

FLAMMABLE

"FIRE THAT DANCES"

2 SAMUEL 6:1-23

This Week's Core Competency

Worship – I worship God for who he is and what he has done for me. Psalm 95:1-7

- 1 *Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.*
- 2 *Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.*
- 3 *For the LORD is the great God,
the great King above all gods.*
- 4 *In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.*
- 5 *The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.*
- 6 *Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;*
- 7 *for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.*

1 Chronicles 15 describes how David brought the ark to Jerusalem. His first attempt, described in 2 Samuel 6, was frustrated when Uzzah was struck down by the LORD for his "irreverent act" (2Sa 6:7). Uzzah took hold of the ark when the oxen pulling the cart carrying it stumbled. As a result, David left the ark at the house of Obed-Edom. Afterward, he returned to finish the trek he had started three months earlier. And while David owned up to his part in the failure, he laid blame for it squarely at the

**Give thanks to the Lord,
call on his name;
Make known among the nations
what he has done.**

– 1 Chronicles 16:8

Levites' feet, saying: "It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that the LORD our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way" (1Chr 15:13). When he returned to retrieve the ark, the Levites were careful to carry it on poles resting on their shoulders as Moses had commanded (v. 15). 1 Chronicles 15:25-16:3 gives a parallel account of 2 Samuel 6:12-19.

Chapter 16 verses 7-36 contains a psalm of thanks sung in connection with the arrival of the ark in Jerusalem. Let me invite you to reflect on this psalm of praise and worship. Read verses 23-36 contemplatively this week. Read each line slowly, taking a relaxing breath at the end of each one to reflect on the words. If you would like to do more, meditate on verses 23-26. Read them and then take a quiet walk to allow the psalm's overall impression to sink in. If you would like to do even more, do both—on separate days, of course.

- 23 *Sing to the LORD, all the earth;
proclaim his salvation day after day.*
- 24 *Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.*
- 25 *For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
he is to be feared above all gods.*
- 26 *For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.*
- 27 *Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and joy in his dwelling place.*
- 28 *Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength,*
- 29 *ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name.
Bring an offering and come before him;
worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.*
- 30 *Tremble before him, all the earth!*

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The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved.
31 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"
32 Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;
let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them!
33 Then the trees of the forest will sing,
they will sing for joy before the LORD,
for he comes to judge the earth.
36 Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting.
Then all the people said "Amen" and "Praise the LORD."

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

2 Samuel 6:1-23

1 David again brought together out of Israel chosen men, thirty thousand in all. 2 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. 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 4 with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. 5 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.

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. 7 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.

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.

9 David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" 10 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. 11 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.

12 Now King David was told, "TheLORD 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. 13 When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. 14 David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the LORD with all his might, 15 while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

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.

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. 18 After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD Almighty. 19 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.

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!"

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. 22 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."

23 And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Underline "thirty thousand" in v. 1.
- * Circle the name by which the ark is called in v. 2 and in the margin write "Cf., 1Ch 13:6."
- * Underline words and phrases that refer to any form of celebration mentioned in the passage.
- * Box "because" indicating *reason* and "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 7, and in the margin write, "Cf., 1Sa 6:19."
- * Circle "irreverent act" in v. 7.
- * Highlight the rhetorical question in v. 9 and the phrase "to be with him" in v. 10.
- * Bracket v. 13.
- * Circle "linen ephod" in v. 14 and in the margin write, "Cf., v. 20."
- * Circle "city of David" in v. 16.
- * Bracket "daughter of Saul" in v. 20.
- * In the margin next to vv. 1-11 write, "Cf., 1Chr 13."
- * In the margin next to vv. 12-23 write, "Cf., 1Chr 15:1-16:6."

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Talk about why David had to fetch the ark from Baalah of Judah or Kiriath Jearim? (See 1Sa 4:1-11; 5:1-7:1.)
2. Describe the *significance* of the ark.
3. How do we know that bringing the ark to the City of David was a big deal?
4. What does the tragic death of Uzzah indicate to you?
5. What's the point of David's rhetorical question in verse 9?
6. Why do you think David left the ark at the house of Obed-Edom for three months? (See 1Chr 15:1-15)
7. What do you infer about David from verses 14 and 15?
8. When Michael saw David dancing before the LORD, "she despised him in her heart." What's her problem?
9. Describe the *mood* of verses 17-19.
10. Contrast the *attitudes* of Michal and David.
11. **Discussion:** David is known as "a man after God's own heart" (1Sa 13:14; Acts 13:22). Talk about what that means in light of his desire to bring the ark "to be with him in the City of David."

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

David is known as "the man after God's own heart." According to the apostle Paul, God testified concerning him, "I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do" (Ac 13:22). Clearly obedience is a defining trait of the man or woman after God's own heart, but there is another—a desire to live in God's presence.

Moving the ark from Kiriath Jearim where it wound up after the Philistines returned it to Israel—they had captured it at the battle of Aphek (1Sa 4:1-11), but seven months later decided to return it since keeping it threatened to destroy them (1Sa 5:11)—appears at first glance to be no big deal. But note the attention scripture gives to it. One chapter is devoted to telling the story in 2 Samuel, and more than two in 1 Chronicles, not to mention David's psalm of thanksgiving in 1 Chronicles 16, which pertains to it, and Psalm 24, which he may have written just for the occasion. One scholar puts the significance of its move this way, "Whatever changes he introduced, David understood well the spiritual power of Israel's ancient institutions. This is illustrated by his decision, not long after he had established himself in Jerusalem, to transfer the Ark of the Covenant from Kirjath-jearim, where it had lain neglected for more than a generation, to the capital city. A tent shrine was erected for the purpose, and the Ark was brought with great ceremony and rejoicing—though not without mishap—and installed in it (II Sam., ch. 6). The significance of this action cannot be overestimated. It was David's aim to make Jerusalem the religious as well as the political capital of the realm. David showed himself far wiser than Saul. Where Saul had neglected the Ark and driven it priesthood from him, David established both Ark and priesthood in the official national shrine" (John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 2nd ed., 196). King David had political reasons for bringing the ark to his city.

But he also had personal reasons for doing so. One cannot read the descriptions of him celebrating the return of the ark to Jerusalem without recognizing his personal interest in the effort. "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" as they left the house of Abinadab for Jerusalem (2Sa 6:5). Later on the way, "David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the LORD with all his might while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets" (v. 14), and as the ark was entering the city, Michal, his wife, much to her chagrin, saw her husband "leaping and dancing before the LORD" (v. 16). Why was David so exuberant? The answer to this question is suggested in verses 9 and 10. Uzzah's irreverent act appeared to frustrate David's desire, leaving him to question, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" David wasn't reconsidering his decision to move the ark; he wanted the ark of the LORD "to be with him in the City of David" because the presence of the ark implied the presence of the LORD. He wanted to live in God's presence. He just didn't know how to get it there. Once he learned that God had prescribed that the Levites carry the ark (see 1Chr 15:1-15), he returned to the house of Obed-Edom with them to finish the task (1Chr 15:25-28). Michal, on the other hand, had no appreciation for the ark or its significance; she despised her husband because he had humbled himself in the sight of everyone to celebrate before the LORD.

The *upper* story is about David restoring the ark to a prominent role in the religious life of Israel by bringing it to Jerusalem, the nation's new capital. David believed that the right to rule over Israel was God's to give, not his to take. Yahweh had anointed him, and now that he had made him king, David wanted his rule to be guided and blessed by God's presence.

The *lower* story is about David's desire to live in God's presence. God was enthroned over the ark; to be in the presence of the ark was to be in the presence of God. David wanted to bring the ark to Jerusalem because he wanted the LORD to be with him, but before that could happen he had to learn a lesson regarding the LORD's awesome holiness.

Believers, today, are in a different place than David. The Spirit of God lives in them. Their job is to live as in his presence with reverence for his awesome holiness.

The Message of the Passage

God lives in believers today in the person of the Holy Spirit, so be sure to live as in his presence with reverence for his awesome holiness.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on the three "living questions" below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

“Fire that Dances”

(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 1 **Thirty thousand** The large number puzzles some commentators. One suggests that the Hebrew word translated "thousand" (*'elep*) "may have designated at this time a unit of soldiers of a particular size, unknown now, but numbering considerably less than a thousand" (Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, TOTC, 68)
- v. 2 **Baalath of Judah** I.e., Kiriath Jearim, about 10 miles from Jerusalem (see 1Ch 13:6; cf. Jos 15:60; 18:14; 1Sa 7:1). The Philistines captured the ark and kept it in their territory for seven months before returning it to Beth Shemesh in Israel. Once it was returned to Abinadab's house in Kiriath Jearim, it remained there in relative obscurity throughout the reign of Saul (see 1Sa 4:1-11; 5:1-7:1).
- v. 2 **Name** The Hebrew word occurs twice, but many translations simply translate it once—"the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts" (NRSV; cf. TEV, NEB, the NET Bible). "The full name of the ark appears to have been 'the ark of the covenant of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim' (see 1 Sam 4:4)" (Bill T. Arnold, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Samuel*, 459).
- v. 2 **enthroned** The LORD, who dwelled among his people, manifested his presence in a unique way over the ark between the cherubim (see Ex 25:22; cf. Nu 7:89). "The ark was the divine throne itself, and the cherubim flanking the throne may reflect Canaanite royal thrones in which winged sphinxes were used" (459). "The ark was the object most closely associated with Israel's God . . . The ark contained the written agreement between Israel and the Lord (cf. Exod 25:16; 40:20; Deut 10:5; 1 Kgs 8:9), was a place of divine revelation (Exod 25:22; Num 7:89), and was in fact the Lord's throne (cf. 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Kgs 19:15; Pss 80:1; 99:1; Isa 37:16)" (Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC, 329).
- v. 3 **new cart** "As respectful and well-intended as David's effort was, however, it violated Torah guidelines regarding the transport of the ark (cf. Num 4:15; 7:9). In fact, David's actions in this matter were more like those of the spiritually ignorant Philistines (cf. 1 Sam 6:7, 10)" (329).
- v. 5 **celebrating** The significance of the ark's return is reflected in the jubilation associated with it. David's piety is evident in his words to the whole assembly of Israel, "Let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we did not inquire of it during the reign of Saul" (1Chr 13:3). "One of Saul's basic mistakes had been his insensitivity to Israel's religious institutions, particularly the central shrine and priesthood. But David grasped the importance of his people's spiritual heritage and sought to perpetuate and promote it. Israel could not have been truly united unless their political head was also their religious leader. By bringing the ark, long neglected by Saul, to Jerusalem and establishing it in a tent home, David made his city the religious as well as political capital, a master stroke which greatly enhanced his people's loyalty to him. His active participation (apparently too active for his decorous wife Michal; 6:20) in the ceremonies of dedication marked him off as one who revered Israel's God and fostered their faith, a reputation he well deserved and never lost" (William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, and Frederic William Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*, 247).
- v. 7 **irreverent act** Although he meant well, the consequences of Uzzah's irreverent act confirmed that a Holy God was uniquely present over the ark. "The ark must not be presumed upon, taken for granted, or treated with familiarity. The holiness of God is indeed present in the ark, but that holiness is not readily available. To touch the ark is to impinge on God's holiness, to draw too close and presume too much. Thus Uzzah suffers the same fate as the 'men of Beth-shemesh' in 1 Samuel 6:19. Uzzah's awesome death, like the earlier deaths, evokes an awestruck question on the lips of David: 'How can the ark . . . come to me?' (v. 9)" (Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, Interpretation, 249).
- v. 8 **angry** David was not angry with God but angry that his plan to move the ark had failed, resulting in the death of Uzzah.
- v. 9 **to me** David's words in vv. 9, 10 clearly indicate that he wanted the LORD to be with him. Bringing the ark to Jerusalem was much more than a political matter; it was a personal matter. David wanted to live in the presence of the LORD.
- v. 13 **six steps** After what had happened, taking six steps without incurring God's judgment was sufficient to indicate that God was pleased that the Levites were now transporting the ark (see 1Chr 15:2-15).
- v. 14 **linen ephod** David took off his royal robe and put on a priestly garment worn by those who served the Lord at his sanctuary. In so doing he humbled himself to celebrate the LORD's return to Jerusalem.
- v. 20 **daughter** Michal is the "daughter of Saul" rather than the "wife of David." Her indifference to the ark matched the indifference of her father who neglected it during his reign. "In her attitudes and actions she was truly a 'daughter of Saul' (vv. 20, 23) and not a wife of David" (Bergen, 332). "She despised him for the very qualities that made him great, namely devotion to the Lord and spontaneity in worship" (Baldwin, 209).
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Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

During this series I will be sharing insights from Kathleen Chapman's book *Teaching Kids Authentic Worship*. Though some would argue that it's a myth, others say we have become very good at multitasking. My teenagers can do their homework, listen to music, have a snack and check social media all at the same time! At least that's what they tell me! Ms. Chapman writes, "If truth be told, full attention moments are few and far between—when they do occur, it's called worship. Worship is an act of the will, giving full attention moments to God. Worship is concentrating on God on purpose because we want to. It's choosing to turn our eyes on Him and look closely—to study Him, hear what He says and focus completely." If your kids are like mine, the only thing that really holds their focus is their iPhones or a good Netflix show. The best way for our kids to learn to slow down and intentionally focus on God is to watch us do it. In our busy culture, there are few moments of solitude with God, especially once your kids are awake. Try modeling what's it's like to just enjoy being in the Presence of God with minimal distractions. Sit on the porch, take a walk at the park or spend a few quiet moments before bed focusing on Him in worship this week!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read 2 Samuel 6

1. David and his men were bringing the Ark of God to Jerusalem. According to verse 5, what was their attitude in doing so?
2. How did Michal feel when she saw David dancing before the Lord (v. 16)?

What Do You Think

God's reaction to Uzzah touching the ark might, at first, seem harsh but there were strict guidelines about carrying the ark that were not being followed. God is holy and expects us to be serious when we approach Him. How can you do that?

What R U Going To Do

In verse 5, the people were celebrating and worshipping with instruments. Make your own musical instrument this week and put on some worship music. Use your instrument to worship the Lord!

Core Comp

Worship - I celebrate God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Memory Verse

Heb 12:28-29 - *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."*

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30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for twelve years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Pantego Bible Church. He and his wife Ruth have been married forty-six years and have one son, Zach.

Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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