

Lovers and Despisers of Worship

1 Samuel 6:12 - 16

Purpose: To contrast true worship with those who despise it.

Nutshell: The testimony of God is around and within all people, Rom 1:19-21. Their conscience tells them they're avoiding God, so people who express love for God are irritating to them. However, this irritation of part of the overall testimony pointing them back to God. So we should love God with all the more gusto.

I. Context: David's kingdom being settled.

II. Text

2 Sam 6:12 And it is declared to King David, saying, "YHWH has blessed the house of Obed-Edom, and all that he has, because of the Ark of God"; and David goes and brings up the Ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with joy.

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

- A. The Book of Kingdoms, our 1 & 2 Sam + 1 & 2 Kings, is the story of Israel's kings, beginning with the prophet Samuel, who anointed both of the first two kings, Saul and David
 1. Samuel warned Israel vs. having a king, 1 Sam 10:19, Hos 13:11
 2. **Saul** was apostate *man's* version of king. God previewed *His* version via **David**, 1 Sam 13:14
 3. David was anointed king over Judah, 2 Sam 2
- B. 1 Kings 15:5 tells us that David kept God's commands except in the Bathsheba incident. This dramatically shapes our approach to the narrative.
- C. 2 Sam 2:8 saw the first split between Israel (the 10 northern ten tribes) and Judah (with Benjamin)

1. Abner made Saul's son Ishbosheth king of Israel
2. Abner picked a fight, but David's forces under Joab won
 - a. It began with a 12-on-12 contest, where all 24 died,
 - b. signifying the ultimate futility of Israel's disunity.
- D. Abner killed Asahel *in* battle, but Joab avenged his brother *outside* of battle: a wrong, but not decisively unlawful
 1. David rebuked the act. Joab later returned to folly, 1 Kings 2:28-29, but co-conspirator Abishai rehabilitated.
 2. Israel then wrongly feared an attack from David
 3. 2 men killed king Ishbosheth to flatter David, but he had them executed for their injustice, 4:1-12
- E. Israel's elders anointed David KING over them, 2 Sam 5:1-5
 1. David's first act as king, apparently long planned and awaited, was the conquest of Jebus, 2 Sam 5:6-10
 2. David had taken Goliath's head to Jebus, 1 Sam 17:54
 3. City renovations began
 4. King Hiram of Tyre aided in a house for David. Yes, God had established David, and he continued to be fruitful, 5:11-16
 5. David rebuffed 2 large-scale Philistine invasions, 5:17-25
- F. Last time, we saw David's great honor guard and pageantry in retrieving the Ark from where the Philistines had dropped it off, 2 Sam 6:1-5

Kid-speak: Last time we talked about the Ark (or Box) or Proof (or testimony) (not Noah's Ark, which is a different word for "box"), where the Israelites kept proof that God had spoken to them.

1. But the Ark was not carried as instructed, 1 Chron 15:12-13; Num 4:15. When Uzzah caught the tipping Ark, God was angry and killed him, 2 Sam 6:6-7
 2. David was angry, thinking he couldn't retrieve the Ark, so he left it with Obed-Edom nearby, 2 Sam 6:8-10
 3. But Obed-Edom and his house were noticeably blessed those 3 months, 2 Sam 6:11. And here we are.
- G. The chronicler gives specified attention to David as God's chosen king, a *picture* of Messiah, but *not* the Messiah; a *reference point* for all subsequent kings of Judah.
- H. 6:12, When David heard of God's blessing on Obed-

Edom's house, he perceived that the Ark had *not* become a messenger of God's disfavor, as he previously feared

1. Even though he should've known this before: the two negative Ark incidents resulted from folly (peeking in; wrongly transporting + touching)
2. But he didn't figure out the wrong transportation on the spot (hence, his anger)
3. At some point during the Ark's 3 months with Obed Edom, David or an advisor figured out that they had transported the Ark wrongly, 1 Chron 15:12-13

★ I. Note the Ark's natural tendency: **blessing**

1. Not as an intrinsic, magic power. It apparently had no such effect at Kirjath-Jearim (Baale-Judah).
2. God was apparently making it specifically clear that He was *not* opposed to David moving the Ark to Jerusalem

Kid-speak: Remember last time, when David left God's Box (Ark) with Obed-Edom? Well, all of Obed-Edom's crops (plants for food) and animals were, like, ten times better; and it was because God's Box was there.

J. David, on hearing of the blessing, understood this immediately and went to retrieve the Ark

1. *OUR CHRONICLER* doesn't seem concerned to explain the previously inappropriate mode of transportation, Num 4:5-15
 - a. As with David eating the Bread of the Presence in 1 Sam 21, he expects us to either *know* the background info or do our *homework*
 - b. Perhaps he even thought that it was embarrassingly clear
2. *THE WRITER OF CHRONICLES* perhaps explains it mainly as an insight into David's behind-the-scenes behavior (*or* he just figured there'd be dummies like us who needed the explanation), 1 Chron 15:12-13

K. David is retrieving it a second time, but still "with joy," *not with suspicion*

1. A person who loves God gives Him the benefit of the doubt
2. The first time, David was angry because his *good expectations* didn't pan out
 - a. Our chronicler went into detail about the sincerity and fulness of worship on that first trip

- b. Intending, for one thing, to disillusion us concerning
SINCERITY WITHOUT TRUTH
- 3. Application: The present-day worship emphasis on *surrendering to God* is only effective in an environment of thorough knowledge of truth.
 - a. Unfortunately, it's usually just a *raw emotion tug*.
Emotion is the perceived key ingredient: My Christianity isn't quite right because I haven't been *completely* sold out to God.
 - b. But this approach, being at best lopsided, cannot bear good, lasting fruit. There are many disillusioned worshipers today as a result.

Kid-speak: So David say, "Hey, if God is blessing everything Obed-Edom has just because the Box is there, God must be telling me not to be afraid of the Box!"

2 Sam 6:13 And it comes to pass, when those carrying the Ark of YHWH have stepped six steps, that he sacrifices an ox and a fatling.

- L. "Six steps." The 'seventh' step was the sacrifice, which 'completed' (7) the procession's intention and setting out
- M. Our chronicler seems to be contrasting *sacrifice* to the previous array of *musical instruments*, 6:5
 - 1. Nothing wrong with the instruments. They came this time too (1 Chron 15:16), but they're not what the Ark was about.
 - 2. The Ark was about **sacrifice**, the centerpiece of Tabernacle worship
 - 3. By sacrifice, David acknowledged his unworthiness to have anything to do with the Ark, much less to bring it home and make a place for it
- N. A "fatling" is just a fattened animal, but 1 Chron 15:26 tells us that they were rams, and that there were seven of each
- O. The ox and fatling are most closely associated with the Peace Offering, which was a (restored) fellowship offering
 - 1. David was accepting God's token of favor, seen in His blessing of Obed-Edom's house
 - 2. The Peace Offering said, "Thank You, God, for maintaining/ restoring fellowship with me."

Kid-speak: So David went and got the Box of God's Proof, and just when he started to bring it with him, he stopped and sacrificed two kinds of animals that showed he knew that things were OK between him and God.

2 Sam 6:14 And David is romping with all [*his*] strength before [to the face of] YHWH, and David is girded with a linen ephod,

- P. The "linen ephod" was associated with Levites/priests, but only in 1 Sam 22:18. Elsewhere, it is always either "ephod" alone or "linen" alone.
1. 1 Sam 2:18 has the child Samuel wearing a linen ephod. He was a Levite.
 2. David was not purporting to be a priest, but he was associating himself with the set-apart nature of this procession, of which the Levites were in charge, 1 Chron 15:27
 - a. David knew that God's original intention had been for *all* of God's people to be priests, Exod 19:6
 - b. David's robe seems to be singled out. He will take the lead in sacrifices, v 17
 - c. This is also a foreshadowing of the priesthood of all believers, 1 Pet 2:5, 9
- Q. The chronicler's word for "romping" is only used here and in Michal's view of and response to it, v 16
1. In 1 Chron 15:29, it's a more common word, but still associated with stamping and leaping. (There is another more regular word for dancing.)
 2. Taking the two together, David's dancing must have been unusually energetic and boisterous
 - a. Expressing a bursting gladness and triumph
 - b. "All his strength." Maximum exertion from an athletic, artistic fellow must have been quite impressive
 - c. He was probably also at maximum creativity: almost nothing off the table: flips, etc.
- R. Scriptural occasions of dancing in worship can almost be counted on one hand. Importantly, dancing is not incorporated in OT worship.
1. Miriam and the women danced at the Red Sea, Exod. 15:20, but this was spontaneous (on the spot, like David's),

- not incorporated/ prescribed
2. Ps 150:4 is praise under the open sky (firmament, v 1)
 3. Ps 149:3 comes closer, having mentioned the assembly in v 1; but an overall broader context is suggested
 - a. privately, on their beds, v 5; and
 - b. publicly, in war, v 6-10
 4. To *incorporate* dance in Christian worship is to read contrary to these instances
 - a. Though a culture with non-lewd dances is the richer for it, and Christians might use those in spontaneous praise
 - b. Though ‘cutting a rug’ in impromptu joy might actually be more on the mark

Kid-speak: David was so happy about bringing God’s Box back to Jerusalem, he starting jumping and dancing! Are you ever so happy you could dance? Well, I hope you go ahead and dance.

2 Sam 6:15 and David and all the house of Israel are bringing up the Ark of YHWH with shouting, and with the sound of a horn,

- S. The 1 Chron 15 account is more detailed
1. All the instruments listed there are ‘summarized’ in the horn here
 2. Possibly because the horn part (*shofar*) was in conjunction with the voices
- T. David left the transportation to the Levites, but he was probably at the head of the procession, the main figure in bringing the Ark ‘home’
1. He wasn’t the only one excited (though perhaps the *most* excited): “all... shouting”
 2. It is sad if we have a gear *for* expressing excitement, but not in worship (OK, pew-jumpers, you’ve got us on this one)
 3. Again, the fact that this degree of enthusiasm was not scripted into worship does not mean that worship was (or should be) otherwise lackluster

Kid-speak: Not just David: *everybody* was yelling and happy, and the horn players were playing! It was great!

2 Sam 6:16 and it has come to pass, the Ark of YHWH has come into the City of David, and Michal, daughter of Saul has looked through the window and sees King David romping and cavorting before YHWH, and she despises him in her heart.

- U. “Daughter of Saul”: a little like a parent noting their spouse in a child’s bad behavior. Michal is adopting her father’s churlish spirit.
- V. The chronicler makes special note of “before Yahweh.” That makes all the difference. (Not that *all* behavior can be excused in the name of worship.)
 - 1. If God is real and responding to Him is real, then we’d better be careful about criticizing true worship, 1 Thess 5:19-21
 - 2. Just as we are obligated to call out false enthusiasm, Rev 3:1; 1 Thess 5:22
- W. Esau “despised” his birthright; as Goliath did David; and soon, as David would God and His command, 12:9-10
 - 1. Jesus would be despised, Ps 22:6; Isa 53:3, *for* whose sake, God would *not* despise the afflicted’s affliction, Ps 22:24
 - 2. All of Israel would eventually take Michal’s turn for the worst, Mal 1:6, 7, 12; for which God would despise *them*, Mal 2:9
- X. Michal despised David for his worship
 - 1. We cannot blame her for at least an *initial* feeling of misplaced embarrassment (“What will others think of *me* for this?”)
 - 2. But someone with a heart for Yahweh would have been able to self-correct (“But this isn’t about me.”)

Kid-speak: David’s wife Michal was embarrassed when she saw David jumping and dancing, so she got mad at him. Should she have been? No, he was worshiping God.

- a. Perhaps there’s a difference between having a *place* for God and having a *heart* for Him
- b. Michal initially loved David, 1 Sam 18:20. But maybe David’s love for God was just an odd part of the mix to her, something she never had to directly deal with until now.
- 3. If our love for God has holes, we may keep them hidden a while (like Michal), but they’ll eventually show through

4. The ‘soulical’ man’s heart will always come to a point of protest with God’s ways, 1 Cor 2:14. This often takes time or circumstance to manifest itself.

Y. Jesus is the Ark assuring us of God’s presence

1. On the basis of His sacrifice, we become priests who offer ourselves and all we are, 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Heb 13:15-16
2. Communion is like the Peace Offering in our acceptance of God’s favor in Christ

IV. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong?
How have I lost righteousness?**

Do I worship openly enough to be despised?

V. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”):
How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?

I will ‘wear my love for God on my sleeve’, not obnoxiously, but enough to bear witness.

VI. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ ?**
“At every opportunity I’ll bless Yahweh,” Ps 34:1

Wrap-up: Has God done anything worthy of my outright admiration?

Ah, but He’s God. He doesn’t need my fawning.

Ah, but I am man, much in need of God on my lips.

Just saying, “I’m glad that God saved my sinful soul” is an impactful and substantial testimony. We sense that the subject of God is an intrusion, but sharing Him as my enthusiasm (vs. other peoples’ enthusiasms) should be fair game.

Worship is certainly what we should be about here. Dick, exhort us, “Let us worship God as we sing _!”