

DOING A RIGHT THING IN A WRONG WAY

2 Sam. 6:1-16; 1 Ch. 13; 15

THE ACTIONS IN David's life, which we will look at, are a sobering reality that God will not change or bend His rules. We'll be reminded that He isn't impressed with our zeal and excitement, if it dishonours His word.

A Right Purpose

David, the man after God's own heart, had a longing desire to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. He was ready to carry out his honourable plan, because he had been officially anointed and crowned king over all of Israel.

Bringing the ark to Jerusalem, the newly established capitol was an important step toward the *unification of the nation*, and for providing a *central place of worship* for all of Israel.

David brought about 30,000 men together, and set out with them to Kiriath –Jearim, where Ark had been located for close to 70 years. During the reign of Saul, the Ark had been neglected and almost forgotten. An apparent picture of a heart out of communion with God.

King Saul and Israel had been out of touch with God. David was about to change that. He desired communion with God, and not only for himself, but for all the people of God.

The Ark symbolized God's holy *presence* and *glory*. In fact, it symbolized the very *throne of God*. David wanted the Ark in Jerusalem at all costs. He understood the deep significance of it and the blessings that it meant.

He wanted to restore a true spirit of worship. Today all this speaks of presence and glory of Christ in the midst the His church. The Lord enthroned in our hearts and our gatherings.

A Wrong Procedure

God had given meticulous instructions regarding the transportation of the tabernacle and its furniture; but David for some reason, did not bother finding out what they were. And it seems neither did the priests and Levites (1 Ch.13:2).

The Ark was designed with four rings , one at each corner, so that poles could be slipped in and the assigned Levites , of the Kohathite division, could lift it up and carry it on their shoulders (Numbers 4:15). That was God's way.

But David without inquiring of the Lord goes up to Abinadab's house with his men to fetch the Ark, but they bring it back in the wrong way. David had it placed on a new cart to be pulled by oxen. David chose to do it the way of the Philistines (1 Sam. 6:7).

David was doing a right thing done in a wrong way. For David, disaster was in the air!

The Ark is brought out with great joy. David and all the house of Israel played music before the LORD. They celebrated with all their might (v5). Judging from the importance of the occasion and all the instruments mentioned, this was quite a procession. The atmosphere was joyful, exciting, and engaging. The problem was that none of it pleased God because it was all in disobedience to His word.

A Severe Punishment

God had tolerated, for a short time, the violation of His explicit command as to the procedure for transport, but once the Ark is touched with human hands, He breaks out with anger, vindicates His holiness, and strikes down Uzzah.

This may seem extreme. But it was a means of preserving the sense of God's holiness and the fear of drawing near to Him without appropriate preparation.

A severe warning is found in Numbers 4:15, “*they shall not touch any holy thing lest they die.*” The Ark was the most holy object in the whole system of Mosaic worship. Uzzah made a decision in a moment to disregard God's command of “hands off” and did what seemed right to him.

With the death of Uzzah everything comes to a sudden stop. The feast is finished. The singing is silenced. The joy was exchanged for sorrow. God is angry. David is angry. And each one for different reasons.

David had done everything with the best of intentions, and with a pure heart before God. What he failed to do was to go to God's word to found out how to move the Ark about.

This is where we too fail and get ourselves into trouble. We want to do things for God, with the best of intentions, but if we ignore His Word, we will be confronted not with blessings, but rather with upsets.

David was angry because of what happened. But David's anger soon turns to fear. He becomes afraid of God and withdraws. When we fear God, we withdraw.

David called the place of judgment, Perez Uzzah, which means, “Outburst against Uzzah.” It is remarkable that this serious event took place near a threshing floor. In Scripture, the threshing floor is always linked with purging, with separating the good with the evil, and the chaff from the wheat.

A Proper Procession

After feeling the heat of God's anger, David underwent a “cooling off” period of 3 months.

1 Chron. 13; 15 –Having inquired of the Lord as to what had gone wrong, and being prompted by the fact Obed –Edom was blessed because of the Ark, he re-organizes and sets into motion the events that will result in the Ark being brought to Jerusalem.

He moves out again, with thousands of his men to go get the Ark a second time. Proceeding rightly, the Levites bear the Ark on their shoulders and cautiously move forward 6 steps, and then offer up bulls and rams in sacrifice, because the Lord was pleased with them. And all the men raised sounds of joy to God.

The bible says, David leaped and danced with *all his might* before the LORD as they marched towards Jerusalem. David didn't hold back anything in his own expression of worship.

David was glad to bring the ark of the LORD into Jerusalem according to God's prescribed pattern. His joy overflowed because he knew God was not angry, but pleased. It was the greatest day in David's life.

So he danced, and he danced. Dancing played an important part in Hebrew worship (Ps .149:3). Usually it was the women who danced and sang before the Lord (Ex.15:20-21; 1 Sam.18:6; Ps. 68:24-26). But on occasions when both men and women danced they were segregated.

We are told David offered sacrifices. We are also told David removed his kingly robes and wore a linen ephod. In this context, David's linen ephod means he set aside his royal robes and dressed just like the priests. Here, we see David as a type of our Lord Jesus, who is the Kingly –Priest, who will eventually come to Jerusalem in person.

Principle Points

1. God's work is to be done God's way, not man's way, if it is going to have God's blessing.
2. The fact that all the leaders agreed on how to bring back the Ark, did not make it right.
3. The crowds may approve what we do, but what about God's approval? It's His that counts.

4. No amount of unity, zeal or enthusiasm can compensate for disobedience.
5. The Philistines –unbelievers and the nations of this world—have nothing to teach us in the matters of God.
6. The way of the world is ultimately the way of death. Prov. 14:12 *There is a way that seems right to a man but its end is the way of death.* The way to Hell is paved with good intentions.
7. “It’s not new methods, its better men, God is looking for.” (E. M. Bounds).
8. All the music and singing was vain—since there wasn’t an attitude of deep respect for the presence of God.
9. Show caution and watchfulness—we can become too familiar with holy things. Uzzah ceased to regard the Ark of the Covenant with due reverence. It had been too long in his father’s house.
10. God is loving and merciful, but He is also holy and He defends His holiness with His power, and affronts to His holiness sometimes bring about His wrath. Heb. 10:31 –*“It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*