

Lesson 12 13 January 2013

David Restores True Worship

Lesson Scope: 2 Samuel 6

Lesson Focus

After the victory over the Philistines, David gathered all the captains and leaders of Israel together, not for battle but for worship, enlisting their help to bring the ark of God from Baale (Kerjath-jearim) to the city of David.

The ark had been with the men of Kerjath-jearim many years. In the days of aged Eli and young Samuel, the Philistines had captured the ark in a battle with Israel. After being plagued by God for this, they returned it on a cart pulled by two cows to Beth-shemesh, where God smote those who looked into the ark. The people of Beth-shemesh sent for the men of Kerjath-jearim who came and brought "up the ark of the LORD" (I Samuel 7:1) into the house of Abinadab, where it rested all the years of Samuel and Saul.

As a man after God's own heart, David desired to restore the worship that had been neglected while King Saul reigned. He organized a group effort that involved all the people. With great zeal they moved ahead, not realizing the serious mistake of following the ways of the Philistines in using a cart to transport the ark of God. Uzzah's sudden death for touching the ark shocked David, and he consequently postponed the event. Apparently David studied the matter seriously and after three months successfully brought up the ark by carefully following God's prescribed pattern.

God alone establishes the terms for acceptable worship. When man approaches God, he must do so according to God's prescribed way.

Ponder these thoughts from Daniel Kauffman's *Doctrines of the Bible*: "Worship is an attitude and feeling of reverence, admiration, awe, adoration, and profound respect. It is the condition of the soul rather than a part of the outer life. . . . Prayer, praise, singing, [and] witnessing for Christ . . . are the fruits of worship rather than worship itself.

"Worship may be true or false, depending upon our sincerity or insincerity, or upon the object of our worship. . . . Purity, righteousness, ho-

liness, [and] the exercise of all the nobler qualities of heart and soul are inseparably connected with the true worship of the one true and living God." Where there is real true worship, holy living and sanctified service are the obvious results!

Lesson Aim: To see what characterizes acceptable worship.

Theme Verses: [Psalm 29:1, 2](#). Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Lesson Text

Worship Attempted

[2 Samuel 6:1-5](#) ¹ Again, David gathered together all *the* chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. ² And David arose, and went with all the people that *were* with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth *between* the cherubims. ³ And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. ⁴ And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which *was* at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. ⁵ And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of *instruments made of* fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

Error Judged

[2 Samuel 6:6-11](#) ⁶ And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*. ⁷ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his* error; and there he died by the ark of God. ⁸ And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah to this day. ⁹ And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me? ¹⁰ So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite. ¹¹ And the ark of the

LORD continued in the house of Obededom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obededom, and all his household.

Blessings Restored

2 Samuel 6:12-18 ¹² And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obededom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obededom into the city of David with gladness. ¹³ And it was *so*, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings. ¹⁴ And David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* girded with a linen ephod. ¹⁵ So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. ¹⁶ And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. ¹⁷ And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. ¹⁸ And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

Questions for Study

Worship Attempted

1. What significant place was the ark designed to fill in Israel's worship?
2. Contrast what David did right in this first attempt with what he did wrong.
3. When does praising the Name of the Lord fall short of divine approval?

Error Judged

4. Discuss the changes in David's attitude toward the Lord and the ark "that day" (2 Samuel 6:9).
5. How do we gain the confidence to move on with God after being chastened by Him?

Blessings Restored

6. What specific details were different this time?
7. What basic need for God's blessing in worship was missing in

Michal's life?

8. What sacrifices can we offer that God will accept?

Analyzing the Passage

In the tabernacle, the ark was the most sacred of all the furniture. God's very presence dwelt above the mercy seat between the cherubim. God had given explicit directions that, when moved, the ark was to be prepared by the high priest. The Kohathites then carried it by the staves (Numbers 4:4-15).

Though David and the people were sincere, they violated these directives. Hauling the ark on a new cart simply duplicated the Philistines' way. When Uzzah lay hold on the ark to steady it, he committed a forbidden act. David's emotions toward God, at Uzzah's sudden death, went from displeasure to fear to questions (2 Samuel 6:8-9). Consequently he placed the ark in the house of a Levite, Obed-edom the Gittite. God blessed this man's house in the three months that followed.

Apparently David and the priests discovered the proper procedures God required for moving the ark. This, along with God's blessing on Obed-edom's household, prompted David to continue his original purpose to bring up the ark of God to his city.

Playing—"rejoicing with laughter" and dancing—"springing about for joy" before the Lord with all his might, along with laying aside his kingly attire, shows David's sincere desire to humbly worship God. His wife, Michal, did not approve of such "unbecoming" actions. Her despising is placed in a negative light.

David, having followed God's "due order" (1 Chronicles 15:13), then "blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts" (2 Samuel 6:18). He set the ark "in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle" (2 Samuel 6:17).

Principles and Applications

Worship Attempted

1. A desire to revive and maintain true worship is noble and right (2 Samuel 6:1-2). The ark of God had been neglected for many years. David's desire for it in Israel's worship was intense. He consulted with every leader in Israel: "If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad to our brethren every where" (1

Chronicles 13:1-2). Revival has its own impetus. But a corporate effort is needed to maintain true worship. God's presence will dwell where the beauty of holiness prevails.

2. God must receive His rightful place in man's worship (2 Samuel 6:2). David learned that God magnified His Word even above His Name (Psalm 138:2). The Word must have preeminence in our worship, both individually and collectively in expression and practice. Our worship and our living must be Christ-centered. Anything less grieves the Holy Spirit and makes "alternate" worship practices attractive.

3. God cannot accept the worship of those who show a zeal in worship but lack in obedience (2 Samuel 6:3-5). David and all Israel rejoiced before the Lord, yet the ark was being conveyed in a "worldly" manner. Many church groups today are doing the same thing with what is called "experiential worship." Contemporary Christian music dominates their worship periods. Gospel lyrics are set to rhythms of sensual rock music. Heavy bass drums accentuate the rhythm, stir the emotions to sensuality rather than spiritually, and drown out the message. Such worship lacks God's approval and has shipwrecked many souls.

Error Judged

4. God moves against those who do not reverence holy things (2 Samuel 6:6-8).

If "he that despised Moses' law died without mercy ... of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:28-29)?

5. A reverential fear of God characterizes acceptable worship (2 Samuel 6:9).

A proper fear of God will bring one whom He has chastened to his knees, humbly seeking His forgiveness and help to go on. One with a proud heart cannot develop a fear of God and therefore will not change his way. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). David feared God, sought knowledge how to change his way, and was accepted of God. "Wherefore ... let us have grace, whereby we may [worship] God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28).

Blessings Restored

6. The sincere will seek God's blessing on their worship (2 Samuel 6:9-12).

David wanted the blessings. He found the answer in the Scripture. One breech of sincerity in Christendom today is the serious, deliberate errors of omission and insidious changes in many Bible translations. God's condemnation falls on such presumption (2 Peter 2:1). The King James Version remains a credible English translation of the Bible that is in order, that God has blessed, and is worthy of our continual use in worship.

7. Godly leaders are responsible to lead acceptable public worship (2 Samuel 6:11-12). These are "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness" (Exodus 18:21). They follow God's order of headship, excluding women from public leadership roles. They keep Bible preaching central. Their preaching feeds the sheep and the lambs, being well balanced with doctrine and practical application. They speak out against the casual worship practices of our day and call for uniformity in faith and practice.

8. True worship involves sacrifice (2 Samuel 6:13). It must cost us something or it is worth very little. Form and duty are important, but unless our heart is surrendered to God, our worship will not be true. Yes, we give time, talents, and money, but self must be laid on the altar of sacrifice for those things to be accepted of God. The widow in Jesus day cast in all of her living. Her worship was truehearted and wholehearted.

9. Engaging in acceptable worship brings joy and rejoicing (2 Samuel 6:12-15).

David had prepared an order of worship that all Israel confidently joined in with overflowing joy. There was rest and unity in the knowledge that all was well. In our worship today, proper preparation and order are no less rewarding. Congregational singing, devotional periods, and Biblical preaching are practices we cannot afford to lose simply by neglect. Uniformity and consistency in our worship patterns enable each worshiper to "hear what God the LORD will speak." It brings unity, rest, and security to the church body that constant innovations will never supply.

10. Some will despise the people of God and their pattern of worship (2 Samuel 6:16). Ridicule and derision of Anabaptist distinctives such as

segregated seating, kneeling to pray, uniformity in dress, and close communion often come from groups that once held to the same. We must not be intimidated. Despising tried-and-proven practices has resulted in serious spiritual consequences. The "come as you are" invitations to worship are casually taken to mean "stay as you are."

11. God blesses those who worship in an acceptable manner (2 Samuel 6:17-18). Setting the ark in its prepared place, though just in a tent, significantly crowned this glorious event. Today God's throne also now rests in the inner chambers of the purified heart, not in edifices. Our meetinghouses serve best when they are kept simple. God blesses those whose love and devotion exalt Christ and the church. They can say with the psalmist, "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah" (Psalm 46:11).

Important Teachings

1. A desire to revive and maintain true worship is noble and right (2 Samuel 6:1-2).
2. God must receive His rightful place in man's worship (2 Samuel 6:2).
3. God cannot accept the worship of those who show a zeal in worship but lack in obedience (2 Samuel 6:3-5).
4. God moves against those who do not reverence holy things (2 Samuel 6:6-8).
5. A reverential fear of God characterizes acceptable worship (2 Samuel 6:9).
6. The sincere will seek God's blessing on their worship (2 Samuel 6:9-12).
7. Godly leaders are responsible to lead in acceptable public worship (2 Samuel 6:11-12).
8. True worship involves sacrifice (2 Samuel 6:13).
9. Engaging in acceptable worship brings joy and rejoicing (2 Samuel 6:12-15).
10. Some will despise the people of God and their pattern of worship (2 Samuel 6:16).
11. God blesses those who worship in an acceptable manner (2 Samuel 6:17-18).

Answers to Questions

1. What significant place was the ark designed to fill in Israel's worship?

The ark of God was the most sacred of all the furniture in the tabernacle. It rested in the most holy place, the innermost part of the sanctuary. God's presence dwelt above the mercy seat between the cherubim. Here, once a year, the high priest came with blood to sprinkle upon the mercy seat, thus atoning for the sins of the people.

2. Contrast what David did right in this first attempt with what he did wrong.

David rallied all the people together for this worship experience. He explained to the people the significance of the ark of God—"the Name of the LORD of hosts"! They all expressed much zeal in playing before the Lord. In spite of all the right things, the wrong was glaringly evident. Putting the ark of God on a new cart drawn by oxen followed the "worldly" method of transferring the ark from place to place. Though this was done in all sincerity, the judgment of God fell on their disobedience.

3. When does praising the Name of the Lord fall short of divine approval?

God must receive His rightful place in men's worship. God has magnified His Word even above His Name (Psalm 138:2). God cannot accept the worship of those who praise His Name but do not obey His Word. Our worship must be Christ-centered. Anything less grieves the Holy Spirit and makes "alternate" worship practices attractive.

4. Discuss the changes in David's attitude toward the Lord and the ark "that day" (6:9).

David began "that day" in praise and exaltation with all the people before the Lord and the ark. Uzzah's sudden death sparked David's displeasure toward God at first (6:8) for His breach upon the procession. But his displeasure turned just as quickly to fear of God and uncertainty, asking "How shall the ark of the LORD come to me"? Being afraid to proceed, he carried the ark to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

5. How do we gain the confidence to move on with God after being chastened by Him?

Jesus is the only way. There is no other place to go but back to Him. "He ever liveth to make intercession for [us]" at the Father's throne. A

proper fear of Him brings one to His knees in humble, honest acknowledgement of sin, seeking forgiveness and help to learn and do what is right. God does not despise a humble and contrite heart. He is always ready to forgive, no matter what the case. A proud heart cannot develop fear of God, and therefore will not change. Neither will further knowledge be given. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). David feared God and sought knowledge of how to change his way, and God accepted his worship.

6. What specific details were different this time?

"The children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD" (1 Chronicles 15:15). David offered sacrifices along the way. He had order in procedure and song (1 Chronicles 15:16-24).

David had put off his kingly robes for a robe of fine linen and an ephod of linen (1 Chronicles 15:27). The ark was brought all the way to David's prepared place and set in proper position in the tent. These were important details of worship that God required and that received His blessings.

7. What basic need for God's blessing in worship was missing in Michal's life?

True worship involves surrendering one's heart to God. Our selfish will must be laid on the altar of sacrifice for God to bless our worship. Michal was sure that David's kingly role was in jeopardy (6:20). She was unable to understand David's exuberant acts of worship (6:21).

8. What sacrifices can we offer that God will accept?

We must offer the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17). We can bring the sacrifice of praise, that is the fruit of our lips (Hebrews 13:15). We must be willing to give up position, honor, and anything that threatens to jeopardize our worship of Him. Our bodies are to be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Him (Romans 12:1).

Research Guide

1. Study the parallel passage of the lesson scope from 1 Chronicles 13, 15, 16.
2. From *Doctrines of the Bible*, read the chapter on worship.
3. Meditate on the worship hymns of the church from the *Church Hymnal* (numbers 1-90).

Summarizing the Lesson

Great God, indulge my humble claim,
Thou art my hope, my joy, my rest;
The glories that compose Thy name,
Stand all engaged to make me blest.

With ready feet I love to appear
Among Thy saints, and seek Thy face;
Oft have I seen Thy glory there,
And felt the pow'r of sovereign grace.

I'll lift my hands, I'll raise my voice,
While I have breath to pray or praise;
This work shall make my heart rejoice,
Throughout the remnant of my days.

—Isaac Watts