

# God Finding a Resting-Place

by Horatius Bonar

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*The sermon explores the significance of the temple site, chosen through David's sin and punishment, and how it reflects God's grace and the connection between Israel and the Gentiles.*

**Scripture:** 1 Chronicles 21:18

**Topics:** "God's Grace", "The Temple's Significance"

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## Description

Horatius Bonar explores the significance of the temple site chosen by God, revealing how David's sin led to the identification of Moriah as the resting place for God's name. He emphasizes that this location symbolizes the intersection of judgment and grace, where life begins and death is halted. Bonar highlights the importance of the Gentile connection to the temple, illustrating that all nations have a place in God's plan. He also notes that the temple's establishment was a divine response to human pride and sin, and that God honors the ordinary work of individuals like Oman, transforming their labor into a sacred space. Ultimately, Bonar reflects on the transition from the tabernacle to the temple, marking a new era in God's relationship with His people.

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## Transcript

1 Chronicles 21:1-30

THERE is something very peculiar about this fragment or episode of Israel's history. It is abrupt, and in a manner isolated, though not wholly so. It has also some very remarkable points about it. It is the introduction to the history of the temple. It shews the way in which David was led to Moriah as the temple site, and to Oman's thrashing-floor as the place for the altar of burnt-offering. It was through David's sin and punishment that God pointed out the "rest" which He had chosen, and the spot where He had purposed to place His name (2 Chronicles 3:1). Thus God overrules human sin; nay, takes occasion from it to display His grace. It was their king's sin that was the link between Israel and Moriah, between Israel and the temple, between Israel and the place of burnt-offering. Strange this, but suitable and striking. It is sin that is, in one sense, the link, or at least the point, of contact between us and Jesus.

There is this peculiarity also about the spot: it was the place of division between death and life, between condemnation and pardon, between pestilence and health. All up to this point was judgment; but here the sword stayed. This hill, this thrashing-floor, stood between the

living and the dead. Such is really the character of the temple and the altar. Here life begins, and death is stayed. All up to this is death and vengeance; that temple was the shield of the world.

There is also this peculiarity. The spot where the plague stayed was Gentile, not Jewish ground. It was the property of a Jebusite--the last heir of the Jebusite kings (2 Samuel 24:23, "Araunah the king"); perhaps of Melchizedek; so that thus Moriah passes from Melchizedek to David. It was on Jebusite or Gentile ground that the angel of judgment sheathed his sword, and Israel's temple was erected. How much of that temple was Gentile, not Jewish! The ground, the cedars, the gold, and silver, and brass (1 Chronicles 18:7,11), the workmen were Gentile; all but the stones, which were Jewish. Israel was thus to learn that the Gentile had an interest in these courts. The Gentile could say, That rock is mine, that gold is mine, that cedar-wood is mine, that workmanship is mine. Yes; in that temple all nations meet with one another, and meet with God. One in Christ, was the teaching of the temple, as well as of the cross.

Let us further notice, that it was in connection with the numbering of Israel that the temple-site came to be fixed. God's special promise to Abraham was, that his seed should be as the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven; and now, when this promise is abused, and made a minister of pride, the judgment comes because of it; and yet, out of the judgment comes the voice which says, "This is my rest." The point of the destroying sword (not a voice from the glory) marks the temple; its flash reveals the long-appointed spot. That temple was to be a seal and pledge of Israel's numbers without number--"the fountain of Israel."

Let us further notice, that it was in connection with the common occupations of life that this revelation of the temple-site was made. "Oman and his sons were thrashing wheat" at the time when the angel came, and his sword stayed at the thrashing-floor. They had no share in David's sin and Israel's punishment, and they were not alarmed at the pestilence. They were not clad in sackcloth, like David and the elders. They were not on their knees, but engaged in the common duties of the day. God finds them at the thrashing-floor, and blames them not. Nay, He honours them and their employment; He honours that piece of ground where they were working, by turning it from a thrashing-floor into an altar. Let no man be ashamed of his honest trade, or think that God will not meet with him in the midst of it. Oman's flail was not a mean thing in the eyes of God.

Let us notice again, that this ground was bought at its price by David for Israel. There are only two spots which thus passed by purchase into Jewish hands, Machpelah and Moriah,--the one for burial-place, the other for a temple; the one bought by Abraham, the other by David. Of all the rest of the land Israel took possession, as God's gift, without money and without price. Strange that, for a spot on which to fix the symbols of resurrection and reconciliation, Israel (in the persons of Abraham and David) must pay the full price!--as if to remind them that, in both cases, it was by ransom that the blessing was reached--"a ransom for the sins of many," "I will ransom them from the grave."

One thing more we notice, this fixing of the temple-site had nothing to do with the tabernacle, or the ark, or the priesthood, or the Urim and Thummim. There was a break between them. The ark was on Zion, and the tabernacle (at this time) was at Gibeon, and it was not to the high priest that God made this new revelation, but to David, and Gad, and the elders of Israel. There was much in the temple that was a repetition or fuller development of the tabernacle, there was much in it that was new. The tabernacle was linked with Levi; the temple, in great measure, with Judah. It is the king, not the priest, that builds the house. God asks the help of David, and Solomon, and Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel, and such civil governors in the maintenance of His worship. Their giving it honours them, and defiles not the temple of God. God, in his sovereignty, led the ark about to Gilgal, Shiloh, Kirjath-jearim, Zion; and now that His

purpose is served, He sets it aside, and chooses a new site for His place of worship; and that place no longer a tent, but a temple; no longer connected with priesthood only, but with royalty as well; no longer frail and moveable, like a pilgrim, but fixed and unchanging,--type of the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Such is the end of the tabernacle-age. It began with Moses and ended with David. It began with Sinai and ended with Zion. It began with the thunder of the burning mountain and ended with the pestilence and the devouring sword. A wondrous mixture all throughout of mercy and of judgment!

The temple-age ended in more awful judgment--the desolation of temple, and city, and people. For man is always treasuring up wrath against himself and ripening for the final stroke, "Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse." "The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

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