

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Feb. 4

MONDAY

David goes to Araunah's farm to build an altar and offers to buy the land. Araunah gives him a royal welcome, but refuses to accept money. It's all yours, he says, and then he throws in everything else David might need to sacrifice to the Lord, including the wood and oxen.

READ: II Sam.24:20-23

Araunah was a Jebusite. That is, he wasn't Jewish by birth. But because he owned land in Israel, it's clear that he had converted to the Jewish faith. And from this account, it's clear that he honored the Jewish king, and honored him greatly. His actions speak loudly of both his patriotism and his faith. It is a combination that believers should always demonstrate. We are told to honor the king and to give generously, sharing cheerfully with others what God has given to us. And, as Araunah does, to pray God's blessing on them.

TUESDAY

David refuses Araunah's offer of land and materials and insists on buying and paying for them. Then he builds an altar and offers God a sacrifice. God accepted the offering and was moved to stop the pestilence early.

READ: II Sam.24:24-25

David's answer is amazing! "I will not give to the Lord that which cost me nothing." David would not take the cheap way out. He wouldn't accept a free ride. Not when it came to the things of God. How strongly David stands in contrast to the day we live in. "What's the least I have to do? What's the smallest I must pay? Which is the path of least resistance?" Listen, the cost paid by God in saving us was too high for us to cheapen with cheap faith! To genuinely follow the Lord will cost something. It may cost much. There is a price to pay in the eyes of this world, in the relationships we enjoy with others, and in our own schedules, hobbies, and finances. What will you offer unto the Lord this day?

WEDNESDAY

David is old, and apparently somewhat weak and frail. And cold. His servants search for a young girl to be his nurse and to warm him with her body.

READ: I Kings 1:1-2

What was it about David's life which would make those around him - those making decisions for him - think that he would want a young virgin to lie with him to keep him warm? Perhaps the legacy of David included his sin with Bathsheba and the consequences of that throughout his life, and that it was own legacy which follows him now. A legacy is nothing to mess around with. May the legacy of our lives be one in which our full commitment to the Lord and to His ways is known and honored by all.

THURSDAY

They search and find the beautiful Abishag (Abby not Shag). She's brought to the palace to care for David. While serving the king, she remained a virgin.

READ: I Kings 1:3-4

As a people serious about living for the Lord, we are told to avoid the appearance of evil. David does not do that well here. The beautiful young virgin comes to be his nurse, and to keep him warm with her own body heat. There can be little doubt that this arrangement would seem to be risqué, to say the least. Imagine the conversations which discussed that arrangement! We are called upon to more careful than that. May we have the determination and wisdom to stay away from all appearance of evil.

FRIDAY

One of David's sons, Adonijah, decided to be king in his father's place. A good-looking young man who had not been corrected by his father, he gained the support of General Joab and of Abiathar the priest in his quest.

READ: I Kings 1:5-6

It was not God's will that Adonijah be the next king. But Adonijah will try to make that happen anyway. To do so, he recruits a leading military leader and a leading religious figure. It's not hard to find people to go along with any plan (no matter how wrong or foolish) if there is something in it for them. Do not be overly impressed by organizations because of their size or programs or budget or facilities. What God calls for in our lives is faithfulness. Not greatness. Faithfulness. Not success. Faithfulness. "Well done, my good and faithful servant," He will say someday.

SATURDAY

There are those who did not support Adonijah in his effort to be king. When Adonijah offered sacrifices as part of his attempt to wrestle all power from his father, he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the priest's son, Solomon his older brother, or any of David's so-called 'Mighty Men'.

READ: I Kings 1:8-10

It's unthinkable wicked what Adonijah did: he put on a big show of being religious, hoping undoubtedly to attract that crowd. He offered sacrifices and that was wrong to do. But Adonijah was ambitious, and doing the right thing was a non-issue. His heart was set on power, prestige, and money, and righteousness was nowhere to be found. As God's people, we are called apart from such things, and commanded to follow after righteousness. "Be holy as I am holy," God has told us. May we walk to a different drum beat, and live our lives to do the right thing in the right way.

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