

Journey Through The Cities Of Refuge

Lesson #33

A Jebusite's Threshing Floor

Sept. 9, 2026

The account of the threshing floor is linked to David's sin of pride in taking a census.

Question: Why is God so angry at David and Israel? II Sam. 24 & I Chron. 21

II Sam. 24:1 And again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and

he incited [moved] David against them, saying, 'Go and take a census of Israel and Judah.'

The parallel account reveals who incited David to take the census:

I Chron. 21:1 And Satan stood up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel.

Key: God permitted Satan to tempt David in order to accomplish the purposes He had in mind.

God can use Satan in various ways, with the result being the refining, disciplining, and purification of disobedient believers [Luke 22:31-32; I Cor. 5:1-5; II Cor. 12:7-10].

I Chronicles 21 opens with "And" which should cause us to look at the immediate context.

I Chron. 20 closes with: These were born unto the giant in Gath;

and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

What a record of notable exploits and victories for David and his mighty men!

Newton: It was a remarkable juncture in the history of David. The ancient foes of Israel, after centuries of conflict, had at last succumbed. Even the powerful sons of Goliath had been so crushed by his vanquisher that they no longer made any effort to antagonize.

But not only had the surrounding nations been subdued, they were despoiled, and

the huge quantities of gold which had been taken from them were dedicated unto the Lord.

Pink: Nothing gives Satan so easy an approach to and such an advantage over us as when we are swelled by a sense of our self-importance. Few things are more detestable unto God than a heart that is inflated by egotism. [7 things God hates: 1st > "A proud look" Prov. 6:16-19].

II Sam. 24:2 For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him,

Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and

number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

There were 2 reasons for taking a census in those days:

(1) to assess a tax on the population

(2) to prepare to conscript an army.

Note: The land was at peace. There was no need to conscript an army.

Israel had extended its borders and was a recognized power.

Question: Why was God angry at David? In those times, a man only had the right to count

or number what belonged to him. Israel did not belong to David; Israel belonged to God.

Morgan: "David was tempted to take some of the glory in himself. He looked at how Israel had grown and prospered during his reign - it was remarkable indeed. The count was a way to take credit to himself. The spirit of vainglory in numbers had taken possession of the people and the king, and there was a tendency to trust in numbers and forget God."

"This census was taken so David could take pride in the strength of his army. In determining his military strength, he was beginning to trust more in military power than in God."

II Sam. 24:3 But Joab said to the king, "May the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king can still see; but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?" [Near the end of his reign]

Key Point: If we feel self-sufficient and put confidence in our strength apart from God, we will soon fall to Satan's schemes.

Note: God provided a WAY OUT in Joab's counsel, but David seemed spurred on by arrogance. A king who had been delivered by the Lord from lions, bears, Goliath, Saul, Philistines, and internal rebellion was now tempted to measure strength by numbers.

➤ The census became an act of royal self-assurance.

Pink: "In this instance it is clear at least that God permitted Satan to tempt David, and David being left to himself yielded to the temptation and sinned. Moreover, the fact that David yielded so readily, and so obstinately rejected the counsel of his servants, seems to indicate that he had not been walking with holy watchfulness before God."

Ex.30:12 God told Moses, "When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, then Each One of them shall give a Ransom for himself to the LORD when you count them, so there will be no plague among them when you count them."

It was up to God to command a census, and if David counted, he should only have done it at God's command, receiving a ransom to "atone" for the counting.

The ransom, $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel, was required of those 21 and older; those would go to war.

This money was to help provide upkeep of the Tabernacle.

This would keep Israel from a plague.

This eventually grew to the custom of the "temple tax" that was used to pay for temple expenses. [Ex. 30:12-16]

Key Point: This ransom wasn't to help an army. It was to support the worship of God.

Help the Tabernacle and work towards putting Israel's focus on God - not on their army.

Conclusion: David counted the people for himself. They did not pay the ransom.

II Sam. 24:10 Now David's heart troubled him After He Had Counted The People.

So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done.

But now, LORD, please overlook the guilt of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

Note: The census took about 9 months

II Sam. 24:12 The prophet Gad brought David a message from the LORD:

This is what the Lord says: "I am imposing upon you three choices; choose for yourself one of them, and I will do it to you."" So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him...

- 3 years of famine
- 3 months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you & overtake you
- 3 days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel.

Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to Him that sent me.

Consider: Choices 1 & 2 would have involved some level of dependency upon the mercy of man.

- Famine would require Israel to seek food from other nations.
- The warfare of the enemy would be as severe as the enemy desired.

Conclusion: David chose to rely on the mercy of God. The plague was

God's most direct form of punishment and they could only look to God for relief and mercy.

The discipline that he will experience should not be taken lightly, but it is the discipline of a loving father, discipline meant to draw David near to Him: [Heb. 12:7-13]

II Sam. 24:14 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us now fall

into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into human hands."

II Sam. 24:15 So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men.

Interesting: God killed total of 14,700 Israelites due to the rebellion of Korah.

God killed total of 24,000 Israelites due to idolatry & adultery on the plains of Moab.

God killed total of 70,000 Israelites due to PRIDE.

C.F. Stuart "Yet it is also to be noted that God's scourge fell immediately upon the people themselves, for it was against them Jehovah had a controversy [v. 1]. A solemn time it must have been. Pestilence was walking in darkness, and destruction was wasting at noonday. The destroying angel was actively at work, and no man was able to withstand him. Throughout the length and breadth of the land death was claiming its victims. Who would next be struck, no one could tell. No remedy availed to cure the sick. No intercession, however urgent, succeeded in preserving the life of a beloved one. All joy must have fled: all energy for ordinary pursuits must have been paralyzed. God was working, and in power. Of old He had laid bare His arm and worked in power on behalf of Israel; now His hand was outstretched, but in this deadly way against them. Could any charge Him with injustice? No. They deserved the chastisement, though David's act in numbering them was the proximate cause for this visitation. Helpless, how helpless were they all. Their only hope was in the mercy of God."

I Chron. 21:15 God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; and as he was destroying it, the LORD looked, and relented concerning the catastrophe and said to the destroying angel, "It is enough; now remove your hand [of judgment]."

And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

The distinctive Angel of the LORD is a Christophany, an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ.

II Sam. 24:16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people,

It is enough: stay now thine hand. [Even in His rebuke God still shows His love and mercy.]
And The Angel of the Lord was by the threshing place of Araunah the Jebusite.

Jebusite, thresher, means to tread down or trample with the effect of destruction.

A threshing floor like Araunah's would have been a large, open, elevated area to facilitate threshing and winnowing. The threshing floor, a flat surface that was smooth and hard, was used to tread on the husk of the freshly picked grain.

After the harvest, the grain was separated from the straw and husks by beating it manually. Animals such as oxen were used to tread on the husk to separate the edible grain from the scaly, inedible chaff. Flails or sticks could be used for this purpose.

They also used a threshing sledge, an arrangement of heavy boards with abrasive material (e.g., sharp rocks) on the bottom side. The sledge was pulled by draft animals back and forth across the grain to separate the tough outer husk from the kernel.

Then winnowing forks were used to throw the mixture into the air so the wind would blow away the chaff and leave the good grain on the threshing floor.

Both the Old and New Testaments refer to the threshing floor as a symbol of judgment.

I Chron. 21:16 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.

What did the Lord "behold"? David and his servants, "clothed in sackcloth,"

fallen "upon their faces." Then follows immediately David's supplication.

He is broken under the weight of what has happened.

II Sam. 24:17 And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done?
let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

I Chron. 21:17 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.

➤ David had focused on his thousands which now must be drastically reduced.

➤ At the end of the judgment, an angel had slain 1/20 of David's military might.

David refers to Israel as "Thy people." In his folly he had regarded them as his people, but in his wisdom, he now saw them as the Lord's.

David was given a terrifying sight of God's judgment as the plague swept through Israel.

The angel was carrying out the sentence connected with David's sinful census. 70,000 men had already died. The destruction halted near the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

The angel was poised to strike Jerusalem, highlighting the severity of the situation.

As Israel's king, David bore particular responsibility for leading God's people. He did not shift blame to the nation, Satan, or circumstances, but confessed his own guilt before the Lord.

Genuine repentance involves acknowledging one's sin and interceding for others affected by it. God's response to sin is just, yet He is also merciful to those who repent and seek His forgiveness.

David's willingness to take the punishment points to Christ, the ultimate shepherd, who took upon Himself the sins of the world.

Matthew Henry: See the power of the angels, when God gives them commission, either to save or to destroy. Joab is nine months in passing with his pen, the angel but 3 days in passing with his sword, through all the coasts and corners of Israel. See how easily God can bring down the proudest sinners, and how much we owe daily to the Divine patience.

- David's adultery is punished, for the present, only with the death of one infant.
- His pride with the death of all those thousands, so much does God hate pride.

Thomas Scott: "Whatever we idolize or grow proud of, God will generally take from us or else convert it into a cross."

Key Point: Let us seek constantly to bear in mind that, the only place where we are safe from a fall is to lie in the dust before God.

Key Point: David, a type of Jesus Christ, presents himself as the intercessor before God: stepping into the breach and making supplication for his afflicted kingdom.

David said, Smite me, the shepherd, but let the flock be spared.

God would not allow David to suffer in the stead of all Israel. No, none could fill that awful and honorable place of substitution but the Son of David, Jesus Christ. David foreshadowed

II Sam. 24:18-25 Obedience Has A Price Tag: God had a different solution > Sacrifice

It was David's sin that led to God's judgment and punishment. But David confessed his sin. He needed to offer the proper sacrifices to God for his sin to be covered.

- This was always done at the tabernacle of the Lord at Gibeon. But God commanded:

II Sam. 24:18-19 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him,

Go up, rear An Altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded.

Recall: David's sin = Pride = He counted as his [the people] that belonged to the LORD.

They had just won major victories over the Philistines. God's anger was also against Israel. He and the people focused on their military might and their self-reliance rather than focusing on and worshiping God. He did not collect the ransom which was to be used to support the Tabernacle and the worship of God.

I Chron. 21:20 Ornan turned back and saw the angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves.

Now Ornan was threshing wheat.

Note: Even after David captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites, Mt. Moriah [chosen by God] was again trodden underfoot by Ornan the Jebusite who used God's most sacred place as a threshing floor.

II Sam. 24:20-21 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.

²¹And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant?

And David said, To buy the threshing floor of thee [from the Jebusite], to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

I Chron. 21:21-22 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. Then David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of this threshing floor, 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.

Note: The context of King David's initiative to purchase that threshing floor was the need to stop the Angel of Death, who was exacting the punishment for sin. He was to build an altar to the LORD on this site ensuring it was legally owned and recognized for sacred use.

Key: This immediate context establishes the threshing floor as the divinely chosen site of mercy, where wrath was stayed and communion restored.

II Sam. 24:22-23 Araunah's response: And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems 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.

I Chron. 21:23 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. A prominent theme of sacrifice and atonement. Ornan's willingness to offer his possessions to David reflects the concept of sacrificial giving, as well as the desire for reconciliation and atonement.

His generous offering of the threshing floor, oxen, threshing instruments, and wheat symbolizes a complete surrender and submission to God's will. Heart of true worship & devotion

Matt. 4:8-11 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

Key: Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world without the sacrifice of the cross. For Jesus to gain all the kingdoms of the world & provide salvation, it will cost him the full price.

David's Response: II Sam. 24:24 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 threshing floor and the oxen for 50 shekels of silver.

I Chron. 21:24-25 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.

A sacrifice that doesn't cost anything is not a sacrifice at all. David understood that to demonstrate his repentance and his faith in the mercy of God, he needed to pay for the site and supply the oxen, threshing sledges and wheat for the offerings. The Full Price

➤ True worship involves personal sacrifice and cost.

II Sam. 24:25 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.

I Chron. 21:26-28 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.

A burnt offering spoke of consecration before God, and peace offerings belonged to fellowship and thanksgiving. David's offering did not purchase forgiveness as though God could be paid.

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 threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there.

Royal Priesthood: David—the king—offers sacrifice,

foreshadowing Messiah's combined kingship and priesthood. Psalm 110; Hebrews 7

Note: David's sin was not completely dealt with until there was blood shed. [Heb. 9:22]

This site became the Temple Mount.

II Sam. 24:16-24; I Chron. 21:22-30

I Chron. 22:1 Then David said, "This *is* the house of the Lord God,

and this *is* the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

The land was sanctified and would one day be the site of God's temple.

II Chron. 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 threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

Thousands upon thousands of animals were sacrificed each year to atone for sin.
God took David's sin of pride and self-reliance and turned the entire situation around.

- The threshing floor's purpose: Get rid of the chaff in his life
- The threshing place becomes a place of obedient worship where God had shown mercy.
- The threshing place becomes the place for Solomon's Temple where the Shekinah Glory of the LORD will dwell.

Araunah: A Gentile by birth: A proselyte to the faith of Israel I Chron. 21:23

Gentile Inclusion: His acceptance prefigures Gentile grafting into God's people. Rom. 11:17-24

Araunah: A Jebusite Connected to Mercy and the Temple Site

God shows mercy in surprising places. A Jebusite-owned threshing floor became linked to the place where David prepared an altar to God and to Solomon's temple.

Significance of The Threshing Floor of Araunah

A. It is integrally connected to the theme of Sacrifice and Worship.

- Identified with Mt. Moriah where Abraham was to offer Isaac on the altar. Gen. 22

B. Connected With Substitutionary Atonement. Demonstrates costly atonement

- Isaac's reprieve on Mt. Moriah: An angel stayed the knife in Abraham's hand.

A ram was sacrificed in Isaac's place. Blood shed

Destruction of Jerusalem: An angel stood at the threshing floor and stayed the sword.

David built an altar; offered sacrifices; blood shed; on Mt. Moriah

Thousands upon thousands of animals were sacrificed each year to atone for sin.

David began to make his way up to the place where the angel of the LORD had been halted.

The Significance of Mt. Moriah = a ridge system that starts about 600 meters above sea level.

- It rises to about 740 meters = site of threshing floor & Temple Mount
- The peak of Mt. Moriah = Place where Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac
- The place where God the Father will give His only Begotten Son as The Sacrifice

777 meters [7 is number of completion; It Is Finished]

C. Threshing Floor Stands at the Meeting Place of Judgment & Mercy

- God is holy, sin is serious, and mercy is never something to treat casually.

D. Threshing Floor is a symbol of Judgment and Purification. Grain is separated from chaff.

- God's judgment and the refining of His people.

E. The Threshing Floor becomes the Holy of Holies foundation.

- It sets the stage for the establishment of the Temple.

- God's presence would dwell among His people.

F. Araunah's threshing floor links Abraham, David, Solomon, and Christ.

The Jebusites' fortress city resisted Israel for centuries. When it was taken by David, becomes Jerusalem, hosts the Temple, witnesses Christ's resurrection, and awaits His return.

Micah 4:2-3; Zech. 14 portray Jerusalem as the future throne of global righteousness.

The same ridge where Jebusite sentries once stood later hosts Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection, and promised return. Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:11

God designates the meeting place: today, the believer's heart becomes His temple.

I Cor. 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

True worship still requires cost—our living bodies as sacrifices.

Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.

It is not a life of cheap grace without taking up our cross.

It is a place of daily submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a place where we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice with a humble heart
on God's threshing floor so He can burn away from us everything that is chaff - -
not like Jesus.

This act of worship can be seen as stepping onto God's threshing floor,
to meet with & commune with our bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

What are you willing to do to prepare yourself?