

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG60 – Your Heart—The New Ark Of God

I recently did a podcast on the Tabernacle of David. And as I have done more and more research about the phenomenon of what David did, I have found more interest in really what he was creating and the significance of that for even us today in our worship. It really was the establishment of a new style of worship, and I believe it opened the door for things yet that we must walk in even today as the Body of Christ. If you want to study the story about the Tabernacle of David, you can look at Second Chronicles starting at chapter 1, in verses three through 13. Look at First Chronicles chapter 13; First Chronicles chapters 15 and 16; and in there you will find much of the detail of what David did in establishing what we call the Tabernacle of David.

Basically, to understand it, David took the Ark of the Covenant, which had before that time always been a part of the Tabernacle in the wilderness that Moses put together; he took only the Ark of the Covenant up to the city of David and built his own tent, and placed the Ark of the Covenant in that tent, and commanded worship from the Levites, the sons of Asaph and others, before the Presence of the Lord. Now, one of the things that is amazing about that step is the fact that in the Tabernacle of Moses, there was a Holy of Holies; and only the high priest once a year could enter into that place, which held the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the Presence of God. And in fact, the Presence of God did dwell in that Holy of Holies. So no one really had access into the Presence of God in the Tabernacle of Moses that they built at Mount Sinai. When David goes and takes just the Ark of the Covenant and brings that up to the City of David in Jerusalem, and creates his own tent and pitches a tent there that did not have separation to it, it meant that those who were in the tent and worshiping, serving God, praising God, singing to God, were doing it directly in the Presence of God. So as you can see, this was an absolute change in what had existed up until this time.

Now, David himself did not necessarily separate the Ark of the Covenant from the Tabernacle itself; that had already been done. The Philistines had taken it; it was not all together at the time that David went to claim the Ark of the Covenant. But still, David knew where the whole Tent of Meeting was, the Tabernacle from the wilderness that Moses built. He could have simply returned the Ark of the Covenant into the Tent as it had always been. He could have merely re-established the form of worship that had existed at the time – which of course we know was based in the sacrifice of the animals, which was laid out in the Torah, especially in the Book of Leviticus. And so we see that he could have done that had he chosen to; but instead, he did something completely different. The fact that he did that expresses really in a sense who David was. Because David had a revelation of God, and he was looking to fulfill what God wanted out of the children of Israel. As the Tabernacle of David was established in the City of David, we see that never before really had instruments been the form of worship in the wilderness. The only form of worship was the sacrifice, the burnt offerings, that had been prescribed by Moses in the Torah. But this new form of music and worship and songs of praise opened something else completely. And now we see that the Presence of God is transitioning, in a sense, if you want to call it that, and now begins to inhabit the praise of God's people. In Psalm 22, at verse 3, it says, "Yet You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel." Now in the Hebrew, the word that is used for

enthroned there can also be easily translated, if not even better translated, to indwell, or inhabit. So you would say, "O You who are, who inhabits, the praises of Israel." And this was what began to take place as a transition.

When David moved things away from worship being defined by the sacrifices that had been prescribed by Moses, then he transformed it into a musical worship. That now became worship. Song, instruments, praise, all of these things took on a vocal form. It took on dance. It took on instrumentation, many things that had really never existed under Moses and up through the time of the possession of the land by Israel. So this was, again, a tremendous change that David made, and I believe he made it because of what his heart was towards God, and what his revelation was. Up until this time, the Ark of the Covenant had represented the Presence of God for Israel. That is why they would carry it with them everywhere they went. They would take it with them into war. In Numbers the tenth chapter, at verses 35-36, it says, "Then it came about when the Ark set out that Moses said, 'Rise up, O Lord! And let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You.' When it came to rest, he said, 'Return, O Lord, to the myriad thousands of Israel.'" Moses would proclaim this every time they would pick up the Ark. They packed up the tent, the Levites would pick up the Ark by the staves that were put through the rings in the side of the Ark of the Covenant, and they would carry it with them. Before they started to carry it, Moses would proclaim this, that God would rise up and His enemies would be scattered. So this idea that the enemies of God, or the enemies of Israel, were scattered at the Presence of God – if you wanted to win a war, what did you need? You needed the Presence of God. If you wanted to see God's Presence with you, what did you need? You needed the Ark of the Covenant to be with you. When you came to rest, and you set up camp and pitched the tents to live in for however long God directed, then you recognized that the Presence of God remained with you as that Ark of the Covenant remained.

Everything about God in His Presence was totally related in the minds of Israel; and in fact, and in truth, it was related to this Ark of the Covenant and to the Tent of worship that had been set up by Moses in the wilderness. Now we begin to see something different. David takes just the Ark, which was the most significant piece, representing the Presence of God; and he takes it to dwell with him in the City of David. And he would go in and worship before it; and the sons of Asaph daily would go and worship before it, with songs and praise and instruments and shouts and dancing right directly in and before this great Ark of the Covenant. So we are seeing this tremendous transition.

Were the offerings still being made? Yes, they were being made. But David sent the priests back to the altar and to the Tent to make those sacrifices; he did not do that. His focus was this worship, what we would call today worship and song and praise, before the Lord. That is what was being offered up before God as sacrifice and worship. And all of this was really being created by David. In a sense, it was a scary thing, I think, because he had no scriptural precedent. He only had what was in his own heart and what was in his belief and understanding about the Lord and about what it was that God really was looking for in the beginning, and what God wanted out of His people. So David really understood. This is why he was called a man after God's own heart, because he knew what God really wanted. And he made these changes in the form of worship and the separation of the Presence of God from the animal sacrifice that had been termed and been up to that point what was worship and service to God; and he makes this change.

In First Samuel 13, verses 13-14, "Samuel said to Saul, 'You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, for now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has

sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you." We see in the New Testament Scriptures, in the book of Acts, chapter seven, when Stephen was speaking, in verses 44-45 it says, "Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen. And having received it in their turn, our fathers brought it in with Joshua upon dispossessing the nations whom God drove out before our fathers, until the time of David." See all this had been the way it was until the time of David. Verses 46-47, "David found favor in God's sight, and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for Him." Now, this is kind of interesting terminology, because it is saying David found favor in the sight of God and asked that he might find a dwelling place. The truth is that David did find that dwelling place. He pitched a tent next to his home, in the City of David, and he moved the Presence of God into that tent.

Remember God's response to him: "I have always lived in a tent. I don't need a house, and you are not going to build a house for me." Solomon was to build the house; and in fact, Solomon did build Solomon's Temple, the house of worship. And after he had done that, he moved the tent, which Moses had pitched, and he brought back the Ark of the Covenant, and put them in the house that he built. But David found favor in the sight of God and was able to bring about what is a revelation to all of us, if we can see it clearly, of what it was that God was looking for. And it was a radical step, because like I said, David did not have necessarily instruction for doing it. He wasn't necessarily told to do it. He initiated doing it because that was his heart. And we understand God blessed him, and he was termed a man after God's own heart. And I think it was for this worship that he established, it was for what he did with the Ark of the Covenant, that he was really recognized as a man after God's own heart; because David showed all of Israel, as well as the body of Christ today, what does God want? what was He wanting back at that time?

If we go to Jeremiah chapter seven, this is very interesting. Starting at verses 22-23, it says, "For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.'" This almost sounds crazy, because you're saying, "Well, you've got the instructions of God to set up the tent that Moses built." And He gives very clear directions for the sacrifice of animals and how it was to be done, in painful detail of how it was to take place. Yet here, through Jeremiah, God is saying, "I did not command your fathers, when I brought them out of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. That was not My purpose. My purpose was to tell them to hear My voice, to come into a relationship with Me, to obey Me, and I would be to them a God, and they would be to Me a people." You say, "Well then, how did we get all of these animal sacrifices and this whole way of worship that was set up?" Well, it was already the way of the peoples. It was the way of the peoples that Israel dwelt in. There were animal sacrifices that transpired in Egypt, that they were surrounded with, and in the other nations that surrounded them. And we know that one of the temptations for the children of Israel was that they wanted to be like the nations around them – that is why they wanted a king. And so God, as we know with Saul, gives them a king; and He tells Samuel the prophet, "Listen, they are not violating you. They are not rejecting you. They are rejecting Me from being King over them. I didn't want them to have a king, I wanted them to have Me as their King."

We can look at the advent of the animal sacrifice in much the same way. What God was looking for was a people that He wanted to be the Lord over, the King over. He wanted to be in a relationship with

them. But knowing that they were going to sacrifice, and that they were going to be tempted by it, then what He did was He separated them from the nations by giving them very specific guidelines of what, and how, and when, they were to sacrifice in this tent that they were setting up. It doesn't mean that is what He was looking for. The proof of what I am saying is that that's exactly what they did when Moses was up on the mountain, receiving the Ten Commandments. And remember, the Ten Commandments have nothing to do with animal sacrifice. They are a moral code of our life that is still taught in church today. So this wasn't about animal sacrifice; this was about what God was looking for between Himself and His people. But what did they do? They got tired of waiting for Moses, and they built a golden calf, and they sacrificed to it. They sacrificed before it. And they worshiped before it. See, God knew what was going to happen. He saw it happen. He observed what they did. And so there was a very clear establishment of a way of sacrifice in worship that was much the same as the nations and the lands that surrounded them. But it does not mean that is what God purposed in His heart. And so through Jeremiah, He says very clearly, "I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the ways which I command you, that it may be well with you.'"

So again, David understood this. David had the perception. He was a man after God's own heart; and one of the things he was able to perceive, as a man after God's own heart, was exactly what was it that God was looking for in worship to Him from His people. And so, what he set about to do in creating and building the Tabernacle of David and removing the Ark of the Covenant, or the Presence of God, away from the animal sacrifice, was to create an atmosphere that he knew, being the man after God's own heart, this is what God wants. This is what will please the Lord.

Psalm 69, starting at verses 30-31, says, "I will praise the name of God with song and magnify Him with thanksgiving. And it will please the Lord better than an ox or a young bull with horns and hoofs." Psalm 51, verses 14-17 says, "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise. For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." And these are words from a Psalm that were repeated by Yeshua, by Jesus, when He was on the earth. He recognized this, because remember, this heart of David is an expression of the heart of Messiah. It is the heart of Jesus. It is the heart of Yeshua that was there in existence, and He knew what God the Father was looking for. And so David brought about the pattern. He established the ideal, if you will, of what worship we are to bring unto God. And so he took a major step and moved everything out and separated it from the Tabernacle or the Tent in the wilderness; and he created this Tabernacle of David where you were able to walk directly into the Presence of God, and you were able to worship and sing and praise right before Him; and not with the blood of bulls and goats, but instead with your heart. He was looking for that heart before Him, that would worship Him. What did He tell them? "Shema Israel, you are to worship Me, the Lord your God. You are to love Him with all of your heart, all of your mind, all of your soul, all of your strength, everything you have within you." And that is what Yeshua repeated. This is worship – what comes out of our hearts.

So we see this whole transition that David brought, but there is another step to it; and I want to get into that step in this podcast. So we are going to go to Second Chronicles 20. Now this is the story of Jehoshaphat, and we know that Jehoshaphat was threatened because the armies were going to come and destroy him. He didn't know what to do, and he knew that he was outnumbered and would be

destroyed. So he declares a time of fasting and crying out to God, seeking God. In chapter 20, starting at verses 12-18, it says, "'O our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You.' All Judah was standing before the Lord, with their infants, their wives and their children. Then in the midst of the assembly the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite of the sons of Asaph." Now remember, these were the ones that David had singing in the Tabernacle of David. "And he said, 'Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the Lord to you, "Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's. Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the valley in front of the wilderness of Jeruel. You need not fight in this battle; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem." Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for the Lord is with you.' Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshiping the Lord."

So here they have this dilemma that they are in. They are about to be destroyed by the armies coming up against them. They know that they cannot defeat them. They cry out to God and God says, "Look, the battle is Mine. You go down and face them. You go down and set yourself in array. But remember this, that the battle is Mine." So they follow through with this in chapter 20, starting at verses 20-21, it says, "They arose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa; and when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, put your trust in the Lord your God and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed.' When he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the Lord and those who praised Him in holy attire, as they went out before the army and said, 'Give thanks to the Lord, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.'"

Now you notice in this language, Jehoshaphat is quoting David in this whole transition of worship that takes place in the Tabernacle of David. He is quoting here from First Chronicles 16:29, from First Chronicles 16:34, and from Psalm 29:2. So he has got this picture. Jehoshaphat is in the process of taking what David did and bringing it into another step. And that is why I want us to see this, and take time with some of these verses to really get what transpires; because as much as David made an outward change, Jehoshaphat is bringing the change again. And this is the change that we find ourselves, as believers today, able to enter into.

Verses 22-24. It says, "When they began singing and praising, the Lord set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed. For the sons of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir destroying them completely; and when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another." So they killed themselves. "When Judah came to the lookout of the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude, and behold, they were corpses lying on the ground, and no one had escaped." So then they take three days gathering the spoils from all that they had done in this process.

What had they done? They had followed the instruction of the Lord. He said, "Remember, go out and confront them, go out and stand before them." He didn't tell them how they were going to win. He didn't say He was going to do this. He made them still go out. He didn't separate Himself from the people. And that is what we begin seeing here. We see another step where, instead of now going in and finding that we can be in the Presence of God in the Tent of David, in the Tabernacle of David, and stand before the Ark of the Covenant and worship; we see all of a sudden, God is in the midst of His people.

And that is what the Psalm was about that we read: "O You who inhabit the praises of Your people." God now is taking one more step closer to the believer, and He is now inhabiting us. You could say that the Ark of the Covenant has now become the heart of the believer, and God is dwelling within us. This was what was being foreshadowed; because we know this is true in Messiah, that He dwells within us, that He and the Father will take up Their abode in us.

But all of this began to happen. And it's amazing when we can see it transpiring on a physical level, and how these men of God walked into this in an amazing way and illustrated it for us and gave us a biblical precedent for what we are believing today as Christians in our worship and how it works. So this great step by Jehoshaphat to take a step farther from what David had done and recognize that now we don't need the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle of David; God is going with His people. God is dwelling in the praises of His people. God is infusing our worship. Our hearts are now – and that was prophetically said about David, he was a man after God's own heart. And it was that heart of David that God chose to inhabit. And it was that praise of David that God chose to inhabit. And we see the manifestation of that here with Jehoshaphat and the army coming up. What a tremendous picture that is being drawn for us and what a great success. The battle, the victory was God's, but they had to carry God into the battle. They had to take Him. It wasn't a matter of carrying any longer the Ark of the Covenant, or having the Tent with you. You now, you now are the Presence of God going forth into the world. And God goes with His people. And when God goes with His people, His power and His victory are also there. And they were able to win that day, and it took them three days to gather up all of the spoils from that battle. And they brought them back to Jerusalem.

We see this again reflected, interestingly to me, in the New Testament. Some may disagree that this is what is happening, but in Matthew 26, we just have finished the Last Supper. And it says, in verse 30, "After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." And I think it's very, very significant that Christ Himself, knowing what He was facing, He sang the hymn. He entered into the spirit of David. He entered into the door that was opened, even by Jehoshaphat, where in His worship, in His song, He carried the Father with Him into this difficult moment. And the Father was with Him when He was at the Garden of Gethsemane. The Father was with Him when He was on that cross. But isn't it unique that the expression of it was in this song in worship that the disciples had as they left that Seder dinner, if you want to call it that, and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Again, we see it with Paul and Silas in Acts 16, it's verses 23-26. It says, "When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened."

We see that they, again, were the Ark of the Covenant. They couldn't have gone to visit the Tabernacle of David, they were locked in prison. They were in the inner prison. You see, what had to happen was something greater than the Tabernacle of David. We have to have God with us wherever we are. Where we need His power, where we need His anointing, where we need His victory and His glory, we must be those who are that Ark, now carrying Him into every aspect of the world and what is needed in this age. We must bring the victory of Christ. We must bring the anointing of God the Father. We must bring the power, as Moses would say, "Rise up, O God, and let your enemies be scattered." We need to say that in our day and age. We need to say, "Rise up, O God, who inhabits the praises of His people, who inhabits

my heart, and let the enemies of this generation be scattered before You. And let Your Kingdom come. Let the victory of Your Kingdom come that You won on the cross, let it be established in this day. And wherever You are needed on this planet, we, as Your believers, will carry You to that place; and You then will be able to manifest Your glory, Your authority, Your victory in Your Presence."

This is what we are believing for today. I want to get out of the sense of what we have thought of worship being in the church, just like David had to end the thought process of what worship was in the Tent that had been pitched by Moses. He had to get that out of his thinking, and the thinking of others. There had to be a new level of worship. And worship cannot be what we have known it to be in the church, down through these times of history. There have been breakthroughs where we have seen the Presence of God literally manifest Himself in our worship; but not enough, not consistently enough. And our hearts have to lay hold now on the reality that it is time for us to break through into a pattern of worship. And the boldness that it took for David to do that is unmistakable. He didn't necessarily have guidelines of the way it was, but God was with him because he was a man after God's own heart. We need to become a body of people after God's own heart. We need to have His will at our fingertips to say, "This is what I live for. This is the drive of my life." We have to be those driven to carry His Presence.

We have to be bold enough to create a new day. Don't get stuck in the worship that we have. The praise worship is fine, but it is not where we want to go. It is not what we are looking for. The old congregational worship is wonderful, but it is not what we are looking for. Lord, there is another step. And as You showed it to David, a man after Your own heart, show it to us, Your Body, and this generation; that we may know how to enter into a worship that carries You and Your Presence into this age to bring about Your victory, to bring about Your will, and to build Your Kingdom. Amen.

I want to remember a few points. Number one, the victory is the Lord's. There is nothing we can do. Like Jehoshaphat said, we are not strong enough, we are not great enough, to fight this fight. Lord, the victory is Yours. Therefore, we must have the victory of God. We must have His Presence if we are going to have His victory. The key for Israel was always carrying the Presence of God via the Ark with them. They took God with them wherever they were going. And if they faced an enemy, they won, because of His Presence. David connected God's Presence, the Ark of the Covenant, to worship with song, music, and instruments. He had that revelation and made that transition. And I believe – last point – that the Body of Christ today needs to find a level of worship that brings the Presence, the Lord's Presence, and the Lord's power, and the Lord's victory, into the world today.