

## 2nd Samuel Chapter 6- John Karmelich

1. Chapter 6 is what I call, "Lessons on how to worship God".
  - a) Worship in this context, refers to publicly expressing one's gratitude to God for all the good things God has done for us. One of the main reasons we go to church on a regular basis is not to learn or "get something", but to express our love to God.
  - b) One of the things you learn as a Christian is God has "rules" on worshipping Him.
    - i) The "rules" for worshipping God have nothing to do with standing, kneeling, or sitting. Those rules are all about teaching us to watch our behavior.
    - ii) The reason there are these rules is that God not only desires that we worship Him for our sake, but also as a witness to others around us. If we worship God in a way that "turns others off" to God, we are being a bad witness.
    - iii) For example, if your neighbor knows that you are stealing or cheating in some way, and at the same time you go to church regularly, they will lose respect for Christianity. Therefore, our public and private behavior is important and does affect our worship of God.
  - c) Chapter 6 is all about a public parade for God. Technically, it is two separate parades, three months apart, which are combined into one chapter.
    - i) The parades are about David bringing the most holy religious object, "the ark of the covenant" (also called the "ark of God") from its present location to Jerusalem. The parade is organized that gives all the Israelites an opportunity to be a public witness for God and a chance to show their gratitude to God for their lives. That is "worship" in this context.
    - ii) In the first parade, the Israelites transport this ark in a way that is forbidden in the bible. During the parade, a priest gets killed for touching it. He wouldn't have to touch it if the ark was transported the way it was supposed to be transported. This brings the parade to an abrupt ending and everyone leaves in fear.
    - iii) The ark is then left at someone's home. That person then gets blessed tremendously. That blessing tells David that it is ok to move the ark again, providing David does it properly. Then comes parade #2, three months later.
    - iv) The "curse" and the "blessing" surrounding the ark is a reminder of our relationship with God. God demands obedience. There is blessings in our life when we are obedient and curses when we don't.
2. Let's discuss obedience for a moment. My favorite word to describe Christianity is obedience.
  - a) If you believe Jesus is Lord of your life, than act upon it. If you and I are grateful for what Jesus did for us on the cross, we need to do what God commands us of us out of that gratitude. God has rules for the sake of our happiness. The bible is God saying in effect, "I know what's best for your life much better than you ever will. Here's your set of instructions. Now go live them!"
  - b) This chapter is all about obedience. The events themselves are the public worship of God and "appropriate" and "inappropriate" behavior.
3. The last part of this chapter is basically a marital spout between David and one of his wives. She complains that David was worshipping God in an "inappropriate" manner for that of a king. David tells her she's wrong, and we read of that one wife becoming barren after that outburst.
  - a) That lesson also deals with "appropriate" and "inappropriate" behavior in worship. In that case, the style of worship is criticized. If you study your bible, God says very little on worship style (e.g., be it sitting, standing, shouting, etc.)

- b) The wife was embarrassed how David publicly worshipped God. It says a lot more about her relationship with God than it does about David's.
  - c) The lesson of her punishment is to teach us additional things about "appropriate" behavior in worship. The main lesson there is about not being afraid or embarrassed about taking a public stand for God.
  - d) With all of that in mind, let's get this parade started!
4. Chapter 6, Verse 1: David again brought together out of Israel chosen men, thirty thousand in all.  
<sup>2</sup> He and all his men set out from Baalah of Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim that are on the ark.
- a) Let's recap where we last left off:
    - i) Chapters 4 and 5 were about David's ascent to power and his military victories.
    - ii) Chapter 5 ended with the capture of a key hillside within Jerusalem.
      - a) That specific location in Jerusalem was nicknamed "The City of David".
    - iii) At that spot, David had a palace built and this became his central headquarters.
  - b) Now here in Verse 1, notice the word "again".
    - i) This verse is about a nationwide procession being organized. David is calling for everyone of Israel to be gathered together to bring the most holy object in Israel's possession, "the ark of God" from its present location to Jerusalem where David's is setting up the nation's capitol.
    - ii) The word "again" emphasizes the fact that this is not the first time all of Israel was gathered under David. The first time was the ceremony to anoint David king of Israel.
  - c) This verse states there were 30,000 "choice men" (i.e., soldiers) gathered for this parade.
    - i) Again, this parade is not to show off the soldiers, but to bring this ark object from its present location to Jerusalem. The soldiers were there as protection.
  - d) Now let's talk about the ark itself. The ark is a focal point of the parade.
    - i) Way back in Exodus, roughly 500 years earlier, when Moses was given the Ten Commandments, he was also given a detailed set of instructions on how to build a tabernacle as a central worship place for the Israelites. Within this tabernacle were a number of "furniture" pieces. The most important, as it was described first, was the "ark of the covenant". The construction instructions are in Exodus Chapter 25.
    - ii) This was a wood box, lined inside and outside with gold. It had a detachable, all-gold lid called the "mercy seat". Above the mercy seat were two golden angels ("cherubim's") carved and connected to this lids.
    - iii) This box represents the presence of God himself. Within the box was a copy of "The Law" (i.e., the 10 commandments) among other things. Since "The Law" was inside, it represents God's standards for right and wrong and the fact that God judges based on those standards. The lid was called the "mercy seat" as represents God's mercy as He "covers" our sins.
    - iv) In Exodus, this box is called "The ark of the covenant". The word "covenant" is similar to the idea of a contract. This is a two-way contract between the Israelites and God. God's contract/covenant says in effect, "You Israelites keep my laws and be a witness to me to the world. In exchange, I (God) will be your God. I will protect you and bless you. You keep these laws, and then I will bless you. You don't obey me, and then you're in big trouble." ☺
    - v) Here in Samuel the same box is called "The ark of God". It is the same box as Exodus. The box is roughly 500 years old. The gold does not corrode with time.

- e) OK, enough background. ☺ Why is this ceremony so important and why should I know this stuff? Part of the answer is to understand the connection being ruling over Israel and desiring God's presence at the same time.
  - i) Yes David was ruling over Israel. Yes Jerusalem was the government center.
  - ii) David also wanted Jerusalem to be the worship-center location for the Israelites.
    - a) It is a picture of connecting human power with God's power.
  - iii) A nickname for the entire bible is "a tale of two cities". The two cities mentioned the most often in the bible are Jerusalem and Babylon. Jerusalem becomes synonymous with the central point of worship of God. Babylon becomes a nickname of the desire to worship anything other than the true God. In the Book of Revelation, a "New Jerusalem" comes down from heaven (as the old one still has our old sin nature) and Babylon gets destroyed. (Ref. Rev. 21:12, 18:10, 18:21).
  - iv) David wanted to bring the most holy object associated with God, to Jerusalem. David didn't want to be in charge of worship as that was for the priests. This is about connecting the idea of living a God-centered life with God's presence.
  - v) David was to be king over all of Israel. David understood the principal of "without God, we can't". It wasn't that David wanted to be high-priest. It is just that David wanted God's presence "next" to him as David ruled.
  - vi) This is what we should desire as Christians as well. To finish a cliché that I partially stated above, "Without God, we can't. Without us, God won't". God desires to work through people. At the same time we as people need to understand that we need God's power to accomplish anything and everything that we do. Therefore, David's "first order of business" as king is to bring God's presence with him into Jerusalem.

5. Verse 3: They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart <sup>4</sup> with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. <sup>5</sup> David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals.
- a) The ark has not been mentioned since 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel Chapter 14. It was used during the days of Saul as an object of consultation for Saul's decisions.
  - b) The ark was presently located in the "House of Abinadab". This family is of the lineage of the high priests. There the ark remained there for 20 years. (Reference: 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 7:1).
    - i) What happened to the tabernacle the surrounded the house is a bit of a mystery. It may have faded over time, or it may have been destroyed by the various battles the Israelites have faced over the past centuries.
  - c) So here we have the parade-ceremony being organized.
    - i) The ark itself is placed on a cart for transportation purposes. This is wrong and we'll get to that in a moment.
    - ii) The text mentions two priests named Uzzah and Ahio who were of the "House of Abinadab". Their job was to guide the cart. The text specifically mentions that Ahio walked in front of the cart.
    - iii) Verse 5 then mentions that as the ark-on-the cart led the parade, it was followed by the "whole house of Israel". There were also musicians playing and singing as this cart was working its way from its present location to Jerusalem.
  - d) Verses 1-5 are all designed to be background information that leads up to the first key dramatic point in this chapter (Verse 6). The point of these opening verses is to know that a parade was being organized. Try to visualize thousands and thousands of people parading their way across the countryside, lead by this ark and followed by musicians.

- i) Now you would understand why 30,000 soldiers were necessary for protection. With all the Israelites marching together, they would be vulnerable to attack.
  - e) If you just read Verses 1-5 out of context, you would think, “OK, so far so good. David has been winning victories, his enemies have been eliminated. It’s time to thank God for our victories and be united with God’s presence around us.” In that sense, there is nothing wrong with what David was doing. The problem, as stated in my opening them, has to do with obedience. With that, let’s go on to the big turning point of the parade:
- 6. Verse 6: When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. <sup>7</sup> The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God.
  - a) Stop and visualize this parade coming down the road:
    - i) Here are thousands upon thousands of people singing and dancing their way down the road. The parade is being lead by this box object on a cart.
    - ii) We learn in Verse 6 that the cart is being pulled by two oxen.
    - iii) All of a sudden, the oxen stumbled. The ark was about to fall off of the cart. One of the two priests, assigned to guard the cart, then grabs the ark, so it won’t fall off.
    - iv) Everything sounds reasonable so far. Then comes Verse 7: God strikes the priest (Uzzah) dead on the spot for touching the ark.
    - v) Have you ever seen a marching band or an orchestra come to an emergency stop? Have you ever watched a band leader waving frantically for an emergency stop? Some musicians stop instantly and some stop in a matter of moments. The music volume declines rapidly, but not instantly.
    - vi) Imagine this event being told to the people in the back. “Everybody halt. Something happened. One of the two priests guarding the box just struck dead by God”. Everybody stop!”
  - b) Talk about raining on a parade! ☺ This whole, happy procession just came to a screeching halt. I suspect Uzzah died in some dramatic fashion so that everyone knew God had struck him dead as opposed to say, a heart attack. Maybe a lighting bolt or something of a similar dramatic nature.
    - i) In one brief moment, the celebration turned to shock and horror. You get the impression everyone stopped, and in fear, went home. The text coming up says that it was 3 months before David organized another parade to finish this procession to Jerusalem. Imagine how scared the people would be the second time this procession was about to happen.
  - c) OK, onto the big “why” question: Why did God “zap” Uzzah for touching the cart? Why not “zap” David too, since he organized the parade? Why not “zap” the whole crowd?
    - i) Further, it makes you think about all the mistakes David or Saul has made over all of the book(s) of Samuel. Why was no one “zapped” then and why now?
    - ii) This gets back to the idea of obedience.
    - iii) Here’s two quotes about “ark transportation” written about 500 years earlier:
      - a) “After Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy furnishings and all the holy articles (which includes the ark), and when the camp is ready to move, the Kohathites are to come to do the carrying. But they must not touch the holy things or they will die.” (Numbers 4:15a, NIV)
      - b) “But Moses did not give any (carts) to the Kohathites, because they were to carry on their shoulders the holy things, for which they were responsible.” (Numbers 7:9 NIV)

- iv) OK, what's the point? The point was God gave the command to a specific division of the priests called the "Kohathites" instructions on how to transport the ark. It was never to be placed on a cart. It was never to be touched. It was to be carried on men's shoulders via poles.
  - a) When you read how the ark was built, there were four rings on the outside so poles can be inserted. (Reference: Exodus 25:14). The ark was to be carried on poles upon men's shoulders.
  - b) I could deviate here and give a whole sermon on why the ark is only carried upon one's shoulders. This is a word-picture of how God expects us to "carry the burden of being God's witnesses on our shoulders". We are not to "subcontract" our duties before God to others. We must "carry the presence of God upon our shoulders".
- d) There is also symbolism behind the fact that this happened on a threshing floor (Verse 6).
  - i) A threshing floor is a place where wheat (the good part) is separated from the chaff of the wheat (worthless part). By shaking the wheat, the chaff is broken off.
  - ii) The word picture here is that the same way, a threshing floor is used to separate the "good" from the "bad" is the same way this priest is "removed" for disobedience for touching the cart.
- e) When you think about all the sins that have been committed in Samuel so far, God never stopped and "zapped" anyone for their sins. Usually a much worse punishment is for God to let us live with the consequences of those sins so we can see how damaging it is.
  - i) Every once in awhile, you do read of God "zapping" someone on the spot (e.g., see Acts Chapter 5). That person(s) may or may not be in heaven afterwards. The point is that God does this as a public demonstration to everyone else watching that God is serious about some specific law that was broken.
- f) So why is this law so special? This law seems pretty trivial in comparison to the lying, murder, deception and other sins that we've just read in the past few chapters. The priest touched the ark as it was about to fall off the cart. Why kill that priest here and now?
  - i) First of all, it is a reminder that God holds you accountable based on what information you do know or "should" know.
  - ii) God said in the Book of Numbers that if you touched the ark, you will die. If you remember back in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel Chapter 6, the Philistines captured the ark in battle. They returned the ark on a cart. I'm sure the Philistines touched it and examined it. Why weren't they "zapped" back then?
    - a) The answer is the Philistines didn't know any better. God held the priests accountable to know better. God held the Israelites to a higher standard than the Philistines because they should have known better.
  - iii) The guy who died was part of the family of his priests. Part of his duty was to understand God's laws. In this situation, he should have been aware that the ark was not to be transported on a cart.
- g) This leads to the important application of all of this. (Time to pay attention! ☺ )
  - i) Symbolically, we as Christians are nicknamed "priests" before God: "To him (Jesus) who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom (or to be kings) and priests to serve his God and Father – to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen." Revelation 1:5b-6a, NIV)
  - ii) My point here is that a Christian is called to be a "priest". This does not mean we are all to wear black robes and call each other Father. ☺ A priest in the Old Testament was someone who ministered to other believers. A priest was someone who helped intercede between God and man.

- iii) Yes Jesus is our “High Priest”, but we as Christians serve one another by putting other’s needs in front of our own. In that sense, all Christians are priests before God. Knowing that, should give you a whole new perspective when reading the “priestly duties” of the Old Testament!
  - iv) What this means practically is that if we are Christians, then God is going to hold us accountable for what we know.
  - v) One of the “scariest” things Jesus says, is “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” (Luke 12:48 NIV)
    - a) John’s loose translation: The “bad news” of knowing your bible well is that God holds you accountable for that knowledge.
    - b) I’ll even take that a step further and say that we as Americans, who are blessed with finances, good reading skills and information readily available at hand, have no excuse before God on the topic of not knowing better and are being held accountable.
  - vi) So why doesn’t God “zap” Christians when we mess up? Again, it is usually worse punishment to have to live with those sins than being killed on the spot.
    - a) My point here is that we as Christians will be judged based on what information we have about Jesus. The “bad part” of learning your bible is now God holds you accountable for that knowledge.
    - b) So is it better to be naïve on God’s laws of right and wrong? No. The blessings of a close relationship with God and the blessing of knowing your bible far outweigh the risk.
  - vii) Getting back to the text, this priest got “zapped” so we don’t have to. We will be judged in heaven based on our actions, but the bible stories are designed to teach us lesson on how we are act as God’s witnesses to the world.
  - h) OK, I’ve now been rambling for three pages on these two verses. I consider them the most important verses in the chapter. This priest was killed by God as to teach us about our accountability to God based on what we do know and should know.
    - i) Yes that is a scary thought. That is part of what the “fear of God” is all about. Not that we should live in fear of being killed at any moment. What “fear of God” does mean is to understand that we are accountable to God and in the long run, we will not get away with any sin we commit. Be it in heaven or on earth, we will get judged, especially for situation where we are not good witnesses for God.
    - ii) “But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the LORD; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out.” (Deuteronomy 32:23 NIV)
7. Verse 8: Then David was angry because the LORD's wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah.
- a) Verse 9 says why David was angry. I’m sure he felt some responsibility for what happened. I’m sure David felt as king, that somehow, all of this was his fault. Why didn’t God punish David as the head guy? (The answer is about God’s unconditional promise to make David the king and the accountability of the priests to God.)
  - b) David wanted the ark “next to him” in Jerusalem. Now David felt that somehow God didn’t want that happen. David drew the wrong conclusion based on the circumstances.
8. Verse 9: David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" <sup>10</sup> He was not willing to take the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. <sup>11</sup> The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and the LORD blessed him and his entire household.

- a) David was afraid to move the ark another step. You couldn't blame David for this.
  - b) David took the ark to a nearby place. There is a guy named "Obed-Edom the Gittite" who was now in charge of the ark for the next three months.
  - c) Personally, I find this part comical. Imagine David telling Obed-Edom, "Hey Obed old-buddy, listen, I'm afraid to move this thing because people are getting killed by touching it. Do you mind keeping it in your garage until I know what to do about it?" ☺
    - i) Can you imagine how nervous Obed-Edom was keeping this thing around?
    - ii) If I were Obed-Edom, wherever David placed that thing, I would avoid it like the plague and only live at the opposite end of the house.
  - d) Now, after describing how God holds us accountable for what we know, we now read this uplifting statement: "the LORD blessed him (Obed-Edom) and his entire household."
    - i) Here was this "thing" in Obed-Edom's house.
    - ii) All of a sudden Obed-Edom was being blessed. I'm sure his business became wildly successful. He won the lottery. ☺ The government mailed him a large tax refund by mistake. ☺ He was successful at whatever he did.
    - iii) All Obed-Edom knew is that ever since the ark was in his home, it represented the presence of God and Obed-Edom was being blessed by God.
    - iv) You have to wonder if Obed-Edom complained a little about it being taken away. "Hey, David, do you mind me keeping it here a little while longer?" ☺
  - e) OK, what's the point? The point is the blessings of God are "worth" being accountable.
    - i) First of all, it shows that if we are obedient to God, there are blessings. It doesn't necessarily mean you'll be incredible financially successful the moment you give your life to God. What it does mean is that God gives you joy in this life despite whatever circumstances come your way. It means that we are saved with great rewards in heaven. Eternity is a lot longer than our time on earth. We are blessed in ways that are far greater than material blessing.
      - a) "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."  
(Ephesians 1:3 NIV)
9. Verse 12: Now King David was told, "The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God." So David went down and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing.
- a) Verse 11 states the ark remained with Obed-Edom for three months.
  - b) After the "zapping" incident, David was afraid to move the ark. David found out how this Obed-Edom guy was being blessed, and decided it was "ok" to move the ark again.
  - c) This same story is also told in 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles Chapter 13.
    - i) If you read the same story in Chronicles, additional details are given.
    - ii) Further, the order of events of is a little different in Chronicles than they are here in Samuel. For example, the battle with the Philistines, which takes place in Chapter 5 in here in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel, actually takes place in the three-month gap while the ark was in Obed-Edom's house. (See 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles Chapter 14).
    - iii) My point here is to understand that just because the stories are a little out of order, does not mean the writer of Samuel is contradicting the writer of Chronicles. The text never says, "These events happened exactly in this order". The writer of Samuel just wanted to combine the two ark-stories together.
    - iv) When you do read about the moving of the ark in 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles you discover that David made sure the priests figured out the correct, exact way to move the ark, which is to carry it on their shoulders.

- d) Let's get back to my opening topic of obedience and public worship.
    - i) If you had to pick the one book of the bible that deals the most with "how" God is to be worshipped, that would be Leviticus. There is an old joke that reading the book of Leviticus is like reading a manual on how to properly deal with nuclear waste. The instructions for the priests in Leviticus required special clothing, special care is needed in how God is to be worshipped, special instructions are given on how sacrifices are to be prepared, etc. The point is "special care" is needed in the worship of God.
    - ii) In a sense, that is what we are reading here about the moving of the ark. To do so improperly, can be "deadly".
    - iii) On the positive side, worshipping God in a "proper manner" has blessings beyond anything we can do in life. Just ask Obed-Edom.
    - iv) What's the point? God does require specific things of us, but He does turn around and bless us when we are obedient to those things.
    - v) I have to be careful here. This does not mean God can only bless us when we are on our best behavior. It does mean there are blessings in life when we are obedient to God and do specifically what He commands of us.
    - vi) The story of the "ark zapping" and the "ark blessing" are examples of how God can work in our life. There are penalties in life for disobedience to God's command and blessings when we properly do what God asks us to do.
10. Verse 13: When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. <sup>14</sup> David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the LORD with all his might, <sup>15</sup> while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.
- a) What is implied, but not bluntly stated in these verses is that David organized another big parade to take the ark from Obed-Edom's house up to Jerusalem.
  - b) In 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles, we learned that David built a new tabernacle for the ark to be placed in Jerusalem. (Ref. 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 16:1).
  - c) What these verses tell is that this procession was slow. Every time the ark was moved six paces, a bull and calf was sacrificed. Assuming the ark was presently located a good distance from Jerusalem, this would take a long time. I suspect this "six pace" ritual only happened once they were close to the final resting place, but who knows.
    - i) I visualize the guys carrying the ark thinking, "Gee David, can we go more than six paces without having to stop for an animal sacrifice?" ☺
    - ii) Actually, the purpose for the "six pace" rule is that it ties to God's concept of "six days you shall work and rest on the seventh". (Ref.: Exodus 20:9). They were using the model of "six and one" to symbolically show God's pattern for "work".
  - d) The verse says that the ritual included David "dancing before the LORD with all of his might." (The word "LORD" is the translation of the most holy name of God, "Jehovah").
    - i) Gee, I know a lot of churches don't approve of dancing. I wonder how they interpret this verse? ☺
  - e) If you read the same story in 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 13, you learn that David essentially dressed like one of the common folk. He wore a linen robe (Ref.: 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 15:27), which is what the priests wore in doing their priestly duty. The point is David was not dressed like a king, but like some others in the procession.
  - f) As far as the dancing, I don't think David had a big solo dance. ☺ It was probably more like some men were dancing as part of parade, and David joined in.

- g) What we can learn from this should affect how we corporately worship God. Nobody in church should be “above” anyone else. In a sense, a Christian organizational chart has God on top and everyone else in an equal line below that. Someone has to lead the church services, but that doesn’t make the leader any more or less important than the rest of the congregation. The “king” needs to worship God on the same level as the common folk.
- i) In a lot of church services, the pastors go down in the audience during the music time as opposed to being up on the stage. I’ll argue that is “biblical” given what David did during the parade.
- h) Let’s also step back and look at this whole parade for a second:
- i) This is a triumphant moment for the Israelites and one of the highlight moments of the history of the Jewish people. The civil war is over. All of Israel is united under the one king God wanted to be their king.
- ii) For the moment, there is rest and peace from their surrounding enemies.
- iii) The Israelites, lead by King David, did not pat themselves on the back for a job well done. Instead, they wanted to give God the credit. The ark, which is the symbol of the presence of God, was taken to new capitol located in Jerusalem. The idea is the Israelites telling God and the surrounding nations, “Hey, we are God’s representatives. Where we go, He goes, and where He goes, we go! We don’t make a move without Him!”
- iv) That is a model for us. No we don’t carry a box around wherever we go, but we are God’s representatives to the world. This is why our behavior and obedience to God’s commandments are so essential. If we are to be God’s representatives, then we need to do so on God’s terms, and not ours.
- i) Also notice the volume of this parade. The verse mentions trumpets being used and shouts of joy.
- i) This is another example of being a witness for God. It doesn’t mean shouting is appropriate in church. Our focus in church should draw attention to God, and not upon ourselves. This verse is about saying, “We worship God and we’re proud of it. We’re willing to shout for it. We’re proud of our love for God.”
- ii) The sad part about modern Christianity is we get more excited over our favorite sports team than we do over Jesus. We’re willing to stand up and cheer for the team we love, but we won’t have the same level of enthusiasm for Jesus.
- iii) Compare Christian church services to this Israelite parade where they were shouting and blowing trumpets. (I’m guessing Pentecostal churches like this verse. ☺ ) The point is not so much how we should act in church, but about not being afraid to publicly show some enthusiasm for God. It is about not being afraid to publicly express our love and allegiance to God.
- iv) This reminds me of the Walter Martin line that says, “Congratulations, some of you are excellent secret agents for Jesus Christ. You’re neighbors don’t suspect in the least that you are a Christian!” ☺
11. Verse 16: As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart.
- a) And now, for the rest of the chapter, the mood changes. ☺
- b) Just like the first parade came to an abrupt halt when God zapped someone, we’re going to read about one of David’s wives complaining about how David was acting.
- c) You know it’s going to be a bad scene when Michal is not even referred to as David’s wife but only as “daughter of Saul”.

- d) When you read the story of this parade in 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles, there were women out there in the parade as well. My point is Michal could have chosen to be part of the parade.
  - e) OK, why is she complaining?
    - i) It could be that her father Saul would never act like this. She may have felt that it was undignified for a king to act like one of the common folk. You have to wonder if she didn't have a heart for God. She avoided the whole parade and just watched it from the window of the king's palace. I'm also guessing she still had some feelings for her father and how her father's royal line is all gone and now David has taken charge.
    - ii) Remember that David already had a harem of wives before demanding (not asking) Michal to be his wife also. She may have resented the whole lifestyle change she had to do.
  - f) Whatever her reason for being angry, she was in no mood to go to church. ☺ She sat in her room, watched the parade. She let her anger stew and grow toward David. We're going to watch that anger brew in a few verses.
  - g) This is also a reminder that going to church is not about "feelings". There are times when God calls us to collectively worship Him and unless one is physically sick one should put aside emotional feelings and focus on God.
  - h) The mistake Micah made was she thought she was "above all of this" and was too dignified to worship God in some manner other than how she felt God should have been worshipped. We can have our own "Micah moments" where we think we are too dignified to worship God in some specific manner or style. Assuming another manner is "biblical", we do need to be flexible and accept other's style of worship.
  - i) This reminds me of the classic joke of a guy stranded alone on a desert island. When he was rescued, they found three huts. He was then asked, "Why three huts?", The guy answered, "This hut is where I live. The other two are churches. I go to that one. I wouldn't set foot in the other one if you paid me!" ☺
12. Verse 17: They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the LORD. <sup>18</sup> After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD Almighty. <sup>19</sup> Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes.
- a) These verses are the short-version of the actual story. Again, 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles gives us a lot more details. In Chronicles, we have David reciting a poem praising God for this event.
  - b) These verses also mention a lot of food. David provided a parting gift of some food to everyone who attended. This crowd was probably in the thousands at the least and possibly in the millions. Some commentaries discuss the food as the "blessings of fruitfulness" for being obedient to God. "Fruit" is a central part of this food gift.
  - c) In Verse 17, we have the mention of a tent that David made for the ark. Maybe it was a replica of the original tent. It may have been something else. You can study the different references and argue it either way. Next David offered burnt and fellowship offerings.
  - d) This leads into a discussion of offerings. In the five books of Moses, there are a number of "types" of offerings described, mostly in Leviticus. Only two are done by David. One is a "burnt" offering and one is a "fellowship" offering.
    - i) A "burnt" offering is when you offer an animal sacrifice to God and put the whole animal on the fire. It is a way of saying, "God, I am like this animal. All I am belongs to you. All of my life is yours. All I do now is in your hands. I give my "whole" self to you."

- ii) The second type of offering is a “fellowship” offering. This is about “hanging out” with God. It is like saying, “Now that I’ve committed my life to you through the burnt offering, I also want to just be with you and fellow believers. I want to share my life with you and let you lead me.”
  - iii) Both types of sacrifices were offered by David on his own behalf and the people’s behalf. Again, this is a high-moment in the history of Israel. It is a moment of declaration of the people’s commitment to God and a desire to live in obedience.
- e) As I said, this parade is a high point in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel. David will have lots of problems coming up in a few chapters.
- i) Something to learn from 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel is just because you praise God and offer yourself fully to God, does not mean life will be wonderful and perfect from that moment onward. David is still going to have his problems, both internally and externally to deal with.
  - ii) Giving your life to God and regularly worshipping God helps us to deal with our problems. It helps us to have proper perspective about our problems. We are still imperfect people and our problems don’t magically go away when we commit our lives to serving God. The benefit of serving God, (ok, besides the eternal salvation part ☺ ) is that we live a more joyful life. Yes we still have painful moments, but there is an internally joy that goes with us through those moments.
  - iii) Living the Christian life is difficult. Once you make that commitment, you can’t imagine wanting to live any other way.
- f) Meanwhile, here comes Michal. ☺
13. Verse 20: When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!"
- a) Michal is criticizing David for how he acted at the public ceremony. She is complaining how David is not acting like a “proper king” worshipping with the common people.
  - b) You can just hear the sarcastic tone in Michal’s voice as she makes this statement.
  - c) I should also state that David was not naked. The word “disrobing”, is a reference to David taking off his kingly-ropes and putting on the same linens as others in the parade.
  - d) Anybody who has gone to church for a long time has met their share of Michal’s. This is the type of person who complains, “Well, look what their doing in church today. How disgusting! How undignified! Proper Christians would never act like that!”
  - e) I remember back when my wife and I were “church shopping”, we went to a church where everybody raised their hands during the entire music portion of the service. I looked at my wife and said, “Well, when in Rome...” and then raised my hands and started singing.
  - f) Sometimes, as a Christian, you have to “go with the flow”. Assuming the church service isn’t doing anything “unbiblical”, one has to be accepting of different styles of worship.
14. Verse 21: David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel--I will celebrate before the LORD. <sup>22</sup> I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor."
- a) Now the martial spout goes into full action. ☺ David gets in his own “shot” by stating how God choose David instead of “her father” Saul.

- b) David's next shot is, "I will become even more undignified than this".
    - i) John's translation, "You want to see undignified? I'll show you undignified! You have no idea what I can do when I really want to be undignified! I'll be so undignified, I'll humiliate myself". Those slave girls who you thought were ogling over my dancing? They'll hold me in honor if you don't!" (Can't you just picture a guy saying this? ☺)
  - c) OK, what's the purpose of all of this, other than us watching a good fight?
    - i) For starters, never be intimidated to show public worship to God just because someone around you thinks it is "undignified" or "beneath you".
    - ii) I'm the kind of person who reads my bible in public places. You would be surprised at the looks I get as if I'm reading pornography! My point is not be afraid to be bold for God just because someone around you is embarrassed.
    - iii) The balance of course, is not act in a way that draws attention to yourself in public worship. The great news for most Americans is that we live in a world with lots of church choices. If you choose to attend a church where you want to express your devotion to God in an outwardly emotional way, the options are there, and you blend in with the crowd.
  - d) I was thinking about the last line David said, "But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor."
    - i) I find that people who love the Lord also love other believers. When I see people get excited for Jesus, it gets me excited. You can't help but have respect for those who we share a common bond. That bond is our allegiance to Christ and our gratitude for what He has done for us. Even when I see people whose style of worship is different than mine, I still smile in respect. I believe that's what David meant by the "slave girls holding me in honor".
15. Verse 23: And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.
- a) This is the heavy verse of the chapter. It could mean that David without sex from her and just picked other women of the "harem". It could mean that she was just unable to get pregnant for the rest of her life.
  - b) It seems that this punishment is worse than the crime. The sin was not caring more about how one looks than giving glory to God. You would think that after awhile, David would have forgotten about it or that God would give some "short-term" punishment.
  - c) The word-pictures of this punishment has a number of reasons:
    - i) God intended to end the royal lineage of Saul. One of the ways was to make Michal barren.
    - ii) Second, and more importantly, it is a picture of how not to have a productive Christian life. Being "barren" is the opposite of being "productive". God wants us to be a living witness for him. God wants us to make a difference for Him. That is what Jesus parable of the "ten talents, five talents and one talent" is all about. (Reference: Matthew 25).
    - iii) The secret to having a productive life for God is to stick close to Him and let Him work through you. If you are too dignified or embarrassed to publicly worship God, you and I will have an unfruitful and barren life like Michal.
    - iv) I believe God allowed this curse on Michal to show an example of those who give lip-service to believing in God, but when it comes to worship-time, they find some excuse to not participate. In a sense, you become barren out of your own free will to choose to ignore God.
  - d) OK, on that guilt-ridden note, we wrap up Chapter 6. ☺

- e) The next lesson on Chapter 7, I consider the most important in all of Samuel. The first sentence of the New Testament has a reference to Chapter 7. More in the next lesson!
16. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, Help us to have a bold relationship toward you. Our desire is to live a life pleasing to You. That comes from sticking close to You and not trying to do things by our own efforts. Help us to live a life obedient to your Word and not try to glorify You in a haphazard way that is against Your Will. Let the Ark of the Covenant be a reminder to us that you are serious about being worshipped, how to be worshipped, and at the same time knowing that you desire to bless us for our obedience. Guide as we live for You. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.