

And David Danced ...
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
January 10, 2021

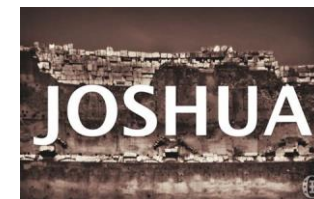
Diaspora XLIII – The Church Scattered, Forty-third Sunday

Text: 2 Samuel 6:1-23

Purpose: We need to acknowledge that we must personally, be involved in carrying the presence of the Lord with us. We do not need to rely on our works (the cart) to carry our relationship with God. We must also value our relationship with God to the point of becoming a “fool” for God. We worship and give glory to an audience of “One” not the audience of the world. This is why David was known as “a man after God’s own heart.”

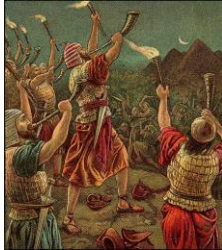
Introduction

A few months ago, prior to Advent, we examined the story of Joshua. We learned that Joshua lived a life of courage as the children of Israel moved into the Promised Land. There were trials and conflicts. There were enemies to confront and land to be possessed. But Joshua never wavered in his determination to establish (as God promised) Canaan as the homeland of God’s chosen people.



At the death of Joshua, the children of Israel began to be ruled and led by a series of judges and prophets. We also

examined one Sunday morning, the life of Gideon, one of the Judges, as he led the people to defeat their enemies the Midianites. He courageously trusted God for the victory over their enemy with only an army of 300 men with trumpets and lamps. The people of Israel moved back and forth over the years between trusting the Lord and lapsing back and worshipping the god Baal. It was shortly after the time of Eli, that Samuel came upon the scene. If time permitted in our Creation to Christ series, I would focus on the prophet Samuel. Maybe we can come back and examine his life one Sunday.



The people became weary of being defeated by their enemies. They felt if they only had a king like other nations, then they would become a great nation and would be able to live in peace. With that as our background, the word of the Lord came to Samuel to go and anoint Saul as the new King over Israel. It was the Lord's desire that He alone would be the ruler and protector of the nation. Sadly, in many ways, the people rejected God and wanted an earthly king.

If you think back you may remember that the people of Israel rejected living directly in the presence of God at Mt. Sinai. They wanted Moses to tell them what the Lord said and they promised they would do it. Yet they did not do as they promised and they failed, generation after generation. Now at this juncture in Israel's history, they were rejecting God as their King. They wanted a king like all the other nations. Therefore, God relented and allowed the most handsome man, one of the tallest men in the kingdom to be crowned and anointed as Israel's first king.

Saul became the king over Israel around the year 1050 BC. This began the period of time known as the United Kingdom. The reign of King Saul, King David, and King Solomon lasted for 119 years before becoming divided into the Northern (ten tribes) and Southern (2 tribes) Kingdoms. Saul began to reign well and had many victories. The women sang in the streets that Saul had killed thousands of their enemies.



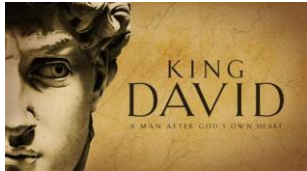
But one day, the Prophet Samuel told Saul to go to a certain place and wait. Samuel would be coming shortly to offer a sacrifice unto the Lord before the enemy attacked. Saul became impatient and decided to take the duties of the priest into his own hand. As he finished doing that, Samuel arrived. Saul was rebuked and God's hand of protection and blessing was taken away from Saul because he was presumptuous and had rejected the established commandment of the Lord.

It was at this point that a young man by the name of David from the family of Jesse was chosen by God. He was the youngest of the family of Jesse to receive the blessing and anointing of Samuel. This young shepherd boy, who fought off lions and bears with only a slingshot, would become the next king over Israel many years later. Maybe you remember the story of how David confronted the giant Goliath and defeated him. As a reward for this, Saul promised his daughter Michal, to become David's wife.

In time, David became the most popular person in Israel. David went into battle and defeated many of Israel's enemies. The women sang in the streets that Saul had killed

his thousands, but David had killed his tens of thousands. Saul became jealous and began a systematic effort to hunt down David and kill him. David had at least two opportunities to kill Saul (asleep in a cave, removed his spear at night) but refused to take his life. Saul's son, Jonathan came to love David more than he loved himself. They became lifelong friends and Jonathan pledged his loyalty to David as the next King of Israel. But this friendship caused even more problems for David.

Eventually, after reigning as King over Israel for 40 years, Saul was killed in battle along with his son Jonathan. A few years ago, when I was in Israel, I was able to climb up to the top of the hillside at Bet Shean where the city wall once stood. It was on that hillside, on that city wall, where Saul and Jonathan's dead bodies were nailed. While I was standing there, it was hard for me to take in how much Biblical history had taken place in that region.



Over the next few years, David began to bring the twelve tribes back together and united them under his leadership through the guidance of God and Samuel. His capital was first in Hebron for six years, and then later in Jerusalem after he defeated the Jebusites that lived there.

As the enemies of Israel were defeated and peace began to reign in the land, David's heart was touched when he realized that he was living in a wonderful palace in Jerusalem while the Ark of the Covenant was in a home away from Jerusalem, the place which later became known as the "City of God." It became David's desire to bring the Ark, and the very presence of God, into Jerusalem.

The passage of scripture that we read this morning, describes to us the heart of David, his desire to bring God closer to him, and the joy David felt as this happened.

This morning, I want us to examine the journey to Jerusalem more closely and see how David became a joyful confessor of God.

The Setting¹

The Ark that David wanted to bring to Jerusalem was the symbol of the presence of the invisible God among the people of Israel. It was fashioned while the Israelites were in the desert for 40 years. It was symbolic of God's presence because the Shekinah glory of the Lord rested above it while they moved it around those 40 years. In many ways, it was a type of Christ among them.



But through the sins of the nation, (1 Samuel 4), they lost control of the Ark to the Philistines as they were defeated in battle. The Ark was a comforting presence to God's chosen people and became a terror to the enemies of God. (1 Samuel 5:8) The Ark brought a plague among the Philistines. Even today, the things of God bring great comfort to believers and tremendous agitation to those that do not believe in God. Several years after being captured by the Philistines, the Ark was returned to the people of Israel – the Philistines didn't want it in their presence anymore!

¹ Handfuls on Purpose, Vol. 5, page 85-88.

Where are you in the spectrum of belief and unbelief with God? This journey of bringing the Ark from the house of Abinadab into Jerusalem illustrates seven different approaches we can have towards the Ark. How these individuals approached the Ark is very similar to the way we approach God today. Which of these participants in the journey to Jerusalem are you?

1. The Zealous Formalists

The first type of person you confront in the transportation of the Ark are zealous formalists.

We read in verse three of our passage that “*They set the Ark on a new cart.*” For many that would seem to be an appropriate way in which to transport the Ark. If you remember the instructions concerning the transportation of the Ark, it was the tribe of Levite that was responsible for “carrying” or “bearing” it.

They were not instructed to place it upon a manmade thing like a cart. It doesn’t matter if it was the best and newest model available. They were to carry it. Instead, David decided to place it on a cart.



These zealous formalists were more interested in providing the best show. There is a show of sanctity about their actions, but they have more pleasure in putting their religion in a new cart than in bearing it themselves.

Many individuals are willing to place God in a large beautiful building and ignore Him the rest of the week.

Many are willing to take the work of their hands and substitute it for becoming personally involved in bearing their relationship with God. Serving God should cost me something.

If serving God becomes too easy or too cheap, then we as human beings tend to think that OUR works or OUR plans or OUR mechanisms will keep God in His proper place. In our zeal to worship God, we develop barriers to keep us from becoming intimate with God.

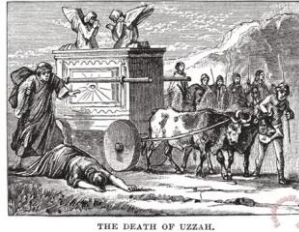
We need to break away from the formalist mindset and cross over into a relationship that involves us *bearing* something. The Ark of the Covenant did not have wheels on it, it had staves (poles) in which those assigned to bear the ark would take hold of it in their hands. I want you to know that faith in Jesus Christ cannot be driven by a mechanical fashion. We may invent new organizations in which to we are to do ministry, but we do not need to put our faith in them. We must personally bear “the burden of the Lord” ourselves. The cause of Christ will only advance when we personally take up our cross daily and walk with Christ. Until then, we will only be pretending to have fellowship with God.

2. Self-Confident Professor

The second person on the journey with the ark was a self-confident professor of God.

David gathered 30,000 people to bring the Ark by way of a new cart back to Jerusalem. As they were traveling, the cart was jostled and Uzzah reached out to steady the load. As he did that, the Lord immediately killed Uzzah for his error.

Of all the things I have read in the Bible, this one has puzzled me the most. Uzzah was trying to protect the Ark of the Covenant from falling to the ground. He was doing what seemed right in the eyes of man, but in the eyes of God, Uzzah sinned.



Uzzah became overly familiar with the Holiness of God. Uzzah assumed that it was an acceptable thing to do – steady the load. What Uzzah forgot was that God didn't need his hand to steady it any more than God needed Uzzah to guide the Pillar of Fire.

It is possible to perish in the place of privilege through putting forth your hand instead of your heart. (Romans 10:3) There are many individuals that are defending the faith in the world and they are using the work of their hands instead of using their heart. Through their actions they are denying their faith. They would defend the Bible with their hands, yet die because they did not have a heart of faith.

3. Timid Seeker

We turn again and see that David illustrates the third type of seeker of God. One that is timid.

When Uzzah died instantly, David's heart was frozen with fear. He said, "*How shall the Ark of the Lord come to me?*" Many individuals that intently want the Lord are anxious about salvation. But when they see the Holiness and power associated with God, they realize that they are extremely sinful and unworthy to come into God's presence.

The timid seeker may say, "*How can God, who is Holy and pure, and one that punishes sinners, ever come to me?*" This little word "*How*" has kept many a person from coming to God.



The answer is found in the cross of Jesus Christ. Jesus became the propitiation (substitution) for our sin. It is through His death on the cross that our sins are forgiven in Jesus name. It is in Jesus name that we can come as poor, sin prone individuals.

We come to the Lord, broken in need of mending,
we come wounded in need of healing,
we come desperate in need to be rescued,
we come empty so we can be filled,
we come guilty so we may be pardoned.

When we do, we are welcomed with open arms, praise God, just as I am. When we acknowledge God as our Savior, and ask Him to forgive us of our sin, then we are reconciled back to God.

In 1 Samuel 6:20, David asks the question, "*Who is able to stand before the Holy Lord God?*" The answer is found in Romans 5:1-2, "*He who comes by faith.*" We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

4. Humble Believer

David demonstrated a transition from a timid seeker to a humble believer. David turned and had the Ark carried into the home of Obed-edom. His name can be found in 1 Chronicles 15:18 as one of the porters of the Ark. Even

though his occupation was lowly, he received the Ark with joy into his home.

God blessed Obed-edom and his household. It was as if the Ark was saying, “If any man opens the door I will come in, and sup with him, and he with Me.” Obed-edom was blessed in having the Ark in his home. Your home will be blessed when you invite Christ to live there. Don’t let your fear of God deter you from hearing the call of God. Say “Yes” to God as He speaks to your heart.

5. Fearless Witness-Bearers.

After the Ark sat at Obed-edom’s home for three months, David returned and brought the Ark into Jerusalem.



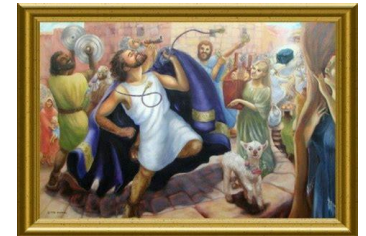
This time they didn't bring it back on a cart, they “bore” it on their shoulders. They had changed from fear to fearless. They no longer ran from God; they now became witness bearers.

I want you to realize that the cause of Christ cannot be born by unbelievers. Only those that have been bought through the precious blood of Jesus Christ can bear testimony of God’s wonderful love and grace. The ox could not bear the Ark, and neither can an unbeliever. If you are a Christian, you need to realize that God is calling us to become fearless witnesses for Him. We do not need to be ashamed about our relationship with God. We need to accept the fact that the world will not understand. But we are called to be faithful to the One that is faithful to us and bear the good news of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world.

6. Joyful Confessor.

David was now on the way to Jerusalem to bring the Ark into a tabernacle built for God. Keep in mind that this was not the temple that Solomon would eventually build, but it was a place specially built by David for the Ark. With great joy, David demonstrated the sixth characteristic of a worshipper of God – a joyful confessor.

The scripture says that David danced before the Lord with all his might. Michal, his wife, said that David twirled and danced in such a way that he made a “fool” of himself dressed in a linen ephod, dancing before the young women of Israel.



But David’s former fear and trembling was now replaced with ecstatic joy. His mourning has now turned into dancing. His sackcloth was now exchanged for the girdle of gladness. David realized that perfect love casts out fear. The presence of God was with David as they sacrificed unto the Lord.

We need to come to God with a joy that the world cannot understand. We are accepted and loved by God. David knew it in his heart and leapt with joy. David didn't care about what others thought. The joy of the Lord was His portion.

7. Sneering Fault-Finder

The last observer we find in this journey to Jerusalem was David's wife, Michal. She was the sneering fault finder. She didn't enter into the journey of bringing the Ark back to its rightful resting place. She sat in the palace watching and waiting for David to return. If she really understood what was happening, she would have joined David on the journey and when they arrived, she would have danced just as excitedly as David.



This sneering fault finder despised David in her heart as he danced before the Lord. She didn't understand and the only response she could give was criticism and bitter words.

1 Corinthians 2:14 says, *“The things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man.”* In her ignorance and self-conceit, she mistook a “glad” David for a “mad” David.

Any fool can be a fault-finder, but it takes more than the world can give to make a man “dance before the Lord.”

David had been hunted by Saul. David was now the King over Israel. He knew who his God was and he was not ashamed to “dance before the Lord.”

Conclusion

If you were on this journey from Abinadab to Jerusalem, which participant would you be?

- Would you be the formalist that tries to make God conform to your understanding?
- Would you be the self-confident professor of faith that presumes the holy things of God?
- Would you be the timid seeker failing to fully trust a judging, yet loving God?
- Or would you be like the humble Obed-edom receiving the presence of God with joy?
- Are you a fearless witness bearer for God to a world that really doesn't want to hear the truth about God?
- Have you become a joyful confessor of God? Are you willing to go to great lengths and willing to become a “fool” for Christ while the world watches and sneers?
- Or are you like Michal, the fault-finder, despising the things of God and those that love the Lord?

When Christ comes, how will he find you?

LET US PRAY

