

GATECITY CHURCH
CARRY THE ARK, PT. 4
SEPTEMBER 15TH, 2024 – BILLY HUMPHREY

I. A Prophetic Parable

- A. As I was sitting in the prayer room on June 24th, 2024, I closed my eyes to engage with the Lord, and in a few moments, I began to think about the details of the day when David brought the ark from Obed-Edom's house.
- B. I sensed the spirit of revelation on my heart as I began to see David bringing the ark from Obed-Edom's house as a parable for the current moment of the House of Prayer movement.
- C. We believe the House of Prayer movement is currently in a pivot – moving from the House of Prayer existing outside the local Church to being carried by the local Church. We believe this is the prescribed order the Lord has for His House of Prayer.

II. Setting the Context

- A. The ark had been lost since the days of Eli and had been out of the hands of Israel for about a century.
- B. The Philistines had experienced the judgments of God when the ark was in their possession, and ultimately sent it away on a cart led by cattle. The cattle brought it directly to Israel, in Beth Shemesh (1 Samuel 6:14). The men of Beth Shemesh sent the ark to rest at Kiriath Jearim, a city on the border of Judah.
- C. There, in Kiriath Jearim, the ark stayed at a man named Abinadab's home (1 Samuel 7:1). His son Eleazar was appointed to look after the ark. It stayed there until David became king of Israel and decided to bring it back to Jerusalem.
- D. The very first thing David did when he was installed as king over all Israel was to drive the Jebusites out of Mt. Zion (2 Samuel 5:6-8). It is clear that David had a plan for Mount Zion. He began to build all around it and fortify it. Zion became known as the City of David (2 Samuel 5:9-10).
- E. As soon as the Philistines heard that David had been exalted as King over all Israel, they gathered in the Valley of Rephaim (Valley of Giants), to the Southwest of Jerusalem, to make war against David and thwart his reign.
- F. David inquired of the Lord as to how he should direct the armies of Israel, and the Lord instructed him on how to defeat the Philistines. Though David was about to enter his "promised land," it was essential for him to follow the Lord's leadership and not to take matters into his own hands.

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- G. With the enemies of Israel on the run, David now turned his attention to bringing the ark back to Israel and setting up the tabernacle of David.

III. Seeking the Ark

1 Chronicles 13:1-4 – “¹ Then David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. ² And David said to all the assembly of Israel, ‘If it seems good to you, and if it is of the LORD our God, let us send out to our brethren everywhere who are left in all the land of Israel, and with them to the priests and Levites who are in their cities and their common-lands, that they may gather together to us; ³ and let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we have not inquired at it since the days of Saul.’ ⁴ Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.”

A. In David’s first attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem, he gathered 30,000 choice men of Israel. They played music with all kinds of instruments, tambourines, and cymbals before the Lord. This was an incredible event that would signal a note of certain victory for decades to come. The ark of the covenant, God’s throne on the earth, would be in Israel once again.

B. There was a fatal flaw in David’s plan to bring up the ark. Instead of carrying it as the law prescribed, on the shoulders of the priests, David placed the ark on a new cart driven by oxen. This was the same method the Philistines used to transport the ark. Instead of consulting the Lord and following the Lord’s prescribed method to carry the ark, David consulted men (1 Chronicles 13:1) and was led by the arm of the flesh. David had the right idea, but he was bringing it about the wrong way.

C. When the oxen stumbled, Uzzah reached out to steady it to keep it from falling to the ground. When he did, the Lord struck Uzzah, and he died.

1. Uzzah’s name means *strength*.

2. The new cart speaks of man’s ways, driven by oxen, representing the strength of the flesh.

3. It was as if God was striking the strength of the flesh and man’s ability to say: “If you’re really going to take this seriously, it has to be My will, My way.”

D. Can you imagine the shock of the entire company as Uzzah’s body lay lifeless on the ground? What had been an inspired moment now ended in unthinkable tragedy. Can you imagine the disillusionment felt by the entire nation in this moment? What went wrong? Why did the Lord not want the ark to come back to Jerusalem?

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IV. A Second Attempt

- A. They took the ark and dropped it at the closest place, a man named Obed-Edom's house. It's interesting to note that Obed-Edom was a Gittite, he was likely a Gentile from Gath, a leading city of the Philistines.
- B. After three months, David heard that Obed-Edom's house was blessed. When David heard about how Obed-Edom's house was blessed by the presence of the Lord because of the ark, he went back to learn the proper way to carry the ark, and found out it must be carried by the Levites.
- C. Can you imagine the way the nation felt about this second attempt? What a risk to approach carrying the ark the second time. They probably thought: "Someone died last time. How are we going to move forward now?"

1 Chronicles 15:13 – "For because you *did* not *do it* the first *time*, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order."

- 1. In the second attempt, David humbled himself. Although before he got angry with the Lord, now his desire for God overcame his own pride and he went to the Scriptures to learn the proper instructions on how to deal with the ark. David gathered the whole nation once again and sanctified the Levites, appointing them to carry the ark along with the whole house of Israel.

2 Samuel 6:15 – "So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet."

- 2. He did this with great care and humility. He got the Levites to carry it on their shoulders as it was prescribed in the law (1 Chronicles 15:15).
- 3. In this second attempt, the right idea done God's way, the whole nation brought the ark up to Jerusalem and saw the glory restored to Israel.

V. Important Takeaways

- A. As soon as David began his plan to build Zion in order to bring back the ark, the enemy attacked. When you are standing at the fulfillment of promises, the enemy often tries to thwart the finality.
- B. Once David got the breakthrough against the external enemies, he had to get the breakthrough from the internal issues. His own anger inspired by pride had to be dealt with so he could humble himself and do the Lord's will, the Lord's way.

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- C. God's will cannot be accomplished according to man's strength and man's order. It must be according to God's order and by His grace.
 - 1. Pursuing God's ends according to man's means will not bring about God's will.
 - 2. Ignoring God's prescriptions will never ultimately bring God's power.
 - 3. Following the ways of the flesh will always give you the outcomes of the flesh - death. Following the ways of the Spirit will always give you the outcomes of the Spirit – life.
 - 4. David had the right vision and the right passion, but he had the wrong method, and it was disastrous. God's will must be accomplished God's way.
 - 5. Carrying God's glory in an unworthy manner, ignoring the Lord's order, will only yield destructive results. You can have the right plan, but it will be destructive if it is done in the flesh.
 - 6. David tried to carry the ark back to Jerusalem via fleshly means. He used oxen and a new cart, and it cost him and all Israel greatly.
- D. God was never opposed to the idea of carrying the ark, even though it seemed like He was. Instead, He was opposing the order and the fleshly way that things were being done.
- E. God longs to dwell in the midst of His people, but He is absolutely committed to make sure that it is not accomplished by human strength, but by His grace, empowering us in our human weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).
- F. Through great disillusionment and trial, the Lord had David rally the nation a second time to complete the dream God had for a dwelling place to be established for His glory.
- G. Though there has been great disillusionment in the House of Prayer movement and in some sectors of the Church regarding the ministry of night and day prayer, we believe that it is still God's desire. Therefore, we are calling the Church to carry the ark together. This is the moment of greatest need in the Church and in our nation, and we must respond to Jesus' desire and be His House of Prayer.