

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

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by

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Today we are looking at Chapter 6 of II Samuel. It is an interesting chapter. It is also interesting how quickly David forgets. As you know, there is often a parallel passage in Chronicles to some of the passages in II Samuel. One of these is here. I want to pick up the introduction to this particular chapter of II Samuel from I Chronicles.

I Chronicles, 13:1:

Then David consulted with the captains of the thousands and the hundreds, even with every leader. And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you, and if it is from the Lord our God, let us send everywhere to our kinsmen who remain in all the land of Israel, also to the priests and Levites who are with them in their cities with pasture lands, that they may meet with us; and let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul." Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

Then something tragic happens. In verse 13 of Chapter 15, David makes this comment about having the Levites carry the ark:

I Chronicles 15: 13

"Because you did not carry it at the first, the Lord our God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance."

First he said, "If it's all right with you people, and if it's all right with the Lord, let's do it." But then, without checking with the Lord, he uses only the will of the people and moves the ark.

II Samuel 6:1:

Now David [this is after going through the Philistine battle] again gathered all the chosen men of Israel [and we just saw he talked it over with them all, including the priests and the Levites, according to the Old Testament and the rules and regulations laid out by God.] thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah...

Baale-judah is another name for Kiriath-jearim where the ark of the Lord had been for the last 75 years. Remember from last time, the Philistines captured the ark and brought it into Philistine country. God brought a plague on them, possibly the bubonic plague, which convinced them to get rid of the ark. They sent it to the people of Beth-shemesh, who were delighted to have it back. During their rejoicing at its return, however, some of them either didn't look at the ark properly or didn't rejoice when it came back, [we're not sure which] and God slew 70 of them. That scared them to death and they said, "Get this ark out of town." The nearest big city was Kiriath-jearim, so they sent it there. They put a Levite in charge of it, and left it there. Kiriath-jearim was a Canaanite town, not a Jewish town at all. As I Chronicles above indicates, "It wasn't used in the days

of Saul," and it actually wasn't used very much in the days of Samuel either. The tabernacle, in the meantime, was over in Gibeon where they sacrificed on the brazen altar.

So here the ark of God has been sitting for 75 years in a Canaanite town not being used. Now David has a city. It's a city given to him by God, a capital city, the city of God, the city of David. God has also given him a nation to govern, and very naturally the king of that nation wants to have the ark, the presence of the God of that nation, his Boss, associated with him in his city. So he wants to bring the ark up, but how do you do that? He can do two things. He can use tradition or he can use Scripture. David chooses tradition. "Well, let's see, 75 years ago the Philistines put the ark of God on a brand new cart, had it driven by two milk cows who had never been yoked and sent little offerings along with it. It came directly out of Philistine country to Beth-shemesh. The Philistines were relieved of the plague, so obviously God blessed it. Well, we'll do exactly the same thing."

II Samuel 6:2:

And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah [Kiriath-jearim], to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the Lord of hosts who is enthroned above the cherubim. And they placed the ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab [that was the Levite who was set aside to watch over the ark] which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart. [These were Levites. They were men set aside to do this] So they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill: and Ahio was walking ahead of the ark. [Apparently Uzzah was alongside the ark] Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord with all kinds of instruments made of fir wood [literally cypress] and with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals.

They were rejoicing. They were worshipping. They were glorifying God and having a ball in front of the Lord. What is wrong with that? How had the written Word of God ordered the Jews to carry the ark of God? On their shoulders, and on the shoulders of the sons of Levi and specifically the sons of Kohath. Nobody else. Nobody was to touch the ark of God, or the sacred vessels, except the priests. After they touched it, they covered it so nobody could see it. Then, using the long staves that came out of the ark of God, the Kohathites, picked it up, put it on their shoulders, and carried God. God was sitting on top of the Israelites. He was not being led by the nose.

He was trying to show that he was a holy God, separate from sinners. To come into God's presence, you had to come by the route that God had prescribed. He didn't isolate himself. No, there was a route they could follow. They could deal with their daily sins at the bronze sacrificial altar that sat in front of the "tent of meeting." Once a year the high priest would come into the very presence of God in a certain ritual way that pictured the life and the death of Jesus Christ, bringing blood in for a sacrifice for first his own sins and then for the sins of the people. Once a year he could walk in the presence of God, but only once a year and only by a prescribed route. There were certain rituals he had to perform such as sprinkling the blood seven times. There were bells on the skirt of his robe which jingled as he sprinkled the blood. When he went into the Holy of Holies, he was letter perfect, and everybody outside was watching for him to come out. "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven; whew! he made it another year." God was very available to them. He lived with them and traveled with them, yet he was a God who was separate from them. He was holy. They were to be a separate people from the Gentiles and yet to be available to be a light unto the Gentiles. So we have this wonderful picture lesson of God's holiness. One of the picture lessons was, "I am never to be on a cart. You are to carry me on your shoulders. I am God and you are my people, and you are to wear my yoke."

God deliberately used that symbol. Sitting up high he was to be carried by the people. They were to bear the yoke of Yahweh. The Lord Jesus said the same thing in Matthew 11:20-30, remember. "Come unto me, all you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How? "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." But it is a yoke. If you want rest for your souls, you have to put on the yoke of Christ. In the context of that day it was a wooden cross bar with bows on either end that hooked you to another animal. Then you and your partner together dragged whatever was attached to you. It meant someone was totally in charge of

you. This was the yoke of Yahweh, Jesus Christ of the Old Testament, which the nation of the people of God were to be under. It would be an easy yoke. It would be a light yoke. They would be given rest for their souls, but it was a yoke. There was to be one boss in Israel and that was not David. It was Yahweh. However, this God was dangerous. Wear his yoke you will have rest. Buck him and you do so at the peril of your soul.

Now in 75 years, with the ark in Kiriath-jearim, the Jews had been forgetting all about the holiness of God. Here is a strange dichotomy. The tabernacle in one place with continual sacrificing for forgiveness, and the ark, the presence of God, in another place just sitting there. So here they are rejoicing, worshipping, celebrating and yet sinning at the same time. Did it ever strike you that you can sin while worshipping even though you are sincere? Well, you can if you violate the principles of the Word of God. That is exactly what they were doing

God laid down some very specific rules in the Book of the Law, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, on exactly how to operate. Numbers 4 lays out as plain as can be exactly how to handle the ark, who is to carry it, how it is to be carried, etc. Then David, in the I Chronicles 13 passage, consulted the priests of the Levites as well as all the people, and said, "If it seems good to you and if it is from the Lord our God, let's do it." The only problem was no one bothered to check with God. All the people said, "They didn't do it in the days of Saul. Let's do it now," but by David's own admission, nobody bothered to check with God, and they had the first five books of Moses right there.

So, here they are rejoicing, worshipping, and honoring God, as far as they know, and yet see what God says about it.

II Samuel 6:6:

But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.

Here are the people rejoicing in the Lord when the ark, as it comes off the hill, starts to tilt. Uzzah in his love for the ark and his zeal and reverence for God reaches out to steady it. The minute he took hold of it he died. God made it very clear in the Scriptures that nobody was to touch the ark except the priests and then only when they moved it. "I am a separate and holy God, and I gave you principles on how to approach me. I will not accept any other way." Now the Philistines didn't know any better. So, God allowed them to lift the ark onto a new cart. They looked to what light they had which was astrologers and diviners, but the Israelites had written rules. So when Uzzah, even in total sincerity, violated the holiness of God, he died. The anger of God reached out and smote him.

This is a good picture of God's anger, or God's wrath. It is not an emotion. It is not a state of mind. The wrath of God, or the anger of God, is simply a settled state of hostility toward evil. Uzzah's motivation was right. He was worshipping God and trying his best to please God, but he died. He is probably home with Jesus right now, but he did die. God's wrath is much like the law of gravity. It is a settled state of hostility toward evil. If you commit evil in any form, such as violating the known will of God when it is available to you, you will pay, no matter what your motivation. God is not mad at you. You don't like the law of gravity? That is too bad, but step off the roof of this church and you are bound to get hurt. It's not because God is mad at you, but because that is the way it is. So, Uzzah paid with his life for violating the known will of God as written in the Scriptures. Uzzah was a Levite. The Levites were teachers of the law and were spread throughout Israel to be teachers of the law. The very law Uzzah should have been teaching told him exactly how to deal with the ark of God. He didn't do his homework. He didn't flunk, he died .

Now look at David. David did get angry. David did have an emotion. Our anger comes from ego. I am mad because I have been treated unfairly by someone. I get angry with God because, according to my standards, he has been unfair to me. But you see, God has no ego problem. Not only is God Mr. Big, but he knows he is Mr. Big. He doesn't have the slightest struggle with self-worth. He knows he is the only thing of value in the universe. All other things have value only as they relate to him. He is totally satisfied with himself. Jesus

Christ had no struggle with self-worth. He knew he was God. He knew he was holy. He knew he was the Ultimate One, the source and the goal of all creation. So he didn't get mad. He did have wrath. Now with David it was different. Remember David was the runt of the litter. He had a real struggle with self-worth all of his life. Look at verse 8; it pops right out.

II Samuel 6:8:

And David became angry [He is not angry at the people, he is angry at God] because of the Lord's outburst against Uzzah, and that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. [Break through Uzzah] So David was afraid of the Lord that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?" And David was unwilling to move the ark of the Lord into the city of David with him; but David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite [He is a Levite.] Thus the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

Here is David doing his best. He is organized. He is up front leading the crowd. They are all worshipping. Everything is going great and bang! this happens. Man, is he angry! God has not observed David's standards. So, when you get angry with God what happens to your relationship with God? You may not actually lose the relationship, but you sure lose the experience of it. Next step after anger is fear, "I might be next. I organized this thing. I'm the king." So David becomes afraid, and says, "Well, how can the ark of God come to me?" Here comes this gap between David and his God. The next step in his spiritual barrenness is his unwillingness to move the ark of God to Jerusalem.

And so David begins with anger against God because God isn't fair. Then he progresses to fear of that God because God is a scary guy and you don't mess with him. Pretty soon there's a distance between David and his God which results in David's unwillingness to reach out and grab hold of the promises of God. The tragedy is God wants the ark in Jerusalem. God has chosen that city for His Presence. He wants the king he has chosen to have the ark of the covenant right there. He wants that. The problem is not God. It is David.

These are the steps to spiritual barrenness All you have to do is start getting angry with God. Then pretty soon you will be fearful of God and next you will be unwilling to obey God. Then you will be down here making appointments for counseling. And we've got to take you right back to the bottom line, your anger against God because he doesn't conform to your standards. He conforms to the Word of God, though, and if you obey that you'll have no worries about the wrath of God or the anger of God.

Now, why do you suppose God blessed Obed-edom and all his household for three solid months? He gets rich over night. Everything he touches turns to gold. His crops grow like crazy, as do his sheep and his cattle. They have offspring like you wouldn't believe, twins all over the place. Everything he touches, as long as that ark is there, just blossoms. He doesn't fight with his wife. His kids behave themselves. The whole place is a paradise. What is God trying to do? Yes! He is trying to show David that he stills loves him. The Scripture teaches that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself not charging the sins against them." God begot the world, and he reconciled the world unto himself while it was yet sinful. What's more he didn't charge the sin against us. He is not mad at David. David is mad at him. So he is saying, "David, I'm not mad at you. Take a look at Obed-edom. I'm not mad at the Jewish people. I just want some respect for my holiness." And so he very graciously blesses Obed-edom, and David gets the message.

II Samuel 6:12:

Now it was told King David, saying, "The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, on account of the ark of God." And David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.

If you will notice in I Chronicles 15 he gets the Levites and the sons of Kohath, and he says, "Last time 'we did not seek Him according to the ordinance,' but this time you carry the ark. We are going to do it the right way," and he checks right out according to Numbers 4. Verse 13 of II Samuel I love.

II Samuel 6:13:

And so it was, that when the bearers of the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling.

Why do you suppose David suddenly, after only six paces, sacrificed to God? What hasn't happened that he thought might happen? Whew! Yes! David is giving a thanksgiving offering. He did it right. God indicated that when nobody died. Now it is a blessed event.

II Samuel 6:14:

And David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, [total restoration. He feels free again before the Lord and he can express himself openly, abundantly, joyously without any inhibitions. No more fear. You notice he was dancing. Part of their worship in those days was dancing.] **and David was wearing a linen ephod** [This was the garment of the priests. Instead of being on the 50-yard line in a box seat as king, he is doing exactly as God says in Deuteronomy 17. The king was to be a servant among the people. He was not to lord it over his brothers. He was to be one of them. He realizes this is a kingdom of priests in a holy nation. So he puts on a priest's garment because he is bringing up the ark of God. The ephod is a shorty nightgown, if you remember. While he is dancing and whirling out there his underbritches are showing, and he humiliates and humbles himself in front of all the people as he is rejoicing in his Lord. Unfortunately Michal spots him.]

II Samuel 6:16:

Then it happened as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David that Michal the daughter of Saul [She is not called the wife of David. Why? What is she acting like? Daddy!] **looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord and despised him in her heart.**

That is a strong word. The man out there, making an ass of himself, is king. He ought to be wearing gorgeous robes which reach to the ground, sitting in a box seat with a spear in his hand having "eyes right" as the procession goes by. Instead he is in a short nightgown, whirling around like crazy, rejoicing in the Lord. Michal is the daughter of a king and the wife of a king. She is royalty, and she despises him.

Have you ever noticed something about wives? A wife becomes one-flesh with her husband. That is really true. Your wife is both your severest critic and your staunchest backer, and she identifies with you. What you do she sees herself doing. How you act, she sees herself acting. You don't believe it? Check out what she tells you on the way home from dinner out with friends. She is either proud or embarrassed by your actions. Why? Because she sees herself identified with those actions. Now Michal is a good wife. She identifies with David. She sees herself out there being humiliated. Also, let us not forget that she has not had her husband for some seventeen or eighteen years. When David escaped into the wilderness, she lost her husband and was given to another man. David was gone about ten years and then was seven years in Hebron, taking six other wives, by the way. Michal comes back as wife number seven instead of wife number one. She comes back as a political pawn. She has deep insecurities. She doesn't know where she stands with David. She loves David. She once risked her life for him and she identifies with her love. She is humiliated because she thinks David is being humiliated. There is a protective instinct there. We are going to see the tragedy of David as a husband here in a minute.

II Samuel 6:17

So they brought in the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent which David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. And when David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offering, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts. Further, he distributed to all the people, to all the multitude of Israel, both to men and women [They are spiritual equals in worship] **a cake of bread and one of dates and one of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed each to his house.**

Interestingly enough David had two priests at this time. He had Zadok and Abiathar who were both descendants of Aaron but from two different lines. They were cousins. Zadok was in charge of the tabernacle

in Gibeon where they had been offering sin offerings for years. Abiathar was in charge of the ark there in Jerusalem for which David had built a tent similar to the one in Gibeon. So he had two tabernacles at the moment, one in Jerusalem and one over in Gibeon.

If you read the I Chronicles 16 passage, David puts Asaph in charge of the choir. He composes a psalm for this celebration. And he has Asaph begin to have public praise worship. This is the first time in Scripture where there is public worship of praise involved in celebrating the Lord's presence. Asaph writes 12 Psalms. He is the choir master of David. He is a brilliant musician. He is also a prophet, a seer. This is the introduction of liturgy into the Jewish religion. This goes on into the temple and into the synagogue. So David, a musician himself, sees the place of music in worship, and the place of responsive praise on the part of the people. He begins to bring "Body Life" into the Jewish worship system, and it continued on until the time of the synagogue.

Now, having done that, II Samuel 6:20:

But when David returned to bless his household, [He had blessed the people. Now he wanted to bless his household] **Michal the daughter of Saul** [There's that nasty phrase again] **came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today!** [Good old sarcasm] **He uncovered himself today in the eyes of his servants' maids as one of the foolish ones shamelessly uncovers himself!"** ["When you whirled out there, David, your linen britches stuck out all over town." She is humiliated by this. Well, you would hope that a loving husband would sense the problem. This one doesn't] **So David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me above your father** [Stick it in your ear] **and above all his house,** [Stick it in your ear] **to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel; therefore I will celebrate before the Lord**

"Whether you like it or not." Isn't that a wonderful response to a concerned wife. Exactly the opposite of I Peter 3:7. "You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way (in the context there if she is on a broomstick) as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life,..." Literally the word "grant her honor" is the word "treat her as precious," the same word that is used in "the precious blood of Jesus." I Peter 1:19. "Treat her as precious and as a joint heir of the grace of life. She needs grace and so do you, David. She is to be honored and loved and understood as the weaker vessel. She is wrapped up in her husband. What you do, she sees herself doing, and you just humiliated her in front of all her maids." David doesn't see that at all, and he comes back with.

II Samuel 6:22:

And I will be more lightly esteemed than this [I am going to keep right on doing it] **and will be humble in my own eyes, but with the maids of whom you have spoken, with them I will be distinguished.**" [You don't give me respect, I'll get it from them. How to make friends and win people. The tragedy is..] **And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.**

When I look at the commentators, I wonder about this sometimes. They all blame God for Michal's barrenness. That's not the context of this passage. David has a tendency to do this sort of thing, and whose fault is that? I think David denied her her connubial rights and cut her off. In II Samuel 20:3, David came back after being chased out of Jerusalem by his own son Absalom. He won the battle. Absalom was killed, but Absalom had violated his ten concubines who were left back in the palace. Remember in those days, as we have seen before, the one who took the concubines took the title deed to the kingdom. The concubines of a dead king, or a prior king, always went to his heir. So for Absalom to make sure that Jerusalem knew, and Israel knew, that he was now king, and he was going to be king, "You better make a choice," he took the ten concubines of his own father. He put a tent up on top of the palace and, in front of all Israel, violated them saying, "They are mine. I am king. And don't you forget it." Now the concubines had nothing to do with it. They didn't volunteer. They were taken.

II Samuel 20:3 says:

Then David came to his house in Jerusalem, and the king took the ten women, the

concubines whom he had left to keep the house, and placed them under guard and provided them with sustenance, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up until the day of their death, living as widows.

David on an ego trip shuts ten women off from their connubial rights as wives instead of forgetting and forgiving and restoring them when they had done nothing wrong. For the rest of their lives the women were secluded and under guard because of the ego of one king.

I don't think God caused Michal to be without children until the day of her death. I think David did. Now it resulted in the same thing. But we shouldn't blame God for our own vindictiveness, our own shortsightedness, our own failure to be a husband. The tragedy of David is that having multiple wives he never really had a one-flesh relationship with anybody. You can only totally give yourself to one person. Once you have done that, there is not much left over. The next person gets a little less of you, and less of you, and less of you. After about 6 or 7 wives you are dealing with very small chunks. When you get ten wives and umpteen concubines, you are giving them pieces so tiny you are not giving them anything at all. The tragedy is that Michal is now #7 instead of #1. David doesn't "sanctify her with the washing of the water of the word" (Ephesians 5:26). He doesn't take her back to the Scriptures and show her, in love, that she has an attitude toward God which is wrong. He doesn't treat her as a woman, as a weaker vessel, governed by her emotions. She is insecure in David's love. She is insecure in her place in the household. She was #1. She was the queen. She was the princess of Saul. Now she is #7.

He doesn't understand at all about her insecurities. I believe to top it all off, he says, "Stay in the house. That's it, kid. You've had it." This is the tragedy of being men. The flesh is always there. David in the beginning ignored the will of God, and I think in the end in this chapter David again ignores the will of God. We forget David was "filled mightily with the Spirit of God." This is the same Spirit of God that wrote I Peter 3:7 and was just as powerful and available to open David's eyes to relations with his wife then as he is now. I know I Peter 3:7 hadn't been written, but the author was indwelling David. I think it was a violation on David's part of what God had intended. I don't think God was mad at Michal. I think God was sorry for her and compassionate toward her. David is the villain. In Scripture the worst sin, as God would categorize sins, is pride. It destroys you. It destroys all those about you. It certainly is a tragedy here.

You asked me how concubines fit into the will of God?

They didn't, as far as his design for marriage, but this was part of the culture of that day, and God does not tear apart a culture in which women are caught up as innocent pawns and cast them aside. However, God particularly told his kings, "You are not to multiply wives." The kings of Israel were to be an example of God. They were not to multiply wives. However, David was trying to build a kingdom that would stretch from the Euphrates to Egypt, the covenant that was promised Abraham, and he did it with multiple wives. Culturally David could justify it, but biblically he could not. Deuteronomy 17 is very specific, "The king shall not multiply wives." Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. Don't blame God for Solomon either.

Next week II Samuel 7.

Father, we just thank you so much for your word which shows us what we really are and doesn't gloss over our sins and yet shows us we are accepted in spite of the fact that we sin. Father, we know that David is going to end up a man after your own heart, we know he has great moments of intimacy with you as the Psalms bring out, and he also have great moments of lack of fellowship with you, but, Father, we thank you most of all that that is not your fault, but it is David's and our fault, that you are always willing to be reconciled, I shouldn't say that, you are always willing to reconcile us to yourself, even when we sin willfully and against light and do dumb things you will bless the house of Obed-edom the Gittite so that we might know what you want fellowship with us, restoration, so, Father, help us not to be blind to you, not to lay trips on you because of our own ego, not to consider you to be like us, inject our personalities into your infinite being. Father, help us to really see you are you are, love, infinite love, one who wants to reconcile the world unto himself and not charging any sin against us. Help us not to charge others sin against them. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name.

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