

Prepared to Meet God

By Pastor Matt Black

Bible Text: 2 Samuel 6:1-11

Preached on: Sunday, April 19, 2009, PM

Tabernacle Baptist Church

7020 Barrington Road

Hanover Park, Illinois 60133

Website: www.GodCentered.info

Introduction: Open your Bible to **2 Samuel 6**. Often we talk about meeting God when we refer to death. We are going to meet God that way, but God made the Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament as a way to extend His presence to the Jewish people.

Remember what God said He would do at the Ark of the Covenant? Look at **Exodus 25:17**, "Thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold... **Verse 20**, "and the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings. **21** And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. **22** And there **I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat**".

- I. Consider what the Ark teaches us about God. We find what was inside the Ark in **Hebrews 9:3-4**, "after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; ⁴ Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant."

The Ark of the Covenant is a picture of the presence of God and a demonstration of the covenant that God makes to commune with sinful men. How can a holy God fellowship with sinners? We have a picture of the Gospel in the Ark of the Covenant.

A. God is **just** and **holy**. Inside the Ark was "the testimony" that he gave Moses on the two tablets of stone—the Ten Commandments. What God does is always consistent with who He is.

1. Consider the Old Testament. **John 1:17** tells us that "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ". The Old Testament seems to show God as being more harsh than in the New Testament. There were many crimes that God demanded the death penalty for. Yet in the Old Testament God is amazingly and astonishingly *merciful*. How is that? God's standard is absolute perfection. If we were to get God's pure justice, not a soul on earth would live. All sin is a capital crime in God's sight. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (**Ezekiel 18:4**).

If we were to open up the Ark of the Covenant and look upon those tablets of stone, we would all find ourselves *infinitely guilty*. None of us in and of ourselves is prepared to meet God.

2. The Testimony of all of Scripture agrees. **Ecclesiastes 7:20**, "For *there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*" **Isaiah 53:6**, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way".

In the realm of God's justice, we all deserve immediate physical and eternal death under the just wrath of God.

3. Yet we cannot keep it there, because if you have come to Christ, then the Law of God is fulfilled for you in Christ, and you have the Law of Christ written on your heart. You can say with Paul in **Romans 7:22**, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man".

What else does the Ark of the Covenant teach us about God?

- B. God is not only holy, He is **merciful**. If only the Law rested in the Ark, and there were no mercy seat upon the Ark, no one could ever commune with God. But above the testimony of God's Law was the Mercy seat. **1 John 2:1**, "We have an Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous".
- C. God is to be **praised**. Who do you have above the mercy seat? Exodus 25:21, "the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings." The angels praise God day and night as should we. When we come to God, we should praise God with the angels. Let us also remember that the angels are in league with us.
- D. We learn also from the Ark, that we were made to be **satisfied** by God. Within the Ark of the Covenant was the golden pot of manna. **Exodus 16:33-34**, "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations." ³⁴ As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept." Jesus Christ is our spiritual meat. In Him we are complete. In Him we have been "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (**Ephesians 1:3**).
- E. We learn from the Ark, that we are to be **fruitful** in Christ. Inside the Ark, according to **Hebrews 9:4**, was "Aaron's rod that budded". It was just a dead stick when it was laid in there, but it became alive the moment it was put into the Ark, and from it came forth almonds. That scepter of Aaron teaches us how Christ rules us and produces fruit in us. Remember also that Aaron was the head of the Levitical priesthood. Peter tells us that we all are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (**1 Peter 2:9**). We are a kingdom of priests, and like Aaron's scepter that budded, we are called to bring forth fruit.
- II. As we approach the Ark in the life of David, let us consider how we must all **prepare** to meet God. Remember last week we learned what a lack of preparation looks like. We cannot come to God and try to steady the Ark. We need to come the way God prescribes. The Ark had been captured by the Philistines 30 years earlier (1 Samuel 4-7), and it was finally in Israel's possession. Now that David is the king, he attempts to bring the visible symbol of God's presence to Jerusalem. **David wanted to celebrate God's kingdom and rule more than his own.**

Remember the people were **not** prepared to bring the Ark. They did the best they could. They prepared a "new cart" (**verse 3**). That wasn't what God said to do. He said to have the Kohathite priests (Levites) carry the Ark on their shoulders. While they were transporting the cart, remember Uzzah tried to steady the cart, and God killed him.

Everything looked great. They had their beautiful music. They spirit among the people *seemed* as if God was there, but God approval was not there. We read in verse 7, "the

anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his* error; and there he died by the ark of God". We cannot come to God any way that we want.

David called the whole trip off. **Verses 10-11**, "So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obedom the Gittite. ¹¹ And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obedom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obedom, and all his household."

David heard though that the house of Obedom was being blessed, and decided to return the Ark one more time. He had a whole different attitude this time.

Let us go with David on that journey to Jerusalem with the Ark of the covenant. As we go on this journey, we learn how to approach God.

A. First, we ought to approach God **seriously**. I love a little verse that tells us a complete reversal of plans in carrying the Ark. **Verse 13**, "And it was so, that when **they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces**, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings." Apparently, David had the Kohathite priests carrying the Ark as prescribed by the Law!

David just learned that places of worship are *dangerous* places! Not knowing about God is a dangerous thing, but claiming to know Him, and not applying what you know is more dangerous. Encountering God is also a wonderful amazing thing. It was at the Ark that Uzzah died. In just a moment we are going to see that it was at the Ark that David danced with all his might. Encountering Christ can be both dangerous and delightful.

Application: We see a similar happening at the Second Coming. At Christ's Second Coming, many will be like David and dance with all their might at the presence of the Almighty Christ coming to redeem. Others will die an eternal death, begging for the rocks to fall on them. Encountering Christ can be both delightful and dangerous.

David took this second encounter with God through the Ark of the Covenant very seriously. We must now assume that they had gone through the extra preparation and had the Kohathites *carry* the Ark.

Like David, we must approach God in all seriousness.

Illustration: When I was in Christian high school, I remember that prayer time was the most excruciating time for me. It was during that time that I would see other young people looking around the room, looking at their homework, and doing everything but encountering God. These young people did not know God. When you know Him, approaching Him is the most serious thing in the universe.

B. Second, we must come to God expecting a **spiritual blessing**. **Verse 12**, "And it was told king David, saying, The LORD 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."

The Bible encourages to come to God. The exhortation comes from the book of **Hebrews 4:16**, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Every spiritual blessing and grace comes from God. We cannot get what we need from any other place. The true and satisfying blessings come from God alone. When you learn that, you stop

spending your time on meaningless activities. You pray more. You trust God more. You stand back. Let me give you an example from Scripture.

Illustration: Think about the children of Israel at the base of the Red Sea. They have a mountain behind them, a Sea in front of them, and the only way of escape between the valley is filled Pharaoh's army. What can we do?

We often try and use human means. The children of Israel could have tried to build chariots, train an army, and outfit the entire group of people. Of course that was impossible, but that doesn't stop most of us from trying!! We need to get out of the way, and let God split the Red Sea. We need to stand back and see the salvation of the Lord. That's what Moses said to God's people in **Exodus 14:13**, "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever."

When we approach God, it is for grace and help in time of need. We ought to expect every spiritual blessing. **Romans 8:32**, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

- We must approach God **seriously**
- We must approach Him expecting every **spiritual blessing**

C.Third, we must come prepared to **sacrifice**. **Verse 13**, "And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings." We must approach God in total surrender. We volunteer all that we are to God. We cannot commune with Him any other way. Our body and soul already belong to Him. In order to commune with Him, we must acknowledge that.

- We must approach God **seriously**
- We must approach Him expecting every **spiritual blessing**
- We must approach God prepared to **sacrifice**

D.Fourth, we ought to come to God with **sacred enthusiasm**. David danced before God with all his might. **Verse 14**, "And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod." When you come to worship God, you are not aware of the people around you. God is concerned about your heart. David had a holy enthusiasm for God. It is on this second occasion that most people believe David wrote Psalm 132. Will you turn there?

Psalm 132, "LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions: 2 How he sware unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; 3 Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; 4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, 5 Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. 6 Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood. 7 We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool. 8 Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength. 9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. 10 For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed. 11 ¶ The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. 12 If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore. 13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. 14 This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. 15 I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. 16 I will also clothe her priests with

salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. 17 There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. 18 His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish."

If you are a believer, you are God's very habitation. God has remembered your afflictions, as He remembered David in the wilderness. You are His dwelling place. You will flourish as you abide in Christ. You are His priest, **clothed in salvation**. And as one of His saints, you ought to **shout aloud for joy!**

- We must approach God **seriously**
- We must approach Him expecting every **spiritual blessing**
- We must approach God prepared to **sacrifice**
- We must approach God with a **sacred enthusiasm**

E.Fifth, and finally, we ought to come prepared to **sing. Verse 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".

Many believe they came singing **Psalm 15**, "A Psalm of David. LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? 2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. 3 He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. 4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. 5 He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

Brethren, when we come to God, we are there not primarily to ask for God's provision, though we ought to do that. But we are there to rejoice in our God! The God of omnipotent love, and justice, and power, and wisdom...LOVES me and died for me! Glory! That's something to shout about!

III. Consider finally who is prohibited from celebrating God's presence.

A.Those who come to God **unprepared** are prohibited from God's presence. Uzzah was not at all prepared to meet with God. He dared touch the Holy Ark with sinful human hands. We cannot make God into our own image. We cannot imagine He will accept our worship if we have unclean hands or an impure heart. That leads us to search ourselves.

Application: Do you pay careful attention to every part of your life?

- Do you see all your endeavors as *worship*?
- Are you trying to "steady the ark" by trying to fix your situation, or are you coming to God for Him to fix you?
- Do you need God?
- Do you long for Him?

We already know He desires to commune with you between the cherubim. He says to the church at Laodicea in **Revelation 3:20**, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Come to God knowing He is holy and just. We cannot hide anything from him. Those who come to him unprepared are prohibited from His communion.

B. Finally, those who come to God **self-righteously** are prohibited from God's presence. Michal was apathetic toward God, and quite consumed with herself.

We read in **verse 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."

1. David's **expectation**. David surely expected his wife to be pleased. He had just provided each of the thousands of guests with a meal in a national celebration. God was now among His people again. His blessings would surely now flow upon the house of David and Israel.

David returned to bring the blessed news to his own household. Michal wasn't so impressed. We read in **verse 20**, "Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!"

2. David's **rejection**. Michal mocked David's spiritual fervor. David had laid aside his royal robes and his dignity as a king, and worshipped the Lord among the people. Michal seems to have been one of those nominal believers—a believer in name only. She would have preferred that David watch the procession from the dignity of the palace. Possibly, she was so deeply offended because she had never seen her father humble himself in such a way. David wore a common linen ephod—that was the clothing of servants.

Application: There is a self-righteousness in worship that God rejects. When we worship together, you ought not consider what others are doing. You should be totally caught up in the Lord.

If our church is to be blessed, it will not be because we have all the latest and greatest technology and programs. It will be because we have the Gospel, and we are preaching it faithfully. But let me warn you, you will not be popular among self righteous people.

3. David's **determination**.

David responds to Michal in **verse 21**, "And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD. 22 And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour."

David had struggles at home. You or I cannot control our spouse, but we can worship the Lord with all our might. We must be determined to bring the Lord's presence into our homes to affect our hearts!!

Conclusion: God cursed Michal with no children. We read in **verse 23**, "Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death." This was severe in the land of Israel. In the same way, those who come to God self-righteously are barren. They seem to know God, but they only know about Him.

We have talked a lot about God, but have you met with God tonight? We need to be prepared to meet Him. Not simply when we die, but right here and right now.