

1 Chronicles 21:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat.

Analysis

Theological Analysis: This passage falls within the section on David's census and divine judgment. The Hebrew term חַטָּא (chet) - sin/offense is theologically significant here, pointing to Even godly leaders sin and face consequences. The Chronicler's narrative, while paralleling Samuel-Kings in places, offers a distinct theological perspective emphasizing temple worship, Levitical service, and covenant faithfulness.

Chronicles presents David not primarily as warrior-king but as worship organizer and temple planner. This verse contributes to that portrait by highlighting the spiritual dimensions of Israel's national life. The text demonstrates that true prosperity comes through proper worship and covenant obedience rather than merely military or political success.

Doctrinally, this passage teaches about Even godly leaders sin and face consequences. Cross-references throughout Chronicles connect David's reign to the broader redemptive narrative, showing how God's covenant promises advance through faithful human leadership while ultimately depending on divine grace and power. The messianic implications are profound: Christ bears judgment for sin on our behalf.

Historical Context

Historical Background: This section describes events from David's reign (c. 1010-970 BCE) but was written centuries later during the Persian period (c. 450-400 BCE). The Chronicler's selectivity in retelling David's story serves his theological purposes—he omits David's sins (Bathsheba, Absalom's rebellion) while emphasizing David's worship reforms and temple preparations.

The historical setting of David's census and divine judgment occurred during Israel's united monarchy, when the nation reached its territorial and political zenith. Archaeological evidence from this period shows significant building projects and administrative development. However, the Chronicler writes for a much smaller, struggling post-exilic community, using David's golden age to inspire hope for restoration.

Ancient Near Eastern parallels show that temple construction and royal sponsorship of worship were common across cultures. However, Israel's understanding of worship centered on covenant relationship with the one true God rather than manipulation of capricious deities. This theological distinctiveness shapes the Chronicler's presentation.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does this verse's emphasis on Even godly leaders sin and face consequences challenge or affirm your current spiritual priorities and practices?

2. What does Christ bears judgment for sin on our behalf teach you about Jesus Christ and His redemptive work?
3. In what practical ways can you apply the principles of covenant faithfulness and proper worship demonstrated in this passage?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשָּׁב	וְאֶרְנָן	וַיֵּרָא	אֶת	הַמַּלְאָךְ הַ	וְאֶרְבַּע עַת	בְּנֵי יוֹ	עַמּוֹ
turned back	And Ornan	and saw	H853	the angel	and his four	sons	H5973
H7725	H771	H7200		H4397	H702	H1121	
מִתְחַבֵּא יִם	וְאֶרְנָן	דָּשׁ	חֲטִיִּים:				
with him hid	And Ornan	was threshing	wheat				
H2244	H771	H1758	H2406				

Additional Cross-References

Judges 6:11 (Parallel theme): And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.