

David's Sacrifice

Key Verse: “*And king David said, ... 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.*”
—*I Chronicles 21:24*

Selected Scripture:
I Chronicles 21:14-30

THE LORD SAID OF DAVID that he was a man after his own heart. (I Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22) This was not because David never sinned, but because of his humility and repentant heart when his sins were called to his attention.

Expressing his innermost feelings, David wrote, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” (Ps. 51:10) He recognized that, by nature, his heart was not always clean, and that through weakness of the flesh he was

prone at times to manifest a wrong spirit. Nevertheless, he was not sympathetic toward his sins and prayed to God that he might be cleansed, that a “right spirit” might be renewed within him.

An example of David's repentant heart is when he sinned before the Lord by disobeying the command not to number the people of Israel, in spite of the protests of Joab, captain of the hosts. Then the Lord spoke to Gad, David's seer, or prophet, and instructed him to tell David to choose one of the three choices of chastisement for this transgression: three years of famine, three months to be destroyed by enemies, or three days of pestilence. Realizing his own weakness, David, in humility, declined

to make a choice and explained he preferred to leave the matter in the hands of the Lord, knowing that “very great are his mercies.”—II Sam. 24:2-4; I Chron. 21:1-13

God chose the three days of pestilence chastisement, and in a very short time seventy thousand men of Israel died. Then God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but soon after said to the angel, “It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.” David pleaded with God, acknowledging it was he that had sinned and not the people, and asked for God’s chastisement to be upon himself.—vss. 14-17

Through the angel, God instructed David to go and “set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite,” and offer sacrifice to the Lord. Ornan first “saw the angel” and then saw David arrive. David asked to pay “full price” for the threshingfloor. After buying it, he offered “burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD.” The Lord “answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering.” Based upon these sacrifices, the Lord stopped the plague.—vss. 18-28

The sincerity of David’s devotion to the Lord is revealed beautifully by his insistence that he buy at full price Ornan’s threshing floor for use in offering sacrifice to the Lord, rather than accept it as a gift or pay a lesser amount. He explained that he did not want to present burnt offerings to the Lord which cost him nothing. (vs. 24) This is a good lesson for all of God’s people. If we sacrifice in the Lord’s service only that which we do not need anyway, or which we have no other use for, we give little or no evidence of true devotion to him.

As a final note to this account, the threshingfloor of Ornan, which David bought, was the place where Solomon would later build the temple, “the house of the LORD.”—II Chron. 3:1 ■