



FEED MY SHEEP

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How to Approach the Ark

In the last issue, we discussed the possibility that the Ark of the Covenant carried a very high electrical charge which may have caused the death of Uzzah when he touched it. We then flashed back to the time of the death of Eli when the Philistines defeated Israel and captured the Ark. They took it to one of their cities, named Ashdod, and placed it in the temple of their god, Dagon. But remember, Yahweh will deal with the heathen differently. The Philistines realize they've got trouble when in the morning they go in and find their dog-gone Dagon fallen on his face in front of Yahweh, the Ark. (See 1 Samuel 5:1-5.) So they set him back up. This is symptomatic of false gods. False gods always need propping up. How are they propped up?By the works of man, of course.

Then Yahweh began causing terrible plagues and destruction to come upon the people of Ashdod, so they sent the Ark to one of the other cities of the Philistines; namely, to Gath where Goliath came from later. Many men there got tumors in their private parts and died very quickly. Hmm. Does the widespread occurrence today of prostate, ovarian, colon and rectal cancer have any spiritual meaning? Others of Gath survived the tumors. So they sent the Ark to the city of Ekron, whose people did not want it either. They said: "Hey, what are trying to do, kill us all? Take that thing away from here!" By chapter six, the Philistine priests and wise guys got together to figure out what to do with the Ark. The plan settled on was to build a new cart and hitch up two cows to it; specifically, two cows which had just given birth, to set the Ark upon it and set it out on the road and see where they go. If the two cows were to do something so unnatural as to leave their suckling calves behind and head towards Israel, then the Philistines

would know that this was God's doing.

I get a chuckle out of this verse where it says that in the event the cows don't head towards Israel territory, then the Philistines said we'll just have to chalk it up to chance—in other words, coincidence. It just happened. Nothing or nobody caused these plagues to happen. It was just by chance.

1 Samuel 6:9 And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, then he [YHWH] hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: it was a chance that happened to us.

Readers who are new to this ministry might not understand why I would love that so much. It is because if there is one thing that underlies all we teach, it is the sovereignty of God, meaning that there is no such thing as chance or coincidence. Everything happens because God planned it: the good, the bad and the ugly—but all for His good purposes in the end. So—as *chance* would have it (chuckle)—the cows head straight for the town of Bethshemesh in Israel. Incidentally, Bethshemesh means the "House of the Rising Sun," which is where The Animals bring the Ark, get it? (A reference to the 1960s British rock group whose most famous hit was a song by that name.)

The men of Bethshemesh are ecstatic as they see the Ark and so they drop what they are doing as the cart and the Ark came to rest. Significantly, what they were doing was reaping the *wheat* harvest—which again associates *this* incident with Pentecost and the

church age. Some Levites are there to properly handle the Ark, but in verse 19 tragedy strikes the men of the House of the Rising Sun. Their curiosity got the best of them and they evidently lifted the lid of the Ark and looked inside and it says that 50,000 and three score and ten men were killed. In the Bible, idolatry is associated with spiritual adultery and *harlotry*. Is it just a coincidence then that the song “House of the Rising Sun” was a reference to a New Orleans *whore house*?

The deaths of the Bethshemeshites again shows that the Ark must be considered Most Holy. You don’t touch it, let alone lift the lid and look inside. It is Most Holy because that is where it belongs—in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle. However, the Ark will now be separated from the Tabernacle for perhaps as long as 70 years.

The men of Bethshemesh didn’t want the Ark in their town after all those deaths, so they sent word to the men of Kirjathjearim to come get it and take it to their town up high on the hill, which they did. And in 1 Samuel 7, verse 2, it says that it was there 20 years. That must mean that it was there 20 years before the next incident recorded here, not 20 years total. Because we know that it was 20 years there before Saul came to the throne, plus 40 years of his reign, plus anywhere from one to ten years into the reign of David before he brought it to Jerusalem. So it was in Kirjathjearim anywhere from 60-70 years.

Now with all this background, we see that the Israelites had for the most part forgotten about how to handle the Ark, how to treat it with utmost reverence and respect. Thus, when David assigned men to bring it to Jerusalem, I don’t know if David micromanaged the whole deal and personally specified building a cart for it, or if one of his underlings was assigned the task. And if so, perhaps he was scratching his head and asked the very old men who were just boys when it had come to their town 60 years before. And they said “Well, as I recall, it was transported on a new cart, with two milk cows pulling it.” In any event, all the deaths of the Philistines and the men of Bethshemesh and the tragic death of Uzzah all remind me of the incident of the strange fire offered by the sons of Aaron.

Leviticus 10:1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and of-

fered strange fire before YHWH, which he commanded them not.

2 And there went out fire from YHWH, and devoured them, and they died before YHWH.

And now here is the important thing to remember in all these events.

3 Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that YHWH spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

To be sanctified means to be set apart. In other words, there are certain rules and regulations, certain statutes for approaching near to the presence of the Universal Creator and when one does not comply with those rules—whether by ignorance or by presumption—as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, it made no difference; the penalty was quick; it was severe and it was death. Over time, David figured out what the problem had been because we read in...

1 Chronicles 15:1 And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent.

Therefore, we see that the Ark and the Tabernacle will be coming back together in the reign of David.

2 Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath YHWH chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever.

3 And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of YHWH unto his place, which he had prepared for it.

4 And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites:

12 And said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of YHWH God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it.

13 For because ye *did it* not at the first, Yahweh our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.

14 So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of YHWH God of Israel.

15 And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of YHWH.

Meanwhile, back in 2 Samuel 6:11, messengers were coming to David and telling him that God was blessing the socks off of this Obedom guy whose property served as the resting place for the Ark.

2 Samuel 6: 11 And the ark of Yahweh continued in the house of Obedom the Gittite three months: and Yahweh blessed Obedom, and all his household.

Obedom means “servant of Edom.” That does not mean he *was* an Edomite. Perhaps his ancestor had been in servitude to an Edomite, but genealogically, Obedom was almost certainly a Levite, being from Gathrimmon, which was a Levitical city. There is more evidence than that, however, that Obedom was a Levite. We see in 1 Chronicles 15:16 that concomitant with setting up the Ark in Jerusalem, David saw to it that proper worship was reestablished.

1 Chronicles 15:16 And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.

17 So the Levites appointed ...18... Obedom. [i.e., a man from their own tribe.]

2 Samuel 6:12 And it was told king David, saying, YHWH hath blessed the house of Obedom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obedom into the city of David with gladness.

14 And David danced before YHWH with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.

The ephod was generally, but not exclusively, a garment of the priests. Samuel the prophet was of the tribe of Ephraim, but he was girded in an ephod as a child at the feet of Eli. Now here David was dressed like a priest, yet no one appears to have been offended by this. Nor is there any indication that God was displeased with it either, as though David were *usurping the role of the priest*. But contrast this with Saul.

We recall way back at the beginning of Saul’s reign, however, that when Samuel told Saul to wait seven days for him, and then Samuel didn’t show up “on time” (according to Saul), that Saul took it upon himself to perform the sacrifice. (1 Samuel 13:9) When Samuel arrived, he chastised Saul quite severely. You see, Saul acted the part of the priest out of fear and presumption and even pride—pride that he could do the job, they need not wait on the prophet. Whereas with David—what a difference attitude, motive and intent makes! David is filled with joy and praise for God.

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

16 And as the ark of Yahweh came into the city of David, Michal Saul’s daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before Yahweh; and she despised him in her heart.

She loved David for his good looks, his military daring-do, his prowess, his courage, perhaps for his ability to command men, but when he demonstrated here his humility by being “just one of the folks,” and by not setting himself *above* the ordinary people in the festivities and dancing which accompanied the ark, Michal had her nose stuck way up in the air. This type of behavior was not befitting a king, she sniffed. She was indeed her father’s daughter. She was acting like Saul. It was pride and haughtiness. She represents the daughter of the Saul church!

Even today, as the overcomers are about to rule, there remain some in the church who despise the humility of the overcomers. Overcomers lower themselves. They see themselves as less than others. Even when they are in offices of authority, they do not allow themselves to be set above and apart from the people, as most clergy and civil rulers have done all during the age of the Saul church. Of course, Michal is the perfect type for many of these same leaders who will resent the overcomers. They will despise them and yet envy them at the same time.

17 And they brought in the ark of Yahweh, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before Yahweh.

Let us now consider some lessons we can learn from this whole story of David's bringing the Ark up to Jerusalem. First, let us understand that *the cart is our way, not God's way*. We can dress up our activities, our worship, our behaviors all we like, but if it is not according to God's instructions, it is not pleasing to Him. God says to worship Him in spirit and in truth. If we are not approaching Him in a spirit of reverence and awe, and in a spirit of humility and recognition that we are dust and He is the sovereign King eternal...if we are not approaching Him seeking truth, but perhaps to have Him rubber stamp what we want to be the truth, then we are putting the Ark on a cart.

It might even be a *new* cart, all decked out in high-falootin' doctrines to decorate the Almighty King with worldly symbols and riches. God has nothing against riches *per se*, but when they get in the way of worshipping Him in truth, then we've got the Ark on a cart. That will be bad news... because as we go along on the road of life, on the way to *New Jerusalem*, we're going to hit some speed bumps. And if our Ark is on a cart, we will automatically reach out to keep our false image of God from falling. But when it does, we will find out He is the Stone that crushes us in our idolatry. Let us rather prostrate ourselves before the cornerstone and capstone of the universe, Jesus the Christ.

A second application is that there was a period of time when the Ark was *separated* from the Tabernacle. Prophetically, this would indicate that there was, or still is a time in the church age, or now in the transition period, when the Ark is separated from the Tabernacle, the "shell" of the church—not the buildings, but the Ark is separated from the ecclesiastical organizations. Could that possibly be so? Well, we speak of dead churches, don't we? If the Spirit of God is not in them, they are dead, aren't they? And the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ and the two are one-and-the-same as the Holy Spirit, are they not? If the Holy Spirit is not moving in the hearts and lives of the believers in a given church, then that is a dead church.

If a church organization has grown fat (that is, materially wealthy) and blind, like Eli, (that is, blind to new truths), and like Eli, this church's sons are corrupted, the priests are corrupted, is it not correct to say then that the Ark is not there? Speaking of the Christian church in general for the past 2,000 years (this means there are always exceptions), but generally

speaking, on many occasions and in many ways Christ the Ark has been separated from the church.

What separated them? ...Sin, of course, but specifically, it is the methods and the attitudes of those in positions of authority in the church: a spirit of condemnation and of judgment. "Do what we say or you will go to hell." "If you don't agree with the way we see it, you are wrong and deserve to go to hell." Condemnation and judgment; no mercy. Remember that the Ark was the place of *forgiveness*. The cover of the Ark was called the *Mercy Seat*, but the church (in general) would much rather judge and condemn people than to forgive and show mercy.

Moreover, like the men of Bethshemesh discovered, we cannot open the Mercy Seat and have the blessings inside the Ark until we are a forgiving and merciful people. The power of God is infinitely too strong for these old, carnal (whoring) wineskins. Our wineskins are instantly exploded upon gazing upon the Eternal One. To be merciful and forgiving—this is what overcomers strive for in all things and with all people.

One more point. In the Old Testament, the externals were the types and shadows of what was to come. Therefore, I don't care if the box called the Ark of the Covenant is in Ethiopia or the Israeli state or even if it is in the state of Arkansas. If it were discovered, people would turn it into an idol. The OT Ark was to point us to the real Ark which is Christ living in you. The Ark is in your heart and in your mind and in your spiritual reproductive organs because you are going to ultimately bring forth, you are going to give birth to the totally new man, which is that immortal, incorruptible person that you are destined to become.

The Scripture says that "When we see him (Jesus), we shall be like him." The seed is implanted in your feminine soul by the masculine spirit of Christ and some day you and I will truly be born again into that glory of incorruptible immortality where God will be all in all. Which is to say that He will be everything in everybody! All praise to the Eternal Creator!

Feed My Sheep is a part of the teaching ministry of James W. Bruggeman and is sent out freely upon request. The tithes and gifts of those who are fed by it make it possible for us to continue in ministry. Gifts may be sent to P.O. Box 6388, Asheville, NC 28816.