

## Pictures of God's Servants - 02

**Araunah**

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### **Introduction:**

Last week we looked at Queen Esther and how she laid her life on the line, exposing herself to possible execution, so she could try to save God's chosen people. As we honor our bravest soldiers with the Congressional Metal of Honor we should remember that there is coming a day when God's brave soldiers will be honored.

Most people don't know that for every soldier that is on the battle front with a rifle, or the stick of a fighter jet in his hands, there are more than ten support personnel backing them up and making it possible for them to do their job.

It is also important to remember that it is not only those who lay their physical life on the line that will be honored in the Kingdom of God. Like a functioning, healthy body, there are different members with different jobs to make the body function properly. There are those members who will never face martyrdom or the reality of leaving everything behind to go to a foreign mission field. But this does not make them any less important than the other members of the body.

This morning we will look at King David, His generals and commanders, and a man who was dedicated to God and to God's chosen King. Not as a general or great warrior, but as a faithful servant. His name was Araunah and he faithfully and generously served King David.

This morning we want to answer three questions as we look at this passage of scripture in **2 Sam. 24:1-24:**

1. What kind of soldiers are these men?
2. What kind of king is King David?
3. What kind of servant is Araunah?

### **Text:**

#### **2 Samuel 24:1-4 (NASB)**

[24:1] Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

**(What kind of King is this?** He is a king who has human weaknesses just like you and I do. God uses David's emotions, his makeup, his pride to punish Israel. One commentator wrote: Since he wanted to "know how many there are" (v. 2), it is evident that his action was motivated either by pride in the size of the empire he had acquired or by reliance for his security on the size of the reserve of manpower he could muster in an emergency or, more likely, both. The mere taking of a census was hardly sinful (see Nu 1:2-3; 26:2-4), but in this instance it represented an unwarranted glorying in and dependence on human power rather than the Lord (not much different from Israel's initial desire to have a king for their security; see 1Sa 8-12). **MHCC**)

[2] The king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, "Go about now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and register the people, that I may know the number of the people."

[3] But Joab said to the king, "Now 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 still see; but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?"

**(What Kind of soldiers, servants, are these men?** Joab knew that what King David was about to do was wrong, so he confronts the King. He knew his King intimately and he knew that this was pride on David's part, so he warns him. But he was obedient to the king after warning him. Verse 4 indicates that all of David's army commanders joined in the protest. It seems that all of David's leaders are men of God. Men who believed that they were great generals and warriors because they worshiped God and trusted in Him to work out His will through their actions as soldiers. These are men who are not afraid to confront, even their King when they see something wrong in what he is doing.)

[4] Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to register the people of Israel.

## **2 Samuel 24:8-25 (NASB)**

[8] So when they had gone about through the whole land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

[9] And Joab gave the number of the registration of the people to the king; and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

[10] Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

**(What kind of King is this?** A king who, when he falls under conviction does not try to dismiss or justify his actions, but instead seeks God when he has failed in his life.)

[11] When David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

[12] "Go and speak to David, 'Thus the LORD says, "I am offering you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I will do to you.'"

[13] So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider and see what answer I shall return to Him who sent me."

[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 the hand of man."

**(What kind of King is this?** Notice that King David placed himself at the mercy of God when faced with a choice about what his punishment would be.)

[15] So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time, and seventy thousand men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.

[16] When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who destroyed the people, "It is enough! Now relax your hand!" And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

[17] Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, "Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father's house."

**(What kind of King is this?** King David did not place himself above his people but saw them as sheep given to him by God to take care of. When he saw the angel destroying his sheep he could not take it and he cries out to God in their behalf.)

[18] So Gad came to David that day and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite."

(This is the site that the temple would be built on by David's son, King Solomon. [2 Chronicles 3:1]

Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in 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 the Jebusite, that is Araunah. It is also interesting that this is the place where Abraham came to offer his only son Isaac as the lord had commanded him. [Genesis 22:2] He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.")

[19] David went up according to the word of Gad, just as the LORD had commanded.

[20] Araunah looked down and saw the king and his servants crossing over toward him; and Araunah went out and bowed his face to the ground before the king.

**(What kind of servant is Araunah?** He was the kind of servant that paid attention and was ready to serve the king at any moment.)

[21] Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be held back from the people."

[22] Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what is good in his sight. Look, the oxen for the burnt offering, the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood.

[23] "Everything, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you."

**(What kind of servant is Araunah?** He was generous. He understood that everything he had belonged to God.)

[24] However, the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

**(What kind of king is this?** David understood that the debt was his to pay so he would not take advantage of his servant Araunah.)

[25] David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. Thus the LORD was moved by prayer for the land, and the plague was held back from Israel.

## Conclusion:

This passage answers three important questions for us:

- What kind of men were David's top general and commanders?
  - What kind of king was King David?
  - What kind of man was Araunah?
1. What kind of men were David's top general and commanders?
    - They were men of God who were not afraid to speak up when King David was about to do wrong.
    - They were men who knew that God was in control. Any success they might have as soldiers had more to do with the power of God than it did with their military skill, physical power, or personal bravery.
    - They were men who were faithful servants of their king, willing to follow him and die for him if necessary. King David was God's chosen leader, he was God's representative here on earth. He had been chosen to lead God's chosen people, Israel. Because they were men of God they followed God's King.
  2. What kind of king was King David?

- He was a man of God who made mistakes and failed God at times. It is important to remember that no matter how close to God we become in our relationship with Him, there is always the potential for failure.
- He was a man of God who admitted and confessed his failures to God. He had a trust in the promises of God. You see God has promised His children that He will be with us no matter what. The only thing that can separate an individual from God is their choice to reject God's revelation in their life. David did not reject or try to justify his troubled heart which was God's revelation of the king's sin. Instead he went to God in confession and repentance.
- King David was a man who was not afraid to place himself at the mercy of an all knowing and all loving God. When faced with a choice about how he would be punished for his sin, David asked God to make the choice. Even in his time of failure King David placed his life in the hands of His God. His people had a history with God and David learned about the character of God from that history. He also had a personal relationship with God that assured him that the character of this loving God would not change because he had failed God. David had stepped out in faith to face the giant Goliath and learned in an intimate way what kind of God this was. So once again, he puts his life in God's hands.
- King David was a man who did not see himself as better than anyone else. Even though his station in life placed him over all others, he did not take advantage of that position. He thought about others before he thought about his own comfort and safety.
- King David paid his own debt refusing to take advantage of others. Everyone needs help from time to time. But David teaches us that the man or woman of God has personal responsibilities that they must not lay on other people. In our welfare culture most people expect to be taken care of by others, but David shows us the importance of personal responsibility.

### 3. What kind of man was Araunah?

- Araunah shows us the qualities of a dedicated and faithful servant which flowed out of His relationship with God.
- Araunah was a man who paid attention. He was watching when the king approached his property. He was ready to serve the king at any moment the opportunity might present itself. Not at his own convenience but at the convenience of the king.
- Araunah was generous. He gave the most important earthly possessions he had. He gave the king the things he needed to make his living. He shows us a servant willing to give his king all he had. You see he understood that the king was God's representative on earth and so to give to the king was to give to Almighty God.

What is important about the people we have looked at in this passage is that they show us how we are to live our lives for God.

Like the Commanders we need to be faithful and courageous.

Like King David we need to be honest and trusting.

Like Araunah we need to be generous and ready to serve at any moment.

In answering these three questions we see the characteristics of true servants of the living God. Let us measure our own relationship with God, by these men of God.

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**MHCC** - Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible by Matthew Henry, L A R I D I A N, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.