescue God's word from error. God can defend Himself and His word quite well all by Himself, thank you. But He does put these apparent contradictions in His word so that those who are *not called* will scoff, while those who *are* called at this time will dig deeper and take great delight and praise God for the way He hides some of these gems.

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.

1 Chronicles 22:1 Then David said, This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.

After David realized he could no longer go to Gibeon to the tabernacle and altar there, it suddenly dawned on him that God was showing him that this, Ornan's threshing floor, was to be the site of the great temple to Yahweh that David had been shown by the Spirit so many years before, and for which he had been collecting and amassing the building materials all along. But during all those years, he did not know *where* the temple was to be built.

Can you imagine David's emotions at that moment? How the grief and the sorrow of the deaths of 70,000 were caused by his sin of pride and failing to collect the atonement money; and now, how through this great and tragic evil God was showing him the answer to one of the greatest questions in his life...the question of *where to build the temple?* David must have wept with bittersweet joy at that revelation! And what about us? How many Christians live their whole lives thinking that their goal is to fly

off into the by and by and spend eternity in some kind of nebulous, fluffy mansion in some heaven out there in outer space.

But God has revealed to us that your *body* is His temple, that His people are His collective temple. That the kingdom of heaven is *on* earth and *in* your earth, in your body, which will one day be immortal. The kingdom of heaven is within you, not in outer space. You can see the building site of God's real temple every time you look in a mirror. True, when we look in the mirror, sometimes we are not pleased with what we see, either physically or morally, but let us never forget what John told us in his second epistle, that when we look in the mirror...

1 John 2:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

In Tabernacle/Temple symbolism, we all begin in the outer darkness. Then we enter through the door, i.e., Jesus, into the outer court and so forth. People also progress from a grapes stage to a wheat stage to a barley stage. Have you ever wondered what Jesus meant when he said to Peter

Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not...

You see, Pete was still in the wheat company, but with the prayers of Jesus going for him, I don't think Pete would fail to arrive in the barley company. The point is that in the place where your wheat is threshed, there the temple of God is being built in you.

First Chronicles, chapters 17-29 are all related to the temple. Chapter 21, which we just finished is really about locating a site for the temple and chapter 22 is about which of David's son's will be its builder.

Having been a general contractor, I find it revealing how true is God's word when He says that His ways are not man's ways. If one were to build something like Solomon's temple today, first there would be a site selection committee. Those members would

confer with land use planning experts and the city or county zoning department. And they would confer with commercial real estate firms and architectural firms and perhaps construction firms who had an interest in bidding on the job. They would all get their heads together and study the various parcels of land to determine which would be the best. But God's way was unique. He used another of David's moral failures as the method to show His choice for the site of His temple.

It is another superlative example of God's sovereignty—how He brings good out of evil, how He used this terrible tragedy to show David where the temple was to be built, how He brought a great blessing from the illegal census. 2 Chronicles 3 is where it tells us that King Solomon actually began construction on the temple. There is something there which provides another little glittering jewel in this whole saga.

2 Chronicles 3:1 Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where *the LORD* appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

What happened at Mount Moriah even years before the exodus? It was the place where Abraham built an altar. What did David do at the threshing floor? He built an altar of sacrifice. Here on Mount Moriah Abraham was willing to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac, the son of promise. Abraham was willing.

And just as the angel hovering over the threshing floor had an outstretched sword ready to strike Jerusalem, so Abraham had his arm outstretched, ready to plunge the knife into Isaac. Both happened at the same place, Mt. Moriah, Ornan's threshing floor. It was the place where *God showed mercy* to Abraham and Isaac. To two men, but through them to all the world.

It was the place where God showed mercy to David and to Jerusalem and to all Israel by staying the plague. Mercy to His chosen people, even through judgment, and through them to all the world. How? Because this very place of mercy would be the site of the temple. And in the Holy of Holies is the Ark of the Covenant and the *Mercy Seat*.

The Mercy Seat is the place of forgiveness of sins. It symbolizes Jesus Christ who was to come and be the sacrifice for our sins and the mediator between

man and God, who grants forgiveness and mercy, not only to Abraham and Isaac, not only to David and all Israel, but working through His chosen people, the good news of mercy and forgiveness is for *all people and for all time*. In the dedication of the temple, Solomon asked God to hear the prayers of all non-Israelites as well.

1 Kings 8:43 Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as *do thy people Israel*; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.

You see, Ornan was a Jebusite, a non-Israelite, one of the cursed Canaanites. David obviously let some of them live after he conquered them, including this one-time king or would-be king, Ornan. The name Ornan has two meanings and one meaning is "light was perpetuated." Symbolically, it was through Ornan's threshing floor that the Light of the World was and is perpetuated.

We have seen how Ornan, the Jebusite king, whose kingdom now consisted of perhaps only a threshing floor, how this pagan king, *willingly* gave way to David, the type of Christ, for the building of an altar of sacrifice, and ultimately for the building of God's temple.

This foreshadows the time when, as it says in Revelation 15:11, that *all* the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. Just as the pagan King Ornan did *willingly* offer his threshing-floor-kingdom to David, so too will all the kings of the earth *one day willingly* bend the knee and give their kingdoms over to the King of kings. When will this day come? Remember that Gad the prophet came to David on the third day. We are entering the third prophetic day since Jesus Christ. Come soon Lord Jesus and complete your temple in us! Amen.

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