

LESSON 6

Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem

2 Samuel 6

When they came to Nacon's threshing floor, Uzzah reached out to the ark of God and took hold of it because the oxen had stumbled. Then the Lord's anger burned against Uzzah, and God struck him dead on the spot for his irreverence, and he died there next to the ark of God. David was angry because of the Lord's outburst against Uzzah, so he named that place Outburst Against Uzzah, as it is today. David feared the Lord that day and said, "How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?" So he was not willing to bring the ark of the Lord to the city of David; instead, he diverted it to the house of Obed-edom of Gath. The ark of the Lord remained in his house three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and his whole family, 2 Samuel 6:6-11.

Class Overview: 2 Samuel 6 describes the moving of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, a moment that defined David's reign and Israel's worship. The first attempt ended in tragedy when Uzzah died because the ark was handled carelessly. The second attempt succeeded when David and the Levites followed God's commands with reverence and joy. The entire city celebrated as God's presence returned to the heart of the nation. David's humility in worship contrasted sharply with Michal's pride and contempt. Through obedience, humility, and rejoicing, David demonstrated how God's people should approach their holy King. This chapter reminds us that worship must be both reverent and joyful, rooted in obedience, and focused on honoring the presence of God above all else.

Class Objectives:

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Summarize the events of 2 Samuel 6 and explain the significance of the ark's arrival in Jerusalem.
2. Describe why the first attempt to move the ark failed and what changed in the second.
3. Recognize the connection between obedience, reverence, and true worship.
4. Contrast David's humility with Michal's pride and explain what each reveals about the heart.
5. Apply principles of worship that combine obedience, reverence, and joyful devotion to God.

Introduction

After uniting the kingdom and conquering Jerusalem, David's first act was spiritual. He wanted to bring the ark of the covenant, the symbol of God's presence, to his new capital. For David, this wasn't just about national pride; it was about honoring the Lord who had brought him this far.

The ark symbolized God's throne among His people. It was the most sacred object in Israel's worship, serving as a reminder of His covenant, His power, and His holiness. However, for years it had been neglected, left unseen since the days of Saul. David aimed to restore it to its rightful place at the heart of the nation's life.

This chapter shares the story of two processions: one that ended in tragedy and one that ended in joy. The first failed because David and the people acted without fully obeying God's instructions. The second succeeded because they followed God's way. Throughout, we learn lessons about reverence, worship, and the risks of pride.

When the ark finally entered Jerusalem, the city erupted in celebration. David danced before the Lord with all his might. But not everyone shared his joy. His wife Michal, Saul's daughter, looked down on him with contempt, showing how pride and self-importance can blind us to the beauty of genuine worship. 2 Samuel 6 reminds us that God must be honored not only in heart but also in action. Our worship must reflect both joyful praise and reverent obedience. When God's people approach Him rightly, His presence brings blessing.

The First Attempt and Uzzah's Death (6:1-11)

David gathered thirty thousand men to bring the ark from the house of Abinadab in Baale-judah (also called Kiriath-jearim). The mood was joyful: music, singing, and celebration filled the air. But something important was wrong. The ark was placed on a **new cart**, pulled by oxen, instead of being carried on poles by the Levites as God had commanded in the Law (Numbers 4:15; Deuteronomy 10:8).

When the oxen stumbled, Uzzah reached out to steady the ark, and he immediately died. The celebration stopped. Scripture says, *The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah, and God struck him dead on the spot for his irreverence.* David was both angry and afraid. He said, *How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?*

This moment is shocking but deeply instructive. Uzzah's intentions may have been good, but his action violated God's clear command. The ark was holy. It represented the very presence of God. No one was to touch it. The tragedy showed that good motives can never excuse disobedience. David halted the procession and left the ark at the home of Obed-edom. It stayed there three months, and the Lord blessed that household. This showed that the problem wasn't with the ark, it was with how it was handled. God's holiness demands reverence and obedience.

The lesson is timeless: worship must always be done God's way. Sincerity is essential, but it can't replace obedience. Proper reverence recognizes that God is both loving and holy, and that His instructions are never optional.

The Ark at Obed-edom's House (6:10-11)

After Uzzah's death, David's joy turned to fear. He no longer felt worthy to bring the ark into Jerusalem. So he left it in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, a man whose name will forever be linked to reverence and blessing. The ark remained there for three months, and the text says, *The Lord blessed Obed-edom and his whole household.* What a contrast to the tragedy that had just occurred! The same ark that brought death to Uzzah now brought abundant blessing to Obed-edom. The difference was not the object itself but the attitude and obedience of the people around it. This moment taught David something vital: God's presence is not to be feared in the wrong way. His holiness is not meant to drive

us from Him, but to draw us to approach Him rightly. When we honor His presence and obey His will, His blessings overflow.

The blessing at Obed-edom's house reminded David that the problem was not with God's commands but with Israel's carelessness. It gave him time to reflect, to study the Law, and to prepare to bring the ark to Jerusalem the right way. We can welcome God's presence into our homes and lives with humility. When we live with respect for His word, His presence brings peace, order, and joy.

The Second Procession of Joy (6:12-15)

News reached David that *the Lord had blessed Obed-edom's house and everything he had because of the ark of God*. This gave David courage to try again; but this time, he would do it the right way.

The Levites were called to carry the ark on their shoulders with the poles, just as the Law commanded (1 Chronicles 15:13-15). Every step now reflected obedience. After the carriers had taken six steps, David offered sacrifices; a visible sign that this procession would be guided by reverence, not presumption.

The atmosphere was filled with joy. David danced before the Lord "with all his might," wearing a linen ephod, the simple garment of a priest, not the royal robes of a king. He humbled himself before God, leading the nation not as a ruler showing off his power, but as a worshiper rejoicing in God's presence. The ark was brought into the city with shouting, trumpets, and singing. The people celebrated, and David's heart overflowed with gratitude. This was more than a parade; it was a declaration that God was once again at the center of the nation.

What a difference from the first attempt! Obedience turned fear into joy, and reverence turned ritual into worship. God's holiness was honored, and His presence filled the city with blessing. The lesson is clear: authentic worship joins obedience and joy. When God's people follow His word with sincere hearts, their worship becomes both reverent and alive.

Michal's Contempt and God's Judgment (6:16-23)

As the ark entered Jerusalem, the city was filled with music, shouts, and celebration. David led the procession, dancing before the Lord with all his strength. It was one of the greatest spiritual moments in Israel's history, a day of joy, worship, and national unity.

But not everyone rejoiced. Michal, David's wife and Saul's daughter, looked out the window and *despised him in her heart*. She saw her husband, the king, dressed and dancing publicly, and found it shameful. Later, she confronted him, saying sarcastically, *How the king of Israel honored himself today — exposing himself in the sight of servant girls!* Michal's attitude revealed pride and spiritual blindness. She valued dignity and appearances more than humility and devotion. Her heart was still shaped by Saul's way of thinking, concerned with image, not with worship.

David's reply was firm: *It was before the Lord, who chose me rather than your father... I will celebrate before the Lord. I will become even more undignified than this.* David was not performing for people; he was worshiping God. He didn't care about social status or reputation. His heart was focused on the Lord.

The chapter closes with a sobering statement: *And Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child to the day of her death.* Her contempt led to isolation and barrenness, a physical and spiritual picture of what pride produces. Michal reminds us that worship is about God, not about us. When pride and criticism replace reverence and joy, the result is spiritual emptiness. God seeks worshipers who come before Him with humility, sincerity, and gratitude.

Practical Application

1. Worship must be grounded in obedience.

The first procession failed not because the people lacked emotion, but because they ignored God's word. Joyful worship is meaningless if it's not joined with reverence and obedience. True worshipers do what God says — and rejoice as they do it.

2. Reverence and joy belong together.

Many separate these two, but both are essential. The ark's second journey shows that when God is honored properly, joy overflows. Reverence without joy becomes cold; joy without reverence becomes reckless. The right balance brings blessing.

3. God's presence brings either blessing or judgment.

Uzzah's death and Obed-edom's blessing show two sides of the same truth: God is holy. His presence cannot be treated casually, but those who honor Him find favor. How we approach Him determines what we receive.

4. Worship flows from humility.

David laid aside his royal dignity and worshiped as a servant. Michal valued pride over praise — and her heart became barren. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Sincere worship forgets self and exalts the Lord.

5. Leaders set the tone for worship.

David's example led the people in obedience and celebration. He didn't delegate worship — he participated in it. Godly leaders today still influence others most when they model wholehearted devotion.

Conclusion

2 Samuel 6 is one of the most meaningful chapters in David's story. It begins with tragedy and ends in triumph, showing that God's holiness and His blessing are inseparable. The first attempt to move the ark failed because David and the people acted carelessly. The second succeeded because they obeyed God's word.

When the ark finally entered Jerusalem, the city rejoiced, and David led the way in worship. His dance before the Lord wasn't about performance; it was about gratitude. God's presence was back at the center of Israel's life, and David's heart overflowed.

But Michal's scorn reminds us that not everyone values pure worship. Pride and criticism rob the heart of joy. David's humility brought blessing; Michal's pride brought barrenness. The message of 2 Samuel 6

is clear: God must be approached with both reverence and joy. When our hearts and actions align with His will, His presence brings peace and blessing. But when we treat Him casually or stand in judgment over others' worship, we lose what matters most: closeness to Him.

For Discussion

1. What lessons do we learn from the first failed attempt to move the ark?

2. How did Obed-edom's experience reveal God's holiness and goodness?

3. Why did David's second attempt succeed where the first failed?

4. What does David's humility in worship teach us about our own approach to God?

5. How can pride, like Michal's, rob us of spiritual joy and blessing?

6. What balance should exist between reverence and joy in worship today?
