

Get off the Throne and on the Altar

CHARACTERS: 1 human with 7 puppets or off stage voices

PROPS: None specified

COSTUMES: none specified

SETTING: Puppet stage

A: Hey, I have a question. What does this verse mean? It's here in Romans 12, verse 1. I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Does this mean I have to get up on an altar and be sacrificed like they sacrificed sheep in the Old Testament?

HUMAN: No. That would be a dead sacrifice. This verse talks about a living sacrifice.

A: Oh good. I get to live. But what is a living sacrifice?

HUMAN: It is kind of like getting off your throne and getting onto the altar.

A: That's confusing. What do you mean by that?

HUMAN: Let's bring a few Bible characters back to help explain it. *(They exit)*

MIRIAM: Hi viewers! I'm Miriam. Anybody know who my baby brother was? *(Get responses)* That's right. Moses. He was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and brought up in a palace.

He had a really cool Egyptian throne and was one of the big guys. But he never forgot his Hebrew family. I don't just mean me, Aaron, mom and dad. When he saved one of the Hebrews from a beating by an Egyptian slave master, he had to get off his throne and run for his life.

MOSES: Pharaoh is trying to kill me. I have to run.

MIRIAM: He became a shepherd for 40 years.

MOSES: It sure is different being a shepherd. I used to sit on a throne and get waited on. People brought my food. Now I have to find food for the sheep. If it was raining, I had a palace to live in. Now I'm out in the desert finding caves and ledges for the sheep and I to sleep under.

MIRIAM: We got our wool from sheep and offered them as sacrifices.

MOSES: I feel like I got off the throne and got on the altar as a sacrifice like one of these sheep.

VOICE OF GOD: Moses, I want you to lead my Hebrew people out of Egypt.

MOSES: Yes, Lord.

MIRIAM: So Moses did. But it took another 40 years and sometimes it was harder. Sheep don't talk back or grumble or complain like people do.

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(They exit. Human and A return)

A: OK. Moses was like a king on the throne but he gave up what he wanted to do to do what God wanted him to do.

HUMAN: That's right. Now let's watch this. King David is on his throne giving orders to his general Joab.

DAVID: Joab, go throughout the tribes of Israel and count the fighting men, so that I may know how many there are.

JOAB: May the LORD your God multiply the troops a hundred times over, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king want to do such a thing?

DAVID: Maybe I want to know just how strong my country is. Maybe I want to ... never mind. Do as I say. I'm the king on the throne!

JOAB: But our strength is not in the size of our army, but in God. Remember when you fought Goliath? You said it was by God's power he would be brought down.

DAVID: I'm the king on this throne. Go count. *(Joab exits and pops back up)*

JOAB: Eight hundred thousand able-bodied men who can handle a sword in Israel, and in Judah five hundred thousand.

DAVID: Let me see now.... 800 thousand plus 500 thousand is..... I'm king on the throne – you add it up for me.

JOAB: 1 million, 300 thousand. *(He exits, Gad enters)*

GAD: David, God sent me to tell you something.

DAVID: Tell me.

GAD: This is what the LORD says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them. 3 years of famine

DAVID: Famine. I like food and there isn't much in a famine.

GAD: Or three months of fleeing from your enemies.....

DAVID: I had enough of that before I was king. No way.

GAD: Or three days of plague.

DAVID: Plague. Like everybody getting sick and dying. I don't like that or any of the choices.

GAD: Think it over and decide how I should answer God who sent me.

DAVID: I haven't made good decisions lately. I'll let God decide. because his mercy is great.

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HUMAN: So God sent a plague. When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD was sad said to the angel "Enough!"

DAVID: 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. I volunteer to be the sheep, the sacrifice.

GAD: David, God has heard you. Now build an altar for him here.

DAVID: This is not my land but I will buy it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD offerings that cost me nothing.
(David and Gad exit)

A: OK. David was king on his throne. But when he did wrong, he offered first himself as a sacrifice.

HUMAN: Right. God let him substitute a sheep instead.

A: So David had to get off the throne and onto the altar, except he was allowed to use a substitute.

HUMAN: But it wasn't the greatest substitute of all time.

A: What was?

HUMAN: Let's read from Philippians 2.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

A: Let me see if I have this right. Jesus was on a throne with God from the beginning.

HUMAN: Yes.

A: But because we messed up, he got off his throne and came to earth.

HUMAN: Yes. And he offered himself as our sacrifice for sin.

A: But it was on a cross, not an altar.

HUMAN: Right. When you say Get off your throne, it means to stop acting like you are king of your life

A: And get on the altar means to sacrifice yourself. (*Other puppets come up*)

HUMAN: So thinking about Romans 12 and “Get off your throne and get on the altar” means

MIRIAM: To be like Moses and do what God wants.

GAD: To be like David and confess when you are wrong

A: And to appreciate Jesus sacrificing himself.

HUMAN: Let’s ask our audience for ways they can get off their thrones and onto altars as living sacrifices today.

ALL PUPPETS: Yes, Let’s do that. OK. (*Take suggestions from the audience*)

Song: We bow down by Kutlass would fit well here. Lyrics at

<http://www.christian-lyrics.net/artist/kutless/track/we-fall-down-lyrics.html>