

1 - Worshipping God the “Right Way” (1 Chronicles 11-16)

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Recently, the Lord has been speaking to me about worshipping Him (THE RIGHT GOD) the RIGHT WAY and in the RIGHT PLACE. As believers, we have good intent. We want to worship God. I do not mean just to have a time of singing with other believers. To worship means “to bow down” and “to serve”. In New Testament terminology this means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ (*follow Him, deny yourself/take up your cross, don't be afraid or anxious, believe/have faith*). This is what worship really means and it does include praising God in song.

King David was a man after God's own heart and even he had challenges with worshipping God the RIGHT WAY. Let's review a small portion of 1 Chronicles to shine some light on this matter. This portion of 1 Chronicles is just after Saul has died and David becomes king.

11:1 Then all Israel gathered to David in Hebron, saying, “**Look—we are your flesh and bones.** 2 For some time now, even when Saul was king, you were the one who led the army of Israel in battle. And Yahweh your God said to you, ‘**You will shepherd my people Israel and will be leader over my people Israel.**’ ” 3 Then all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron in the presence of Yahweh. And they anointed David as king over Israel according to the word of Yahweh by the hand of Samuel.

1 Chronicles 11:1–3 (LEB)

In these verses we have, in type and picture, Christ as the head of the body and the congregation as the body (bone and flesh – see Genesis 2:23). David is the head and all Israel as the body (bone and flesh). Israel is ready to receive their king according to the word of the Lord that came through Samuel.

Then we see Jerusalem conquered by David's army followed by an inventory of the mighty men of David, and an accounting of many of the men of war from the tribes of Israel. This is described from 1 Chronicles 11:4 to the end of 1 Chronicles 12.

From an Old Testament perspective, we see that the right leader (David, foreshadowing Jesus Christ) has been anointed in agreement with God's will and the right place (Jerusalem) has been conquered and established as the home of the right leader (David foreshadowing Jesus Christ).

- *right leader* – David foreshadowing Jesus Christ
- *right place* – Jerusalem

13:1 And David consulted with the commanders of thousands and hundreds, with every leader. 2 And David said to all the assembly of Israel, “**If it seems good to you and before Yahweh our God,** let us send word abroad to our brothers who remain in all the land of Israel and to the priests and Levites with them in the cities with their pasturelands that they might be gathered to us. 3 Then let us bring around the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul.” 4 **And all the assembly agreed to do so, for the word was pleasing in the eyes of all the people.**

1 Chronicles 13:1–4 (LEB)

Take note that David said “If it seems good to you and before Yahweh our God”, but then in agreement of the assembly it only says “the word was pleasing in the eyes of all the people”.

Seems good doesn't it???

- *right God* – God with Ark of Covenant picturing the presence of God David and all of Israel had a good desire and good intent.

13:7 And they carried the ark of God upon a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio were driving the cart. 8 Now David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all *their* strength, and with songs, lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets. 9 And when they came to the threshing floor of Kidon, Uzza reached out his hand to hold the ark because the cattle had stumbled. 10 And Yahweh was angry with Uzza, and he struck him down because he reached his hand upon the ark. And he died there before God. 11 And David was angry because Yahweh had broken out in wrath against Uzza. And that place is called Perez Uzza unto this day. 12 And David feared God on that day, saying, "How can I bring the ark of God *home* to me?" 13 So David did not move the ark to himself into the city of David but diverted it to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. 14 And the ark of God remained with the household of Obed-Edom in his house three months. And Yahweh blessed the household of Obed-Edom and all that he had.

1 Chronicles 13:7–14 (LEB)

There is much that we could look at here, but we will keep this simple. They made a cart. They praised God along the way with ALL THEIR MIGHT. An animal stumbled. *Uzzah saves the day!* ...AND GOD STRIKES HIM DEAD! David gets angry and rejects the idea of bringing the Ark of the Covenant (i.e. the presence of God) to Jerusalem (the right place). He sends the Ark to another location and calls the place by meaning, the place where God broke out against Uzzah.

At this point in the story line, i'm with David. I'd be angry. Look at what a good thing it is they are doing for God and God strikes Uzzah dead on an apparent technicality. Who is this God we serve???

If interested, read Chapter 14. Effectively, life goes on for a little while. Moving to Chapter 15, we find out the truth of what happened with Uzzah.

1 And David built houses for himself in the city of David, *and he established a place for the ark of God. And he pitched a tent for it.* 2 **Then David ordered that none except the Levites should carry the ark of God, for Yahweh had chosen them to carry the ark of Yahweh and to serve him forever.** 3 And David gathered all Israel to Jerusalem to bring up the ark of Yahweh to its place that he had established for it.

1 Chronicles 15:1–3 (LEB)

15:12 And he said to them, "You *are* the heads of the families for the Levites. Sanctify yourselves and your brothers and bring up the ark of Yahweh, the God of Israel, to *the place* I have established for it. 13 **Because the first time you did not, and Yahweh our God burst out against us, for we did not care for it according to the law.**" 14 Then the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of Yahweh, the God of Israel. 15 And the sons of the Levites carried the ark of God **according to what Moses commanded, according to the word of Yahweh**, on their shoulders with the carrying poles upon them.

1 Chronicles 15:12–15 (ESV)

David has changed his attitude. He's not angry anymore. We don't see how, but David's understanding has been corrected. He now knows that he has to bring the Ark of the Covenant (the presence of God) to Jerusalem according to the rule ... as Moses had commanded according to the

Word of the Lord! It is also important to see that David had changed his understanding. He no longer believed God only broke out against Uzzah, but he knows that the “Lord our God broke out against **us**“. He includes himself and the entire congregation in this matter. He recognizes their error and that Uzzah was just the one who received the consequences. How merciful God was to David and the rest of the congregation that day.

David didn't get it right the first time, but he was teachable and, after some correction and instruction, he was ready to try again. David's rejection of the presence of God is not permanent. David now understands more clearly that God is holy and expects important things to be done the RIGHT WAY. This reaction to reject the presence of God is just while we are learning the RIGHT WAY. We would like to think that we would never reject the presence of God, but we do. We get offended with God because His holiness affects the areas of our lives that have not been purified. We have a faithful loving God who helps us with all of this if we will just return to Him and submit to learn from Jesus Christ and be trained by Him through the discipline of the Lord.

There is another curious moment in this story. David and Israel follow through and bring the Ark of the Covenant (presence of God) into Jerusalem. David is worshiping God as they bring the Ark and one of his wives sees what David is doing and her heart turns against him because she despises his worship. I believe this is God's judgment against David for his anger against the Lord. David has a fleshly response (anger) to God's holiness. Michal has a fleshly response to (despises) David's worship of God. I also believe this is a picture of how the flesh looks upon the spiritual. The flesh despises true spiritual things.

Some of this may be difficult to consider, but listen to the Psalmist.

99:6 Moses and Aaron *were* among his priests; Samuel also *was* among *those who* called on his name. They called to Yahweh, and he answered them. 7 He spoke to them in *the* pillar of cloud. They kept his testimonies and *the* statute he gave to them. 8 O Yahweh our God, you answered them. You were a forgiving God to them, but an avenger of their *wrong* deeds.

Psalm 99:6–8 (LEB)

Even Moses, Aaron and Samuel were subject to God's discipline. God knows that His discipline, when properly received, is effective to send us forward in our walk with Him in a way that we won't easily repeat the same type of mistakes.

Having this amazing picture gives us the ability to know that in our best intent, we will still get it wrong. With our best effort and the best effort of all those around us, we will still come short of God's way of holiness. We need to find the right way and we need to worship in the right place.

When Jesus encounters the woman at the well (John 4:1-25) we find out part of what we need to translate what we have seen in 1 Chronicles into the present time.

21 Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, that an hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, because salvation is from the Jews. 23 But an hour is coming—and now is *here*—when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for indeed the Father seeks such *people to be* his worshipers. 24 God *is* spirit, and the ones who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

John 4:21–24 (LEB)

So, now we have...

- *right God* – Ark of Covenant pictures presence of God
- *right place* – Jerusalem inside David's Tabernacle at the Ark of Covenant / presence of God IN SPIRIT
- *right way* – According to "the rule" as recorded by Moses based on what the Lord commanded / Word of God as uttered by His Voice (the rhema of God) IN TRUTH.
 - We should also note that Asaph and his brothers were placed by David to minister at the Ark of the Covenant day and night. Asaph was a psalmist and minister of music. I believe this is some level of indication us that we enter His presence best through thanksgiving and praise.

Note: Notice that to operate in truth it is not according to our own understanding or interpretation of the Word of God, but according to the spoken Word of God (i.e. the voice of the Lord) which is to be heard, tested and applied apart from deception (Romans 12:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:21). This can only be done through a submitted walk with the Lord in proper and appropriate fear of the Lord. We cannot do this properly apart from Christ. We are only able to do this properly IN HIM.

We only have to come to our Lord Jesus Christ and submit ourselves into His hands and follow Him one step at a time. He will organize our circumstances. He will work on our hearts. He has the responsibility to purify us and build us up for the work God has in mind for our lives.

25 ... just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her; 26 in order that he might sanctify her by cleansing *her* with the washing of water by the word; 27 in order that he might present to himself the church glorious, not having a spot or wrinkle or any such *thing*, but that she may be holy and blameless.

Ephesians 5:25b–27 (LEB)

Prayer

Dear Lord, give us a heart and a willingness this day to look back on all our well-intended efforts which did not turn out as we desired and acknowledge before you that we fell short in our way. Forgive us and help us to release these things. Give us the courage to say once again, 'I am in your hands, do what is needed in my life to purify me and prepare me to participate in the upbuilding of your Body as a servant of others and your kingdom. Thank you for the rich supply of your Son to help me this day to set my will properly and do what is needed to walk with you in increasing holiness.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one who is all and in all!