DAVID: King of Hearts
A Bible Study by Stan Key

Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. (I Sam. 16:7)

CHAPTER 9. GOD-IN-A-BOX?
II Samuel 6:1–23

I. One Nation under God (II Samuel 1–5).

A. A Time to Weep (1:1–27).

Before tackling the assignment of being king over all Israel, David first ________________ to grieve the loss of Saul and Jonathan. Though Saul had been an evil, murderous and unjust autocrat, David nevertheless mourned the loss of Israel's first king. The contemporary gospel of health, wealth and happiness has little understanding of the place for ________________.

B. A House Divided (2:1–4:12).

In 1858, Abraham Lincoln said: “A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.”¹ Some issues are so significant that tolerance is ________________. A people must choose one path or the other. ________________ is not an option.

This was true in Israel in David’s day. David is anointed king over the tribe of Judah (2:1–7). Ish-bosheth (Saul’s surviving son) is anointed king over the other tribes of Israel (2:8–11). Israel, thus, has two kings. But no one can serve ________________ and a house divided cannot stand. For 7½ years there is civil war.

1. The Battle of Gibeon (2:12–32). The army of Ish-bosheth under General Abner is beaten. Abner kills Asahel during the battle and this causes Joab (Asahel’s brother) to plot ________________.

2. Abner decides to join forces with David (3:1–39). David agrees but wants his former wife ________________ back before the deal is complete (3:12–16). Joab murders Abner. David grieves Abner’s loss but takes no disciplinary action against Joab.

3. With Abner dead, the situation for Ish-bosheth becomes unstable and he is assassinated by two of his military captains (4:1–12).

C. David rules over all Israel (5:1–25).

1. All the tribes of Israel ________________ and anoint David king (5:1–5). David is 30 years old.

2. Now that the king is enthroned and the people are united, God’s work can be fully done:
   - Internal ________________ can be conquered. David captures Jerusalem and makes it the new capital of all Israel (5:6–10).
   - External ________________ can be defeated (5:17–25). The Philistines are beaten decisively.

¹ Though many today imagine that Lincoln is the source for his “house divided” concept, we must remember that Lincoln learned much of his oratorical skill from the Bible. Jesus is the source of Lincoln’s powerful speech: “And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand” (Mark 3:25).
3. At last, David has the opportunity to lead Israel in the single action that will define them forever and make them ________________ from all the other nations of history. Almost his first action is to bring the ________________ to its permanent resting place. Chapter 6 tells the story of bringing the ark to Jerusalem and chapter 7 tells the story of David’s desire to build a permanent temple. Today our study focuses on chapter 6.

Note: The Ark of the Covenant was a rectangular box made of acacia wood that measured 4 by 2½ by 2½ feet. It was covered in gold and carried by poles inserted in rings at the four lower corners. Inside were the two tablets of the Decalogue, a pot of manna, and Aaron’s rod. The lid (mercy seat) was made of gold with two cherubim at each end with outstretched wings. “There I will ________________, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you…” (Ex. 25:22). This box was much more than an artistic piece of liturgical furniture. It was the ________________ of God. Whoever had the box, had God! This is certainly how Hophni and Phinehas and the Philistines understood it (I Sam. 4–6). This was a god-in-the-box.


This passage is most instructive about ________________: it’s purpose, it’s nature, its practice and its participants. In a day when “worship wars” have defined many local congregations, this chapter is very helpful for those who, like David, passionately desire God’s ________________ in their lives.

A. The purpose of worship: the ________________ question.

Let’s pause to personally answer this most important of all questions. Before we define worship or discuss styles, let’s first ask why we worship in the first place? What is the ________________ of worship?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Although Scripture does not specifically state David’s motivation for bringing the ark to Jerusalem, it is not difficult to discern his purpose: he desperately and passionately desires God’s ________________, ________________, ________________, ________________, ________________, ________________, ________________, ________________, ________________. More important than military strength, economic prosperity, political unity or an artistic renaissance, David knew that unless God’s favor was on his kingdom, all was ________________. When his first attempt failed, David tried again when he learned that Lord had “blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him” because the ark was stationed at his house (6:12).

If seeking God’s blessing becomes a means of ________________, then the purpose of worship has become grossly perverted. But when God’s blessing is sought so we can experience a ________________ relationship with him so that we can then ________________ in blessings to others, then we begin to grasp the purpose of worship.

*May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! (Psalm 67:1–2).*

B. The nature of worship: the ________________ question (definition).

By examining David’s practice, we begin to discover that worship is much more than pious contemplation or serenely reading through a liturgy. David’s worship is
passionate and emotional; it is multi-sensory; it is corporate; it involves his heart, his mind and his body. The arts (music, dance, etc.) are involved as well.

To worship is to quicken the __________ by the holiness of God, to feed the __________ with the truth of God, to purge the __________ by the beauty of God, to open the __________ to the love of God, to devote the __________ to the purpose of God. (William Temple)

C. The practice of worship: the _______________ question (worship styles).

David soon discovered that how we worship God is important. In fact, it is a matter of life and death. Good _______________ are not enough! If our goal in worship is to _______________ and sing songs we like, we will never worship rightly. Though David’s purpose in worship was right, his practice was wrong. He needed to learn that you can’t worship the Holy One in an _______________ manner!

1. David’s initial _______________ was to put the ark on a “new ox cart” (6:3). This is how the Philistines had transported the ark years earlier (I Sam. 6:7–8). An ox cart was state-of-the-art science! Why not use _______________ to facilitate worship?

2. At first, things went well. The people were “making merry before the Lord with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals” (6:5). What great worship! Then, suddenly, the situation changed dramatically.

When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. (6:6–7)

David was so _______________ that he called off the worship service! At a loss to understand what had happened, David left the ark at the home of Obed-edom the Gittite, who lived near the place where the incident with Uzzah had occurred.

3. Before dismissing this incident as one of those strange, Old Testament stories, consider what happened to _______________ in the New Testament when they too failed to worship God rightly (Acts 5:1–11; cf. I Cor. 11:27–39). By placing these two stories (Uzzah and Ananias/Saphira) in the opening events of a new era, God apparently wants us to understand that:

• It’s not enough to _______________ (pagans do that).
• It’s not enough to worship the _______________ (Uzzah did that, as did Ananias and Saphira).
• We must worship the right God in the _______________.

4. To understand what went wrong in David’s worship service, let’s examine two passages from the Mosaic Law that David should have known.

You shall make _______________ of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry the ark by them. (Ex. 25:13–14)

As the camp sets out... the sons of Kohath shall come to carry (the furnishing of the Tabernacle), but they _______________ the holy things, lest they die. (Num. 4:15)

But why? What’s wrong with an ox cart? Is God always opposed to Philistine technology? We simply know that God gave the instructions and David did not
follow them. Chronicles tells us that after the incident with Uzzah, David spent time reflecting on what had happened and especially studying the Torah to learn _______________ worship should be carried out.

Then David summoned the priests Zadok and Abiathar, and the Levites... and said to them... “Consecrate yourselves, you and your brothers, so that you may bring up the ark of the Lord... Because you did not carry it the first time, the Lord our God broke out against us, because we did not seek him according to the rule.” So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord, the God of Israel. And the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles, as Moses had commanded according to ___________. (I Chron. 15:11–15)

5. Worshipping the Holy One, is a bit like handling radioactive material. If you don’t know what you’re doing, you might get hurt. This is serious business, so _______________!

Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor with the chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies’ straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake some day and take offense, or the waking god may draw us out to where we can never return. (Annie Dillard, Teaching a Stone to Talk, 1982)

D. The participants of worship: the _______________ question.

There are three main characters in this story which illustrate three kinds of people that are typically in every worship service:

1. David, the _______________ worshipper. Though it took more than one try and cost him dearly, David finally got worship right! We know this is true because he _______________ before the Lord with all his might! (6:14). David learned the importance of worshipping God in _______________ and in _______________ (John 4:24). God has given us clear instructions so that we can _______________ and with _______________ enter the very throne room of heaven (Heb. 4:16). The architecture and furnishings of the Tabernacle/Temple are meant to educate us in this endeavor:
   - The single _______________ (Jesus is the door).
   - The _______________ of sacrifice (the blood of the lamb, the cross, forgiveness for sins, clean hands).
   - The laver; a _______________ for washing; cleansing from sin, a pure heart).
   - The Holy Place (table of _______________, lamp stand, altar of incense).
   - The Most Holy Place (the Ark of the Covenant; the Presence/ _______________).

2. Uzzah, the _______________ worshipper. Though his motives were good, his approach wasn’t. He tried to worship God in his own way. Uzzah is the patron saint of all those who are enamored with Philistine technologies and _______________ styles of worship. In reality, Uzzah was not worshiping God but rather his own god-in-a-box. He felt if he went through the right motions, God would automatically pop up and perform on command. God struck Uzzah dead so all would understand: we must worship the Holy One according to the methods he himself has prescribed!
3. Michal, the ___________________. There is a “Michal” lurking in every worship service! She is not there to worship but rather to watch others as they worship. She “despises” David and those who are like him. Filled with cynicism, sarcasm and ________________, Michal looks down her spiritual nose at the emotionalism of the riffraff who worship in such an unsophisticated manner.

### TABLE TALK

1. What did you learn about God from this story? In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Susan wanted to know if Aslan, the lion, was “safe.” Perhaps you wonder this as well.
2. What did you learn about worship from this story?
3. Do you consider the worship at your church on Sunday morning an expression of “true worship”? 
4. When it comes to worship, why aren’t good motives enough?
5. If you saw someone dancing like David danced at your church, what would your reaction be? What lesson should we learn from Michal’s response?
6. In what sense is worship dangerous?
7. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10). Discuss.

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### Psalm 24 of David

*The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof,*  
*the world and those who dwell therein,*  
*for he has founded it upon the seas*  
*and established it upon the rivers.*

*Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?*  
*And who shall stand in his holy place?*  
*He who has clean hands and a pure heart,*  
*who does not lift up his soul to what is false*  
*and does not swear deceitfully.*  
*He will receive blessing from the LORD*  
*and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*  
*Such is the generation of those who seek him,*  
*who seek the face of the God of Jacob.*  
*Selah*

*Lift up your heads, O gates!*  
*And be lifted up, O ancient doors,*  
*that the King of glory may come in.*  
*Who is this King of glory?*  
*The LORD, strong and mighty,*  
*the LORD, mighty in battle!*  
*Lift up your heads, O gates!*  
*And lift them up, O ancient doors,*  
*that the King of glory may come in.*  
*Who is this King of glory?*  
*The LORD of hosts,*  
*he is the King of glory!*
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Translated from Latin, Veni, Veni, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
And order all things, far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations, bind
All people in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall to thee, O Israel.