

## **Jerusalem is Spared!**

Call to Worship: Psalm 95:1-7a

1st Scripture: 1 Chronicles 21

2nd Scripture: 2 Samuel 24

Hymn #70- *Praise My Soul the King of Heaven*

Hymn #403- *Not What My Hands Have Done*

Hymn Insert- *The Power of the Cross*

### **Introduction:**

Hopefully, last time, we have gotten an appreciative taste for the holiness of God, as we pondered God's judgment on Israel for David's sin. If you were not here two weeks ago, I want to highly suggest that you listen to that message, as it serves as a critical foundation for the main goal of this text, which we will be looking at this morning.

Today, we conclude the Book of 2 Samuel, and we do so, by seeking to lay hold of the rich and profound truth, which is left here for us, at the end of the Book. Why does the author end here? Why does he conclude with this particular event? We come now to the glorious and holy ground of answering these questions. Let us remove our sandals of casual observance, and bring our hearts and minds before God this morning, with a sobering sense of holy awe (and a fervent desire to be engaged and in tune with the Holy Spirit), as we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!

### **I. Jerusalem is Spared!**

We left off with the angel of the Lord hovering above Jerusalem with his sword extended outward, as if, preparing to utterly destroy the city. Seventy thousand men had already been destroyed by plague, from Dan to Beersheba. David pleads with God to spare the people, and to shift the judgment instead toward him and his house, threatening to hinder God's promise to preserve a Davidic Dynasty forever. God calls the angel to restrain his hand from further judgment, but the angel remains in place! Justice must still be fulfilled! God's righteous judgment must still be exercised! It would be unjust to leave Jerusalem intact, from the standpoint of God's justice, for His righteous wrath must be propitiated; it must be satisfied in full! Jerusalem should be leveled! Jerusalem must be leveled! There is nothing that David or anyone else can do. If mercy and grace are to find a way somehow, then they must find their

way through God; the same God, whom David knew was a source of such grace and mercy. We recall David's response to Gad, in verse 14, when he was given three options of judgment to choose from: "I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man." What then will God do at this critical moment in history?

Well, we find in verse 18 that the prophet Gad returns with another message from God. "Go up, erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." God provides a way; a way of atonement, so that Jerusalem can be spared! The wrath of God will be appeased at another location, away from the site of the present tabernacle (the high place in Gibeon - 1 Chron. 21:29); away from the present site of the golden ark, which rests in the City of David; a location chosen by God and not by men.

And so, David immediately runs to purchase that place, the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, along with the land, upon which it rests. And Araunah humbly offers it, along with oxen (servant livestock) and wooden threshing implements to supply the burnt sacrifice. After paying the due price for all of these things, David sets up the altar and presents burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord, and then we are told (in 1 Chron. 21:26) that when David had called upon the Lord there, that the Lord "answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering." God consumed the sacrifice Himself; with His own match, as it were. And the plague was immediately withdrawn from Israel. In 1 Chronicles 21:27, we are told, "So the Lord commanded the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath."

What David was afraid to attempt to accomplish at Gibeon, the place of Moses tabernacle, God had David do right here, atop a mountain (just north of the City of David; some 450 yards), at the threshing floor of Araunah. And from that point on, this became the location, upon which, David had sacrificed.

## **II. The Threshing Floor of Araunah**

Now brethren, what is the significance of this event? Why does the author end 1 and 2 Samuel on this note? What hope does this offer the reader, if any? Well brethren, let me suggest to you that the location of God's expressed mercy here, contains the key to unlocking the

ultimate significance of this text, not only for Old Covenant Israel, but further, for the New Covenant church! The location tells the story!

Now, while *our* road ends here in 2 Samuel, in 1 Chronicles (our parallel passage), immediately following this event, we are given some additional important information:

1 Chronicles 22:1&2- Then David said, 'This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel.' So David commanded to gather the aliens who were in the land of Israel; and he appointed masons to cut hewn stones to build the house of God."

Now, what does David come to understand by *God's* instructions for David to go up to the threshing floor of Araunah to make the sacrifice, which would appease God's anger, and lead to the sparing of Jerusalem? He sees that God has now, at this time of judgment, and at this time of mercy, designated the very place whereby intercession will be made (on behalf of the people of God) from this time forward. This will be the place, where Israel will seek the mercy of God, continually; where sacrificial atonements/offerings will be made daily and where God will set His covenant to be their God and for them to be His people. This will be the place where the mercy seat will rest, atop the ark, surrounded by all of the other holy tabernacle furnishings, committed to the service of the priesthood. This will be the place where David's son, Solomon, will build the house of God, the Temple! And David moves on then to prepare for that end.

Notice as well, what we are told later on in 2 Chronicles 3:1, where we are given the details surrounding Solomon's building of the temple: "Now Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem *on Mount Moriah*, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan (Araunah) the Jebusite." And so, here is the place where the temple will be built, soon to be called, "Mount Zion."

But brethren, notice one other important detail, given in this text (2 Chron. 3:1), which will help sum up the matter for us, leading into some very significant and relevant applications. What else are we told about this location? We are told that this was "Mount Moriah." Now, why is this significant? What significant event, depicting the profound mercy of God, had happened many years earlier atop this very mountain? We recall back in Genesis, chapter 22:2, these words of the Lord, spoken to Abraham, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you

love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." And when Abraham went to that mountain in Moriah, and attempted to sacrifice his son, we recall how the Lord had stopped him, and provided a ram caught in a thicket instead. God provided the sacrifice. And in verse 14, Abraham responds, "And Abraham called the name of the place, 'The Lord Will Provide;' as it is said to this day, 'In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided.'"

The place where Abraham's son was spared; the place where Jerusalem was spared; the place where the temple would be grounded; the place of sacrifice, pardon, hope and grace, was fixed by God, on top of this mountain, just alongside of (and later to become part of) Jerusalem. And so, as Israel would get a sobering taste of the holiness of God, seeing 70,000 killed because of David's sin, they would also find the incomprehensible mercy of God, which sheathed the Angel's sword, as an atonement was made upon this mount. Where there is judgment, there is also hope and mercy. And brethren, that hope comes to us in its fullness in what all of these things point to, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is the significance of this glorious text! Indeed, we find a God to be feared; a God's whose nature is incomprehensibly holy (burning hotter and brighter than the noonday sun), but also a God who is merciful, and who has, from the beginning, opened up a single door of salvation, through the Seed of the woman, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ!

### **III. Closing Thoughts and Applications**

Having worked through this text, brethren, let us then close our time this morning by considering a few concluding thoughts and applications as we prepare to take the Lord's Supper together:

Friends, behold once again, the very clear message of the Gospel displayed here in our text. Indeed, all throughout Scripture, the Gospel is placarded, from Genesis to Revelation, presenting a glorious hope to a naturally fallen, condemned and corrupt world. We have the disease of sin within us; we have inherited it from Adam, and that is a frightening reality, when you consider the uncompromisingly righteous and holy nature of God. But there is hope; hope in

a "city of peace," (Jerusalem - "City of Peace/Yeru-Shalom") because God Himself has provided an atonement.

David's sin brought judgment upon Israel, spanning the whole nation, from Dan to Beersheba. And 70,000 perished as a consequence of this sin. And friends, Adam's sin has brought judgment upon the entire world; upon every race and language and people group. And on a global scale, by far, most perish in their sins. Most are condemned and judged because of the sin nature they have inherited in Adam. But God, in His rich mercy, sets apart a city of peace; a heavenly Jerusalem, who although equally as deserving of the fiery judgment received by all else, are spared. He provides a sacrifice; not servant oxen, burning atop wooden threshing instruments, but a servant Man; a God-Man, His only Son, crucified outside of the city, atop Mount Golgotha (the place of the skull), on a wooden cross, so that His people will be spared. And God consumes this offering not with a lightning bolt from heaven, as in the case of the oxen, but with the fierce fullness of His wrath; a burning, incomprehensible, hell on the inside, squeezing out the words, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"

And all who are among the people of God; all of the true seed of Abraham by faith, spiritually fixed in the heavenly Jerusalem; all who are residents of Mount Zion, are spared, forgiven, reconciled and adopted as God's beloved children; brothers and sisters of Christ!

"The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob" (Psalm 87:2).

"Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion" (Psalm 2:6).

"Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion! Declare His deeds among the people" (Psalm 9:11).

[Read Hebrews 12:18-24]

[Read 1 Peter 2:1-10]

[Revelation 21:9-11a; 22-27]

And so, the question is begged here this morning: "Are you still under the law and condemned in your sin? Are you still bound to Mount Sinai, without any hope of obtaining mercy and grace in the sight of a holy and righteous God? Or, have you come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, where a "once for all time" sacrifice has been made, not in the

earthly temple (made with men's hands), but in God's heavenly temple; even the sacrifice of Jesus Christ? Are you a child of grace, or a slave of the unrelenting Law, which condemns unrighteous sinners?"

Consider this. From the beginning of time, man has always sought to make his own way to God. Man has always sought some other way, apart from the free and glorious means which God has provided in His Son. Indeed, our text was written to Israel, soon to be a divided kingdom following the reign of Solomon, to boldly and clearly state that salvation is in Zion and in Zion alone. But, what did they do? Under the leadership of Jeroboam, the northern tribes set up their own means of attempting to reach God; two golden calves (one in the north and one in the south). And in doing so, great judgment came upon the north, leading to their ultimate demise and exile.

Friends, there is no other way to be reconciled to God than through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ! There is no other place of salvation, outside of the true church of the living God, the true Jerusalem! Only upon the Rock of Zion will you find a sure foundation, where you can stand. All other ground is sinking sand! The road to destruction is broad and many, many, travel upon it. But the road to life is narrow... there are few who find it! Christ is the door! Enter through Him, the Narrow Way, and be saved!

AMEN!!!

The Lord's Supper!