



PRESENT TRUTH



Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12)

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How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?

By: Art Nelson

And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me? (2 Samuel 6:9 KJV)

David wanted to bring the Ark of the Lord to him in Jerusalem. But, he had a problem. His first attempt to accomplish this was a disaster leaving one man dead. David knew that the Ark had been moved in the past, yet now it appeared dangerous to move it. How was he to do it?

This is a question that is also facing the Church. How shall the ark of the Lord come to us? The Ark represented the covenant of God with His people and was a visible manifestation of the covenant and of the Glory of God. When Israel tried to use the Ark inappropriately in a battle it was captured by the Philistines.

And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. (1 Samuel 4:10 KJV)

And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain. (1 Samuel 4:11 KJV)

The capturing of the Ark was a serious issue. It meant that the glory had departed from Israel.

And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband. (1 Samuel 4:21 KJV)

And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken. (1 Samuel 4:22 KJV)

Has this occurred to the Church also? Has the glory departed? Have the Philistines (the World System) taken from us the visible manifestation of the presence of God?

When you read the full story of the time the Ark was with the Philistines you realize that it made them very uncomfortable and they wanted to get rid of it even though it had only been in their

country for seven months. So they built a cart and put the Ark on it and hitched to it two cows that had just had calves. They reasoned that the cow's natural inclination would be to stay with their calves. If cows, contrary to their natural inclination, were to go to Israel pulling the cart then for sure God was responsible. Of course, this is what they did. The cows carried the Ark on the cart to the borders of Israel. Even though the Ark was on a cart built by the Philistines, there was still an element of the supernatural in the handling of the cart.

And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh. (1 Samuel 6:12 KJV)

And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. (1 Samuel 6:13 KJV)

And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they cleaved the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD. (1 Samuel 6:14 KJV)

Naturally, there was great rejoicing by the people of Beth-shemesh for the Ark was again in Israel. The priests unloaded the Ark from the cart and make sacrifice to the Lord. This was a proper thing to do; however, apparently, the people weren't told the rules about the Ark because they looked inside and disaster resulted.

And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter. (1 Samuel 6:19 KJV)

And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us? (1 Samuel 6:20 KJV)

And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you. (1 Samuel 6:21 KJV)

Over 50,000 people died as a result of either the ignorance of the people or the failure of the Priests concerning the holiness of the Ark and the commandments of God concerning it. After this judgment they decided it would be better if someone else had custody of the Ark.

And the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD. (1 Samuel 7:1 KJV)

And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD. (1 Samuel 7:2 KJV)

So, others came and collected the Ark and for twenty years cared for it properly.

David decided that he would like to have the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem and decided to move it there. But David didn't inquire of the Lord or others about the proper way to move the Ark.

Common sense said to use a cart. The Philistines had used a cart and it worked well. So, David had a new cart built. This is a key fallacy of the Church today. We can't use the world's way to handle the Ark of God. Only God's way will work properly.

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. (2 Samuel 6:2 KJV)

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, drove the new cart. (2 Samuel 6:3 KJV)

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. (2 Samuel 6:4 KJV)

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. (2 Samuel 6:5 KJV)

There was a lot of activity—the Ark was on the move! Music, singing, worship, rejoicing—they were dancing in the streets! What a wonderful sight—but it was out of order. Instead of following spiritual procedures for handling the presence of God (which the Ark represented) they were following natural, worldly procedures.

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. (2 Samuel 6:6 KJV)

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. (2 Samuel 6:7 KJV)

And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day. (2 Samuel 6:8 KJV)

And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me? (2 Samuel 6:9 KJV)

Uzzah made an error that cost him his life. It was an innocent error performed with the best of intentions, yet it kindled the anger of the Lord. When we are ignorant of the proper spiritual methodologies ordained by God, even our well intentioned, innocent errors produce death. Using the world's ways always results in people being hurt. This isn't the people's fault--the responsibility for this is in the hands of the leadership. David should have known better. He should have known the correct way to move the Ark of the Covenant. At least David was smart enough to know that he had a problem for which he didn't know the answer. He stopped his worldly attempt and, apparently, began to search and ask the priests about the way that God had said the Ark was to be moved.

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 Obed-edom the Gittite. (2 Samuel 6:10 KJV)

And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his household. (2 Samuel 6:11 KJV)

After three months, David had learned the way of the Lord concerning the Ark and proceeded to move it to Jerusalem to the tent that he had prepared for it. The Ark was carried on the shoulders of the priests as was ordained and every six paces sacrifice was made to the Lord. Everyone rejoiced, danced and praised God. David now handled the Ark in the correct manner with awe, sanctification, holiness and reverence.

I believe that God wants to restore to the Church the fullness of His Covenant, His manifest presence. The bible speaks of two arks: the big ark, Noah's, and the little ark, the Ark of the Covenant. Noah's Ark symbolizes us in Christ. The Ark of the Covenant symbolizes Christ in us, the hope of Glory.

From the time of Constantine, the World System has held captive the New Testament version of the Ark of the Covenant. The Church and the world became mixed and much of the spiritual aspect of the ways of God were lost and forgotten. The Reformation was the beginning of re-discovering the ways of God—the Ark was on the cart and heading for spiritual Israel. The Pentecostal movement “fetched the Ark” to the house where it remained for a number of years.

The Charismatic movement went to get the Ark and move it to “Jerusalem”. (I am a Charismatic dating from 1970). However, the Charismatic movement was (and still is) ignorant of the proper ways to handle God's Glory and His manifest presence. Worldly methods, promotion, and marketing have made a spectacle of the Gifts of the Spirit. People are manipulated in the Name of the Lord to seek greater and bigger signs. When I see and hear some of the things said and done on TV by some of the supposed bible teachers, prophets, and evangelists my heart cries out to the Lord. Where is our reverence and awe for the manifestation of the Glory of God? Where is our holiness and sanctification for handling His Gifts? Like Uzzah, well-intentioned people are left along the road, hurt, confused, and dying.

Leadership! Wake up! At least be as smart as David and recognize that we have a problem. We must seek the Lord and His ways and lean not to our own understanding. We must purify our teaching from the world's contamination. Jesus didn't die so that we could live a rich, problem-free life. He said that we would have troubles. He gives us the grace and power to either go through them or overcome them. We will never avoid many of them. Having a problem doesn't mean that we are defeated. It means that we are human and that we still live in a fallen world.

We have to look beyond the hoopla to reality. What is God saying? Do we want His presence? Then, let's honor Him, reverence Him, and follow His ways. It's His will, not ours; His Kingdom, not ours; His money, not ours; His purpose, not ours; His plans, not ours. We must remember: every six paces David offered sacrifice to the Lord. To move the Ark of the Lord, we must present our bodies as a living sacrifice. It is our reasonable service

NOTE: *There is great significance to the fact that David did not move the Ark to the old tabernacle, which was in Hebron but instead brought it to Jerusalem and the tent that he had set up for it.*

For those of you who might be using this for deeper study: there are three aspects to this that you might want to pursue. 1) The reasons the Ark was lost; 2) the return of the Ark; 3) placing the Ark in the proper place. All three of these have spiritual application to us today.

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