

# **Spiritual Progress Requires a Right Attitude**

## **Part 1**

### **A Willingness to Learning from the Past**

Scriptures 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13 & 15

#### **Background**

David at this time had become the undisputed King of Judah and Israel. After consulting many people, he decided to bring the Ark of God to Jerusalem.

Both scriptures above give account of David's initial unsuccessful attempt to bring the Ark of God to Jerusalem. Contrary to God's law and instructions, the Ark was transported on a cart pulled by oxen. On the way the oxen stumbled and one of the drivers called Uzza, put his hand out to steady the ark and God struck him down dead. David was angry and too afraid of God to move the Ark any further and so left it nearby in safe keeping for three months.

David later after proper preparation successfully brought the Ark of God up to Jerusalem. This time, it was carried by the Levite priests in accordance with God's law and they came to Jerusalem with great rejoicing. In this and following articles we shall examine the spiritual lessons and challenges for us today from this episode of David's life.

#### **God's work in David**

God was undertaking a great work in David's life. He was only a young man when he was anointed King of Israel. Before he ascended to his throne God allowed David to be pursued by Saul through the wilderness for many years, with his life under constant threat. In the furnace of these circumstances, he learnt to have a very real relationship with God.

#### **Presumptuous and Assuming Attitude**

After God struck down Uzza, David left the Ark and returned to Jerusalem. He discovered that they had been very presumptuous in their dealings with the Holy Ark of God. They had assumed a great deal and had moved the Ark on a cart in the same manner as the Philistines. David got the priests to sanctify themselves and ensured the Ark was finally transported according to all Gods instructions.

### **Spiritual but Still Capable of Presumptuousness**

David was no ordinary cold man hearted man, he was spiritually alive and had proved God to be true in his years in the wilderness. Yet, he was still capable of being presumptuous with God when dealing with the Ark. This is a very significant warning to us, that although we are in the New Covenant and have the Holy Spirit, we too can have the potential to be presumptuous in handling the things of God. We are in the age of Christ's wonderful grace and goodness, but this can increase the potential for us to be presumptuous with Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

### **Past Instructions Ignored**

There were a number of written instructions to help David and the people to correctly move the Ark. Numbers 4v15 & Deuteronomy 10v8 both state that only the Levites were to carry the Ark of the Lord.

In addition, they should have been cautious given the terrible retribution God inflicted on the Philistines when they briefly captured the Ark. ( This is recorded in 1 Samuel chapters 5 & 6.) Furthermore God slew over fifty thousand people because some of the people looked inside the Ark when it was returned to Israel. David and those advising him failed to take heed of God's law or the incidents mentioned above.

### **Are We Ignoring Spiritual Inspiration and Guidance?**

Are we guilty of neglecting what is in the scriptures or what great Christian men and women have written about spiritual life in Christ? Are we studiously reading the scriptures? When was the last time we sat and read a great spiritual classic?

The scriptures and the writings of our spiritual fathers are a wonderful and invaluable inheritance. They were left to encourage us and give us direction so we can successfully move into the deep riches of Christ.

It would be extremely arrogant on our part, to think that we are experiencing the highest possible level of spiritual life and have little to learn from the past. We should soberly consider that some of our spiritual forefathers had a much deeper experience and knowledge of Christ than ourselves. We need to read their works so that we can be challenged and inspired by their lives and thoughts. They attained great spiritual depths and we need to be encouraged that we can attain the same. We should be in no doubt that we can attain far more in the Lord Jesus than we are at present.

When we get to heaven the cloud of witnesses mentioned in Heb 12 may tell us that we had the directions, encouragement and inspiration available in their writings to go much deeper with Christ but we ignored them.

## **Prevent the Setback & Public Embarrassment**

God struck down Uzza before an array of over 30,000 people. This was a very public setback and an embarrassment for David.

Many of us would make fewer spiritual mistakes and be more on fire if we had better knowledge of the Scriptures and the Christian spiritual classics. They will also help protect us from spurious doctrines and spiritual moves that can otherwise easily blow us off course.

## **The Past Can Spur us Forward**

God has called us into the deep riches of Christ. There is a danger that we can stay in spiritual shallowness, reassuring ourselves that we are ok because we are the same as everyone around us. The inspiration from past great spiritual men and woman will help challenge our present spiritual state and spurs us onward into the deeper things of Christ.

## **Future Articles**

In future articles, we shall explore several areas where there is potential for us to be presumptuous in our dealings with the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

## **Some Suggested Christian Reading**

Heart Talks on Holiness by Samuel L. Brengle

The Seeking Heart (Library of Spiritual Classics) by Fenelon

In the Day of Thy Power by Arthur Wallis

J. Hudson Taylor: A Man in Christ (Missionary Life Stories) by Roger Steer

George Muller: Delighted in God by Roger Steer

Rees Howells: Intercessor by Norman Grubb

Revelations of Divine Love. Author: Julian of Norwich

Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ by Madame Guyon and Jeanne Guyon

Madame Guyon: Her Sole Crime Was Loving God by Jean Marie Guyon

Oswald Chambers Abandoned to God by David McCasland

Biblical Ethics - Oswald Chambers

Not Knowing Whither Oswald Chambers

The Spiritual Man by Watchman Nee

The Divine Conquest AW Tozer

The Pursuit of God AW Tozer