

The First Reading: 2 Samuel 24:10-25

David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the Lord, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O Lord, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing.”

¹¹ Before David got up the next morning, the word of the Lord had come to Gad the prophet, David’s seer: ¹² “Go and tell David, ‘This is what the Lord says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.’”

¹³ So Gad went to David and said to him, “Shall there come upon you three years of famine in your land? Or three months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you? Or three days of plague in your land? Now then, think it over and decide how I should answer the one who sent me.”

¹⁴ David said to Gad, “I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men.”

¹⁵ So the Lord sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died. ¹⁶ When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, “Enough! Withdraw your hand.” The angel of the Lord was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

¹⁷ When David saw the angel who was striking down the people, he said to the Lord, “I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Let your hand fall upon me and my family.”

¹⁸ On that day Gad went to David and said to him, “Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.” ¹⁹ So David went up, as the Lord had commanded through Gad. ²⁰ When Araunah looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.

²¹ Araunah said, “Why has my lord the king come to his servant?”

“To buy your threshing floor,” David answered, “so I can build an altar to the Lord, that the plague on the people may be stopped.”

²² Araunah said to David, “Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. ²³ O king, Araunah gives all this to the king.” Araunah also said to him, “May the Lord your God accept you.”

²⁴ But the king replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them. ²⁵ David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt

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offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

The Epistle Reading: Revelation 3:14-22

“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. ¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

¹⁹ Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. ²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

²¹ To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

The Gospel Reading: Luke 18:9-14

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector.

¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

¹⁴ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

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