

Deut. 12:2 You must destroy all the sites at which the nations you are to dispossess worshiped their gods, whether on lofty mountains and on hills or under any luxuriant tree. ³ Tear down their altars, smash their pillars, put their sacred posts to the fire, and cut down the images of their gods, obliterating their name from that site.

Deut. 12:4 Do not worship the LORD your God in like manner, ⁵ but look only to the site that the LORD your God will choose [הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר] amidst all your tribes as His habitation, to establish His name there ...

¹⁰ When you cross the Jordan and settle in the land that the LORD your God is allotting to you, and He grants you safety from all your enemies around you and you live in security, ¹¹ then you must bring everything that I command you to the site where the LORD your God will choose [הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר] to establish His name: your burnt offerings and other sacrifices, your tithes and contributions, and all the choice votive offerings that you vow to the LORD ...

Deut. 12:13 Take care not to sacrifice your burnt offerings in any place you like, ¹⁴ but only in the place that the LORD will choose [בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר] in one of your tribal territories. There you shall sacrifice your burnt offerings and there you shall observe all that I enjoin upon you.

Bernard Levinson, "Deuteronomy," *Jewish Study Bible*

5: *The site that the LORD ... will choose:* This frequent formula consistently refers to Jerusalem, where Solomon built the Temple. Since Jerusalem played no role in Israel's history until David conquered it, made it his capital, and brought the Ark of the Covenant there (2 Sam. 5.6–6.19), the city cannot be named explicitly without undermining the literary form of Deut. as a Mosaic address.

HIZKUNI: **The site that the LORD your God will choose.** The name of the site is not given here; the Shekhinah will rest in several different places—Gilgal, Shiloh, Nob, and Gibeon—before settling on its permanent home in Jerusalem.

Jeffrey Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, JPS Torah Commentary

the LORD your God will choose The divine choice would presumably be communicated by a prophet. The site where Solomon built the Temple was originally chosen by David for an altar on the instructions of the prophet Gad.¹⁸

¹⁸ 2 Sam. 24:18–25; 2 Chron. 3:1; Sifrei 62.

2Sam. 24:1 ^aThe anger of the LORD again flared up against Israel; and He incited David against them, saying, "Go and number Israel and Judah."

^a *This chapter is also found, with some variations, in 1 Chron. 21.1–7.*

1Chr. 21:1 ^aSatan arose against Israel and incited David to number Israel.

^a *With vv. 1–26, cf. 2 Sam. 24.*

Shimon Bar-Efrat, "1 & 2 Samuel," *Jewish Study Bible*

24.1–25: Census, plague, and altar. These three topics, which are successively dealt with in the three parts of the narrative, are causally connected. David conducts a census, which is considered a sin. God then punishes Israel with a plague. To put an end to the plague, David erects an altar on the site where later the Temple will be built (according to 2 Chron. 3.1).

e-mail: torah-talk@earthlink.net

web: <http://mcarasik.wordpress.com/>

iTunes: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/torah-talk/id291683417>

contribute: <https://www.paypal.me/mcarasik> or @Michael-Carasik on Venmo

Commentators' Bible: <http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/jps/9780827609396/>

Biblical Hebrew: <https://www.thegreatcourses.com/courses/biblical-hebrew-learning-a-sacred-language.html>

© 2022 by Michael Carasik, except for translations from *Tanakh*, by permission of JPS.

Though the plague as well as its cessation result from actions by David, they are independently decided upon by God, hinting at both human responsibility and divine sovereignty.

2Sam. 24:18 Gad came to David the same day and said to him, “Go and set up an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”¹⁹ David went up, following Gad’s instructions, as the LORD had commanded.²⁰ Araunah looked out and saw the king and his courtiers approaching him. So Araunah went out and bowed low to the king, with his face to the ground.²¹ And Araunah asked, “Why has my lord the king come to his servant?” David replied, “To buy the threshing floor from you, that I may build an altar to the LORD and that the plague against the people may be checked.”²² And Araunah said to David, “Let my lord the king take it and offer up whatever he sees fit. Here are oxen for a burnt offering, and the threshing boards and the gear of the oxen for wood.²³ All this, O king, Araunah gives to Your Majesty. And may the LORD your God,” Araunah added, “respond to you with favor!”

2Sam. 24:24 But the king replied to Araunah, “No, I will buy them from you at a price. I cannot sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that have cost me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.²⁵ And David built there an altar to the LORD and sacrificed burnt offerings and offerings of well-being. The LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague against Israel was checked.

David Rothstein, “1 & 2 Chronicles,” *Jewish Study Bible*

21.1–26: David’s census and consequences. The differences between Chronicles’ version and 2 Sam. ch 24 are numerous and substantive, leading to divergent views regarding the textual history of both passages. Chronicles shares many features with 4QSam^a (one of the Dead Sea Scroll Samuel mss from Qumran), yet still differs from it in fundamental respects ... 2 Sam. does not indicate when in David’s career this episode took place. In Chronicles this story, which takes place while David is relatively young (see 23.1), serves as a prelude to the choice of the Temple site.

1: 2 Sam. 24.1 states that “the anger of the LORD again flared up against Israel” and, consequently, incited David to sin so as to bring (further) guilt upon the people. There is no hint as to the cause of this state of affairs, however. Chronicles resolves some of the difficulty by eliminating reference to the LORD’s anger. Furthermore, Chronicles mitigates the difficulties created by 2 Sam. by claiming that David was incited by an intermediary, Satan. Many scholars understand the Heb “satan” to refer to the infamous heavenly being, arguing that the v.’s formulation reflects a growing tendency in postexilic Judaism to distance the deity from direct contact with human affairs, especially those involving suffering, but it is more likely that it here refers to a human adversary, its meaning elsewhere in the Bible.

1Chr. 22:1 David said, “Here will be the House of the LORD and here the altar of burnt offerings for Israel.”

2Chr. 3:1 [NJPS translation] ^a Then Solomon began to build the House of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where [the LORD] had appeared to his father David ...

^a *With vv. 2–17, cf. 1 Kings 6; 7.1–22.*

2Chr. 3:1 [Anchor Bible translation] So Solomon began to build the house of Y’hwh in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah ^awhich David his father had selected^a [אֶשֶׁר נִרְצָה לְדָוִד אָבִיהוּ]—the place which David had prepared [אֶשֶׁר הֵכִין בְּמִקְוֹם דָּוִד]—on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

^{a-a} Vulg. reads *qui demonstratus fuerat David patri eius.*

e-mail: torahtalk@earthlink.net

web: <http://mcarasik.wordpress.com/>

iTunes: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/torah-talk/id291683417>

contribute: <https://www.paypal.me/mcarasik> or @Michael-Carasik on Venmo

Commentators’ Bible: <http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/jps/9780827609396/>

Biblical Hebrew: <https://www.thegreatcourses.com/courses/biblical-hebrew-learning-a-sacred-language.html>

© 2022 by Michael Carasik, except for translations from *Tanakh*, by permission of JPS.