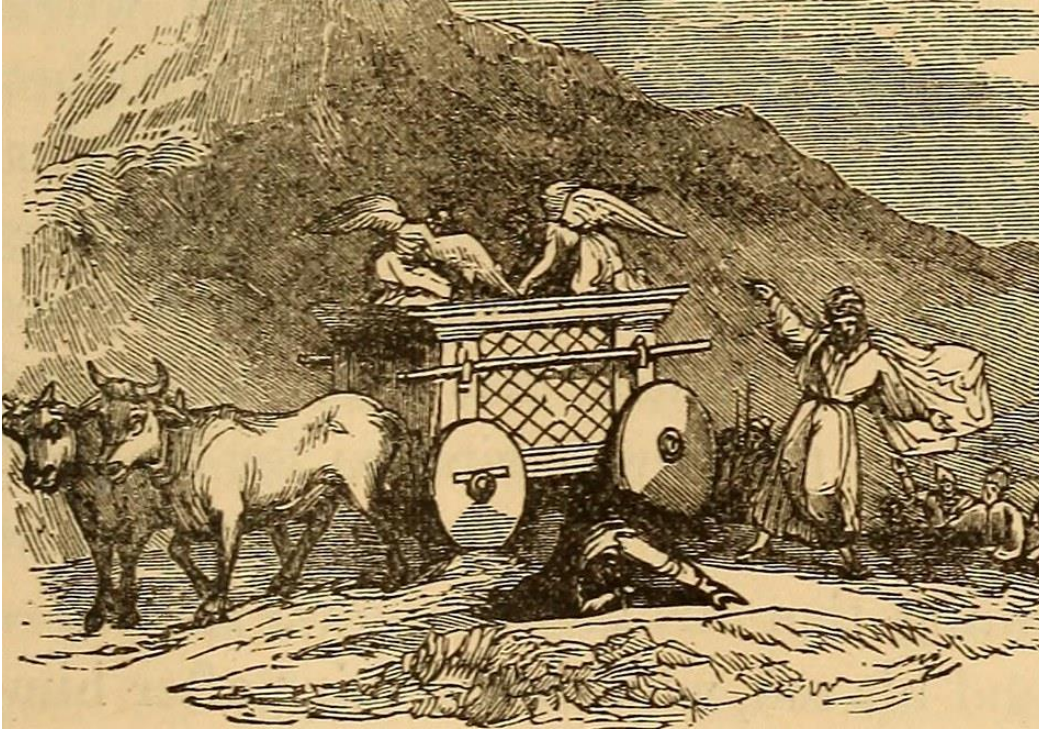


## Exalting God in Worship (2 Samuel 6)

Worship acceptable and unacceptable to God receive dramatic exposure in King David's failure and success in bringing up the ark to Jerusalem. A word from God for today.



1. Exalting self in worship brings humiliation. David's first effort to bring up the ark brought humiliation. He and all the people had plenty of enthusiasm, but not according to God's law. A new cart sounded like a great idea. But God defines the way of his worship. Only the Levites were to carry the ark, and with the poles in the rings permanently attached to the ark, so no one could defile the holiness of God in worship.
2. The consequences of exalting self in worship meant death for Uzzah. In one sense, Uzzah was a victim. But in another sense, he was a participant. The same thing happened to good king Uzziah. With a self-exalting heart lifted up in pride, he violated God's holiness in worship. God struck him with leprosy in the forehead, and he died a leper in a separate house (2 Chronicles 26:16-21). God's holiness that brought death on Uzzah did not make David happy. But by grace David learned his lesson.
3. Does God maintain his law of holiness today? Yes. Many people in Corinth died for wrongly celebrating the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:27-30). Our God is the same, yesterday, today and forever (Malachi 3:6; Psalm 102:27; Numbers 23:19; Hebrews 13:8).
4. Exalting God in worship brings glory - glory to God, and glory to his people. The next time, they brought up the ark the right way (1 Chronicles 15:25, 26; c.f. Deuteronomy 10:8). The whole nation rejoiced.
5. See the humility of our God in the anticlimax of this procession? David set the ark - *in the tent!* The king had built a palace for himself, which was appropriate for his position as king. But God lived in a tent. Yet, the whole nation could rejoice when they worshiped according to God's way.

6. How many false ways do people worship God today? Plenty of rejoicing, but no glory for God. In the end, worship that is not according to the Scripture, will bring shame and death, rather than joy and life.
7. A second critical aspect of right worship concerns the heart of the worshiper. Worship must not only be right in its outward form. It must be right in its heart-attitude. David was dancing before the Lord as they brought up the ark. But his royal robes got in the way. He was dancing with so much enthusiasm that he could not contain himself. He stripped down to the waist. He exposed himself to the crowd.
8. Maintaining personal dignity in worship is not the most important thing. The most important thing is the heart.
9. Consider Michal, the wife of David. She stayed at home that day. Why wasn't she at church? Why was she looking out the window as a spectator of worship? Maybe she just decided it would be easier to "stay at home" and "watch the worship service on television." Such a practice may be sometimes necessary, as in the days of Covid-19. But be sure you haven't fallen into a bad habit. We are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together merely as a matter of convenience.
10. David comes home with good intentions. Full of the spirit of worship, he desires to bless his family. But before he gets to the door, Michal comes out to meet him. Her remark drools with sarcasm. "How my lord has honored himself today. How the king of Israel has distinguished himself, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants. Any vulgar fellow would do something exactly like that" (2 Samuel 6:20).
11. Who is Michal? She is the daughter of a king, the daughter of Saul, Israel's first king. She has her royal dignity to maintain. She has lived her whole life in a palace. She has had servants surrounding her. She has treated others as though they were too low for her to associate with. Certainly she was not ever to stoop to the level of the commoner in her worship of God. Her dignity has been insulted by her husband's behavior. These slave girls, they are not even the servants of the king. They are the servants of his servants. They are the lowest caste of society. David has stripped himself down, removed all his dignity as king. In so doing, he has humiliated her.
12. David's response to Michal seems to be a little out of character. At first reading, it seems as though he is exalting himself. "It was before the Lord, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house." But the emphasis of David's statement is on the **Lord** who chose him. David is simply recognizing that it was the Lord who made him king rather than a son of Saul.
13. So David responds by saying "I will celebrate before the Lord, who has chosen me. I will become even more undignified than this. I will be humiliated in my own eyes." He brings himself down to the lowest point that he may give the greatest glory to God.
14. But at the same time, David recognizes that he will receive glory from these slave girls. They will join with him as they see his sincerity in his worship of God. They will join with him in pure worship. By that means, God will receive greater glory.
15. At David's first effort to bring up the ark, death was the result. He did it the wrong way. He misled God's people. Uzzah followed his lead, and by violating the holiness of God, he was struck dead.
16. Michal also experiences a death. Because of her dishonoring God in worship, she had no children until the day of her death. She had a dead womb as a judgment of God.
17. Leaders in worship, teaching and ruling elders of Christ's church, be very careful. Two elements are necessary for the proper worship of God.
18. First, true worship of God must be according to his Word as recorded in the Scriptures. No deviation from God's precepts should be allowed.

19. Secondly, not just the outer form, but the inner heart must be the focus of true worship. Michal despised true worship in her heart, and she suffered the consequences. Uzzah failed to recognize the importance of the outer form of true worship, and he suffered death. The Corinthians abused the Lord's Supper, and many of them died, while others got sick (1 Corinthians 11:30).

20. God's purpose in worship is for the worshiper to glorify him. But in giving glory to God, the worshiper himself will ultimately receive glory from God (John 17:22; 2 Corinthians 3:18). Certainly no human being deserves such glory. But that is one of the great gifts of God's grace: glory to those who glorify him in worship.