

David Dances before the Ark

Yes!" belted out Colby after reading the text. The 37-year-old man then raised his hands from the grocery cart he was pushing and pumped two fists in the air. "Praise God! Yes!"

Colby was reacting to the message from Deron, one of the young men in Colby's men's meeting. Deron and his wife had separated a few months ago. The message said they had reconciled, and Deron was moving back home.

Colby had been mentoring the 29-year-old Deron since he came to church. Deron, a new Christian, was facing some challenges that came along with his age and from the current times, Colby had told him.

"The struggle is real, and you have to keep on the armor of God," was part of the constant advice and encouragement Colby gave. However, Devon found himself entangled with some worldly affairs. The brothers in the men's meeting provided Devon with the love and support that helped him seek a deeper commitment to Christ.

Colby observed a few quizzical looks from the other customers in line with him as he put his groceries on the conveyor belt.

"Sounds like good news, my man," said the cashier as Colby approached him. "You following the big game?"

"No," Colby smiled. "Man, this is way more important than a football game. The Lord has intervened on behalf of my friend's marriage. I'm turning this store into a place of worship, praising my Lord!"

1. Do you have a special place where you worship God? Explain your answer.

2. When have you spontaneously worshiped Him?

3. Is worshipping God important to you? If so, why?

Moving the Ark

2 Samuel 6:1-5, KJV

1 Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.

2 And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims.

3 And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.

4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark.

5 And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

2 Samuel 6:1-5, NIV

¹David again brought together all the able young men of Israel—thirty thousand. ²He and all his men went to Baalah in 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 on the ark. ³They 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 ⁴with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. ⁵David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with castanets, harps, lyres, timbrels, sistrums and cymbals.

Second Samuel 5 recounts David being anointed as king over all Israel, along with his conquest and occupation of Jerusalem. He renamed it the City of David and made it his new political and religious capital as he firmly established his leadership of the Israelites.

On the heels of a triumph over the Philistines, David assembled 30,000 especially “chosen” men (2 Sam. 6:1,

KJV)—fit and elite warriors from all over Israel to help relocate the ark of the covenant from “Baalah in Judah” (near the nation’s border with the Philistines) to Jerusalem. The Israelites closely identified the sacred chest with the Lord (2 Sam. 7:13; 1 Kings 9:3; 11:36; 14:21). On the ark’s lid were placed replicas of two winged angels called “cherubim,” which symbolized the Creator’s transcendence and power. The lid of the covenant box functioned as the footstool for God’s invisible, heavenly throne (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Kings 19:15; Ps. 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 6:1; 37:16).

David’s intent in transporting the ark to Jerusalem was to signal that it was the official seat of royal and religious power. The relocation of the covenant box would also move it much farther away from Philistine territory and squelch any plans the enemy might have had to launch an attack, capture the sacred chest, and destroy it. This explains why Israel’s monarch gathered a large force to prevent such a dire outcome from taking place.

In consultation with his trusted advisors, David decided to load the ark on a “new” oxcart. At that time, the covenant box was in the home of Abinadab, whose house was located on a hill. Two of his sons, Uzzah and Ahio, were given the responsibility to lead the cart with the sacred chest placed on it. While Ahio walked in front of the ark, Uzzah was positioned along its side.

At first, an air of festivity characterized the event. Indeed, David and all those in attendance celebrated the occasion with a considerable amount of energy and enthusiasm. In addition to singing (1 Chron. 13:8), the entourage was accompanied by an ensemble of worshipful music. This included the use of various stringed and percussion instruments (2 Sam. 6:5).

- 4.** *Who accompanied David in moving the ark?*
- 5.** *In what way was the ark moved?*
- 6.** *What was David doing as the ark was moved?*

Celebrating Before the Ark

2 Samuel 6:14-19, KJV

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

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.

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

17 And they brought in the ark of the LORD, 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 the LORD.

18 And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

19 And he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine. So all the people departed every one to his house.

2 Samuel 6:14-19, NIV

¹⁴Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, ¹⁵while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

¹⁶As 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.

¹⁷They 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.

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

¹⁹Then 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.

The initial attempt to relocate the ark did not go well. As the oxen lumbered downhill, the pair stumbled, and Uzzah responded by trying to steady the sacred chest with his hand. For this “irreverent act” (2 Sam. 6:7), God struck Uzzah dead. Therefore, David decided to leave the box at the house of Obed-Edom. When David learned three months later that God had enabled Obed-Edom’s family to grow and thrive, he tried a second time to bring the ark to Jerusalem following the procedures specified in the law of Moses. For instance, the king directed that only the Levitical priests were permitted to carry the ark, and by using its poles (Exod. 25:12-14; Num. 4:15; 7:9).

For the occasion, David wore a special linen, vestlike garment called an “ephod” (2 Sam. 6:14). Likewise, other participants were likely dressed in fine linen garments, which were typically used by the Levites (1 Chron. 15:27). The procession moved ahead slowly, with sacrifices being made at regular intervals. Along the eight-mile route, attendees heard loud “shouts” (2 Sam. 6:15) and trumpet blasts. Meanwhile, the king vigorously danced in front of the ark with whirling, leaping motions.

As the sacred chest entered Jerusalem, Michal, one of David’s wives, gazed down upon him from a palace window. Michal later told David that he had acted in a disgraceful, foolish manner (vs. 20). The Levites carrying the ark put it inside the specially prepared tent. Then, David officiated as burnt offerings, as well as fellowship offerings, were made to God. This was the king’s way of expressing heartfelt thanks to the Lord. David also pronounced a blessing in the name of “the LORD Almighty” (vs. 18) to all the attendees. Then, before each person went home, they received a loaf of bread, a cake of dates, and a cake of raisins (vs. 19).

7. *Why was Michal upset with David?*

8. *After the ark was moved, what sacrifices did David offer?*

9. *What items did David give to the attendees?*

Heartfelt Worship

On my birthday, for the past three years, I have been blessed to worship God along some beautiful beaches. My worship begins by just walking along the beach silently in awe of all that God has created. As my feet enjoy the beautiful white sands, songs of praise spring up from my heart and I am singing at the top of my voice "How Great Thou Art." Eventually, I find a solitary place to sit and worship my Lord through orally reading various psalms unto the Lord. I conclude my time of worship with writing thanksgivings to the Lord for giving me another year of life.

Cathy walks through her little three-bedroom home remembering the time that her family of six once lived in the one-bedroom alley house. She quickly reaches for her tambourine and starts worshipping God through music and song. Her heart overflows with gratitude for all that God has done for her family. Cathy knows that it was only God who has provided for her family for the past 30 years. She worships God for His faithfulness jumping up and down throughout her home playing the tambourine and singing.

JoJo, bound to his wheelchair and unable to move his body by himself, sits among 90 other special-needs children worshipping God. His eyes sing the words of praise that his vocal cords wouldn't allow him to sing because of his cerebral palsy. JoJo's smiles during praise and worship time are contagious and resound with his heartfelt worship to God. He can't dance with his feet in praise, but his eyes and smile dance to God.

Worshipping God doesn't have to be in a church or heard by others. It just has to be a heartfelt worship to our Lord God and Creator.

10. *What ignites your heart into worshipping God?*

11. *Have you ever worshiped God without speaking or singing aloud? If so, what happened?*

12. *Have you already worshiped God in some unconventional ways?*

New Ways to Praise

Often we are afraid to worship God in a different way than we are used to. For example, if you are used to singing your praises to God, are you willing to try writing poetry to express your praises? If you are used to standing up to worship God, are you willing to kneel down or even prostrate yourself on the floor to worship Him? Have you ever worshiped God in complete silence? Or maybe you have never worshiped God alone or only on Sundays. There are endless ways to worship our Creator.

► *How do you usually worship God? Ask Him to show you a different way to worship Him this next week and write what you might do here.*

KEY VERSE

And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

—2 Samuel 6:5, KJV

David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with castanets, harps, lyres, timbrels, sistrams and cymbals.

—2 Samuel 6:5, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of September 13 through September 19

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Isaiah 35:1-6—Blind Eyes Shall Be Opened.
- Tues.** Psalm 96—Declare God's Glory Among the Nations.
- Wed.** Psalm 115:1-3. 9-18—Glory to God's Name Alone.
- Thurs.** Mark 10:17-22—Only God Is Good.
- Fri.** Mark 10:42-45—Greatness through Servanthood.
- Sat.** Psalm 146—Praise the Lord, O My Soul!
- Sun.** Mark 10:46-52—Praise God for Healing!