

## Making It Right – 1 Chronicles 13 & 15

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Last Time

1. In our last study in 1 Chr. we looked at the story of Eleazar, one of David's *Mighty Men*.
  2. This group had begun as a motley crew of losers, misfits, & malcontents,
  3. But by hanging out with David, they became like him; honorable men of valor
  4. David's mighty men are a great picture of what Jesus, the Son of David does with us.
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#### B. Today

1. As we come to ch. 13, we find a story that's told in 2 Samuel 6.
  - a. So if this sounds familiar, your memory's working well.
  - b. The reason we're going to look at it again today is because the lessons it's teaches bear repeating.
2. David now reigns over all Israel.
3. He knew the nation's safety & success lay in its *dependence* on God.
4. But during the reign of his predecessor, King Saul, the worship of God had been *neglected*.
5. So his first priority was to put God *back* at the center of national life.
6. The tabernacle Moses had built 400 years before had long since deteriorated, so David built a new one at Jerusalem.
7. The center & most important part of the tabernacle was the Ark of the Covenant over which God's glory dwelt.
  - a. At this time, the ark was at Kirjath Jearim, *9 miles* from Jerusalem.
  - b. It was there because of something that had happened *70 years before*.
    - 1) The Israelites had taken the ark with them into battle against the Philistines, thinking it would bring them victory.
    - 2) But God wouldn't allow them to reduce the ark to a lucky-charm & allowed it to be *captured* by the Philistines.
    - 3) When all it did was wreak havoc among them, they sent it back aboard a cart led by an ox.
    - 4) God steered it back to Israel where it found its way to the home of a priest named Abinadab where it remained until the time of David.
8. He went to recover the ark & bring it to the new tabernacle at Jerusalem.

### II. TEXT

#### A. Vs. 1-4

<sup>1</sup>Then David consulted with the captains of thousands & hundreds, & with every leader.  
<sup>2</sup>And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If *it seems good to you, & if it is of the LORD our God, let us send out to our brethren everywhere who are left in all the land of Israel, & with them to the priests & Levites who are in their cities & their common-lands, that they may gather together to us; <sup>3</sup>& let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we have not inquired at it since the days of Saul." <sup>4</sup>Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.*

1. David's wisdom as a leader is made clear here.
2. He knows what needs to be done & as the king could just do it.
3. But he knows it isn't enough to just restore the ark to the tabernacle; God needs to be *installed in the hearts* of the people.
4. So he seeks to build a *consensus* by putting before them a vision of restored worship.
5. He goes to the other leaders & elicits their help by casting the vision before them.

- a. If he could gain their support, they'd gain the support of the people
- b. Which is exactly what happened.

### B. Vs. 5-7

<sup>5</sup>So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor in Egypt to as far as the entrance of Hamath, [entire length of land from N to S] to bring the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim.

<sup>6</sup>And David & all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kirjath Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God the LORD, who dwells *between* the cherubim, where *His* name is proclaimed. <sup>7</sup>So they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, & Uzza & Ahio drove the cart.

1. In Samuel where this same story is told, we read 30,000 people took part in this. They came to be a part of *national renewal*.
2. They made *one error*; they put the ark on a cart for the 9 mile trip from Kirjath Jearim to Jerusalem.
3. God made it clear in the original instructions to Moses that the ark was to be carried by poles thrust through the rings on its sides.
  - a. The ark itself was *never* to be touched,
  - b. And it was not to be carried on anything other than the shoulders of the priests.
  - c. The *reason* was because of the *important symbolism* of the ark.
    - 1) It was over the ark where God's glory was manifested in the tabernacle.
    - 2) The ark held the original 10 Commandments.
    - 3) And it was on the *lid* of the ark where the blood of the goat was placed once a year on the Day of Atonement, providing a covering for the sins of the entire nation.
    - 4) That blood was placed there by the high priest who wore a special garment that represented the entire nation of Israel.
    - 5) The ark was the *meeting place* between God & man.
    - 6) It was the place where a holy God & sinful people were *reconciled into intimate relationship*.
    - 7) & that's why the ark was to *only* be carried on the shoulders of the priests – so they would remember God wanted to be close to them & that they were His people.
4. Putting the ark on a cart was *efficient*,
5. But it grievously *misrepresented* all the ark stood for – *communion* with God.
6. It reduced the worship & service of God to that which is *merely* efficient & impersonal.
7. It turned *relationship into religion*.

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8. *Why* did they put the ark on a *cart* instead of carrying it the proscribed way?
  - a. Well, when the ark returned from the Philistines, it arrived that way.
  - b. They'd set it on a new cart, attached an ox to it & set it loose, saying if it went back to Israel, they'd know it was directed by the hand of God.
  - c. So the last time the Israelites had seen the ark in motion, it had been on a cart.
  - d. They figured if it was good enough for the Philistines, it was good enough for them.
9. This is the attitude of many Christians & churches *today*.
  - a. Instead of looking to God for direction in how to live or what to do,
  - b. They look to the so-called *experts of the world*; therapists & church growth specialists.
10. Many Christians look more to *Oprah* than to Obadiah; to *Dr. Phil* than Dr. Luke.
11. This week I received in the mail a magazine for church leaders that's filled with clever strategies for growing your church into the latest & greatest religious enterprise in your community.
  - a. *Not a single article* was an examination of Biblical instruction.
  - b. It was all the application of *marketing tactics & management psychology*.
  - c. The idea behind it all is this; if it works in the business world, let's adopt it for the church.

- d. It's nothing but a modern-day cart.
12. God **wants** to bless us. But He shares His glory with no one.
- He will not bless our 'carts' – our slick programs.
  - He wants us to simply look in faith to Him;
  - To ask Him, then make ourselves available to be used by Him.
  - He wants **us**, not our clever schemes.
  - EM Bounds said it well; "We look for better **means**. God looks for better men."
  - Just as the priests were to carry the ark, God wants us to carry Him everywhere we go.

### C. Vs. 8-10

**<sup>8</sup>Then David & all Israel played music before God with all their might, with singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, & with trumpets. <sup>9</sup>And when they came to Chidon's threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. <sup>10</sup>Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzza, & He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; & he died there before God.**

- The procession was going along like gangbusters!
  - It was one happy parade with loud music & celebration.
  - Outwardly, it looked like a great day & that real progress was being made in getting back to their roots.
- What they didn't realize is that because they'd neglected to examine God's Word – to see what HE said about what they were doing, every step they took only increased the danger of God's judgment.
- When the ox lost its footing & jostled the ark, Uzza reached out to steady it → & immediately dropped dead!
- He died because even though **why** he touched it was good, **THAT** he touched it was a no-no.
- God is holy & there's **no approaching** Him apart from the blood of a sacrifice.
  - It had been **decades** since the Day of Atonement had been observed.
  - And even then, Uzza wasn't one of the priests who were alone allowed to **approach** the ark.
  - Even the one who did so wasn't allowed to **touch** it.
- When we read of God's judgment of Uzza, it bugs because we assume his motive was to protect the ark.
- It bugged David too – look . . .

### D. Vs. 11-12

**<sup>11</sup>And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzza; therefore that place is called Perez Uzza to this day.**

- "God?!? What are you doing?!? We're fetching the ark to Jerusalem so Your worship can be at the center of the nation! This is how you reward us?"
- "Uzza was only trying to protect Your box! Why would you kill him for **that**???"
- Listen—just because someone's **motive** seems good, that doesn't make their **actions** okay.
  - Their motive might be based on a lie, or poorly reasoned.
  - The guy who's motivated by a desire to save the unborn can't do so by bombing an abortion clinic & killing its staff.
- Uzza's touching the ark was **obviously** motivated by a **concern for its safety**.
  - But that reveals how very **wrong** his thinking was.
  - God doesn't need anyone looking out for Him; He can take care of Himself,
  - As the ark's time among the Philistines makes clear.
- David's initial reaction was one of anger. But it didn't last long -

**<sup>12</sup>David was afraid of God that day, saying, “How can I bring the ark of God to me?”**

6. While his initial reaction was anger, before the sun set, that anger had turned to *concern*.
7. It didn't take David long to realize anger was the *wrong reaction*.
  - a. Whatever God does is based in perfect love & justice.
  - b. Therefore, if God judged Uzza so harshly, it had to be because of some grievous error.
  - c. That David couldn't see what it was meant *he was as guilty as Uzza*.
  - d. In fact, as King, who'd proposed this whole endeavor, *the responsibility was his!*
  - e. So the anger morphed into serious caution →
  - f. Then the question, “How can I bring the ark of God to me?” The key word is “HOW?”
  - g. David realized *there must be something wrong* with the way they were moving the ark.
8. Probably all of us react the way David did here.
  - a. We think we're doing well & life is cruising along fine,
  - b. Then all of a sudden things blow up, some major disappointment crashes in.
  - c. And we get angry at God. “How could You let this happen?”
    - 1) But it's not really a question – It's an *accusation*.
    - 2) We're saying *God's not doing His job* of making life all rosy for us.
    - 3) We think trials & heartache are a breach of His guarantee of unending happiness & good times.
  - d. We need to make sure we don't *stay* angry, but realize how *improper* anger is & let that realization move us to a *renewed reverence* for the Lord.
  - e. Anger toward God is a *symptom* we believe something *untrue about Him*.
9. David knew enough about God to realize anger was an inappropriate response to Uzza's death.
10. There had to be something wrong in the way they were moving the ark, but he didn't know what it was.

**<sup>13</sup>So David would not move the ark with him into the City of David, but took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. <sup>14</sup>The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house 3 months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-Edom & all that he had.**

11. With the realization they were doing something wrong, David refused to move the ark any further toward Jerusalem.
12. They instead took it to the nearby home of Obed-Edom where it sat for 3 months.
13. Obed was a Levite from the family of Kohath, the very group responsible for taking care of the ark.
14. Without realizing it, David placed the ark right where it belonged, & God's blessing followed.

**D. Ch. 14**

1. The story of the ark picks up again in ch 15, but first the writer inserts a short record of what happened in the 3 months the ark sat at Obed-Edom's home.
2. The Philistines attacked Israel & David led the army of Israel in a huge victory.
3. But the writer tells us he didn't go to war *without seeking God*. He first asked *if & how* he should go & God told him.
4. Then, when the Philistines attacked a 2<sup>nd</sup> time in a similar manner, instead of assuming everything was the same as before, David asked again *if & how* he should fight.
5. God gave him a different battle plan the 2<sup>nd</sup> time & again it was a huge victory.
6. The reason the author of Chronicles inserts this in the middle of the story of the ark is to show how David had learned to look to & depend on the Lord *for everything* – to assume nothing.
7. David had read the scriptures & learned many things about how God's people were to follow Him.
8. The point of it all was their need to be totally dependent on Him; that it was all about a close, daily relationship with Him.

9. He learned the ark was to be carried by the Levites *as a picture of that*.

### E. 15:1-13

<sup>1</sup>David built houses for himself in the City of David; & he prepared a place for the ark of God, & pitched a tent for it. <sup>2</sup>Then David said, “No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites, for the LORD has chosen them to carry the ark of God & to minister before Him forever.” <sup>3</sup>And David gathered all Israel together at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it.

1. This will be their 2<sup>nd</sup> try but they’ll go about it differently.
  - a. This time they’ll do God’s work, God’s way.
  - b. They won’t copy the Philistines or form a committee & pool their ignorance as they seek the most efficient way.
  - c. They’ll look to the Lord & be obedient to His instructions.
2. In vs. 4-11 we get a list of the priests who took the lead in the procession to bring the ark to Jerusalem.

**12** → [David] said to them, “You are the heads of the fathers’ houses of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you & your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to *the place* I have prepared for it. <sup>13</sup>For because you *did not do it the first time*, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order.”

3. Let this be an encouragement to all of us about looking to the Word of God for direction & counsel on how to live & not the so-called wisdom of the world.

### F. Vs. 14-26

<sup>14</sup>So the priests & the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. <sup>15</sup>And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD. <sup>16</sup>Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, & cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy.

1. The procession from the house of Obed-Edom to Jerusalem was accompanied the entire way by loud worship & praise. It was a joyous parade.
2. In vs. 17-24 we’re given a list of the musicians because they played such an important role that day. **25** → So David, the elders of Israel, & the captains over thousands went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-Edom with joy. <sup>26</sup>And so it was, when God helped the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bulls & seven rams.
3. In the parallel passage in 2 Sam. 6, we find out the procession made these offerings every 7<sup>th</sup> step. Here’s why . . .
  - a. As David read the Law of Moses, he saw how important the *principle of the Sabbath* was.
  - b. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day of every week, the people were to cease from their labor to rest & renew their dependence on God.
  - c. Every 7<sup>th</sup> year they were to let their fields lie fallow & trust in God to provide for them as they cast themselves in total dependence on Him.
  - d. David had learned the lesson Uzza’s death taught so well.
  - e. He wanted to integrate the *principle* of the Sabbath-dependence on God into the ark’s journey to Jerusalem.

**G. Vs. 27-29**

<sup>27</sup>David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who bore the ark, the singers, & Chenaniah the music master *with* the singers. David also wore a linen ephod. <sup>28</sup>Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting & with the sound of the horn, with trumpets & with cymbals, making music with stringed instruments & harps. <sup>29</sup>And it happened, as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the City of David, that Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window & saw King David whirling & playing music; & she despised him in her heart.

1. David had special garments made for the officials who presided over the procession.
2. Samuel tells us as they neared Jerusalem, David's joy in the Lord grew so great his dancing grew in fervor.
3. He got hot so he took off his royal robe, leaving just the linen ephod on.
  - a. The ephod was a loose fitting sleeveless garment like a large closed vest that hung to the knees.
  - b. It was similar to the simple garment worn by the poor.
4. When the procession reached Jerusalem, David's wife Michal heard the music & looked out a window of the palace & saw David at the head of the parade, dancing his heart out before the Lord.
  - a. Gone were his royal robes.
  - b. And in her eyes, gone too was the *dignity* that ought to attend a king.
  - c. She was embarrassed, but it quickly turned to loathing.
  - d. It bothered her to no end that David would so abandon himself to worship that he'd let go his hold on his royal status.
5. 2 Sam. tells us after the ark was installed in the tabernacle, David threw a huge party in which everyone was given a feast then sent home with more food to bless their family with.
6. David then went home to bless *his* family.
  - a. But Michal met him with words dripping with sarcasm -
  - b. "Didn't the king look marvelous today, spinning naked like a mad man before the young women!"
  - c. David rebuked her, saying that what he'd done, he did to honor & glorify God.
  - d. He wasn't ashamed of expressing his love for & joy in God with what she considered a demeaning display of emotion.
  - e. David knew Michal's scorn was born of her *addiction to image*.
    - 1) So he reminded her that a preoccupation with image was the cause of her father Saul's rejection by God.
    - 2) God had chosen David to replace Saul because, for one thing—he *wasn't* concerned with image.
    - 3) Of far greater concern was the glory of God.
    - 4) And if glorifying God meant being seen as silly or foolish by others—so be it.
  - f. In fact, David said he was willing to be undignified *even in his own eyes* if it would bring honor to God.
7. Michal, not a part of the day's celebration & not the least interested in the things of God, despised David *for* his heartfelt worship.
  - a. The *result*, Samuel tells us; she *remained barren*.
  - b. Putting image above God, though she was David's first & legitimate wife, *none* of her sons ever sat on the throne.
  - c. The lesson is this - Those who mock the worship of the godly will be *spiritually barren*.

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. *Emotion in Worship*

1. There are several great applications from this story & I trust the Holy Spirit has pointed out some for you.
2. As we end, I want to speak to those who've not entered into the joy of open & free worship of God.
3. Don't let concern for what others think hinder your worship. Don't be a Michal. Be a David.
4. You might say, "But I'm just not an *emotional* person. That's not me."
  - a. Really? You never get emotional?
  - b. When you go to a football, basketball, or baseball game, you sit there without moving?
  - c. If you hit a hole in one, you just shrug your shoulders & say, "Yep."
  - d. If you get a check in the mail from the IRS saying they've goofed on your taxes & they're refunding every penny you ever paid them, you respond by saying, "Ho-hum."
  - e. I don't think so.
  - f. Listen, if there was ever any reason to get emotional & to let it out, it's in worship.
  - g. One of the reasons David stands so large in the Bible is because of the quality & expression of his worship.

#### B. *Worshipping*

1. Our guideline for worship is this: Let the posture of your body reflect the posture of your heart.
2. That means if you want to sit, kneel, stand, lie on your face, dance, do it!
3. Just be mindful not distract others.
4. When we gather here, our worship is centered on singing. But I've met people who just aren't into music, so singing isn't the best way for them to give expression to their love for God.
5. If that's you – understand that worship is much more than singing.
6. David *danced* because it was one *more* way to love God with all his *strength*.
  - a. The Words says along with our strength, we're to love God with all our heart, mind, & soul too.
  - b. So maybe there's another way for you to worship God.
  - c. In the movie *Chariots of Fire* Eric Liddell said God had made him fast & sensed God's pleasure when he ran. For Liddell, running was worship.
    - 1) It's too bad the people around him had such a narrow view of what worship is.
    - 2) They wanted to take away from him the very thing he wanted to give to God.
7. God made us all unique. Our worship is the offering not just of our words but our *selves*. So –
  - a. What's your passion? When do you feel most *alive*?
  - b. That's precisely the place God wants you to worship Him.