

2ND SAMUEL

Week 9, chapters 6 and 7

2nd Samuel chapter 6 is the story of the transfer of the Ark of the Covenant to the City of David from where it had rested for the past 70 years in the home of Avinadav (a Levite and probably a Priest) located in **Kiryat Ye'arim**. **Kiryat Ye'arim** was also known as **Baalah** and **Ba'al Judah**; it was less than a day's journey northwest of Yerushalayim.

Now that David had selected and captured the stronghold of Zion that occupied but a portion of the land known as Yerushalayim (a place he intended as his capital), he turned his attention to reinstating and reviving the proper worship of the God of Israel, which had steadily declined since the death of Eli (Samuel's mentor) to the point of being an afterthought among the tribes.

I have already pointed out that as we wind our way through the Samuel Scroll, which has been divided into the two books of 1st and 2nd Samuel, we find fewer and fewer instances of the words Torah, Law, and Moses appearing in the ancient texts; and this is because we find less and less interest in following the true religion as given to God's people on Mt. Sinai. Their preference was for a concoction of Middle Eastern social customs, pagan worship practices, and developing Hebrew Traditions, all of which was accomplished in the name of YHWH.

It is obvious by what we have seen occurring in earlier chapters and now here in this chapter, that neither the authorized religious leadership of Israel (the Levites and Priests) nor the civil leadership (David and his court) had any actual working knowledge of the Torah. Yet I suspect if we could go back in time and ask them if they did, they would display surprised (and probably offended) looks on their faces and respond vehemently that not only did they know the Torah, but they were following the Torah. Such is the nature of what happens in only a few generations after the Lord has declared His true and perfect Word to mankind, and Christianity has not been immune.

Before we resume with the story of the Ark's arrival at Jerusalem there is a question that

needs to be asked: why didn't David FIRST bring the Tabernacle to Jerusalem so that the Ark could then be reunited with its God-ordained dwelling place? For this we'll have to speculate to a degree but I think the answer is fairly evident. The original Tabernacle (a grand tent made of cloth and animal skins) had long ago worn out. We know that in Eli's day, when it was located in Shiloh, it had been highly revamped and added onto, but Shiloh had been burned out and the Tabernacle likely destroyed. It is questionable whether whatever form it now held was even portable. But there was another and more thorny problem involved: there were at this time (at the least) two High Priests and thus 2 independent sets of priesthods, each with its own loyal following divided along tribal lines. David was in process of unifying the 12 tribes and had to find a politically palatable solution to determining WHICH priesthood would preside. Each set of priesthods had some sort of sanctuary and furnishings for it, some of which were undoubtedly original and others being replicas. David's solution was to not use the sanctuaries or the furnishings of either priesthood (at least not for now).

Let's re-read the bulk of 2nd Samuel chapter 6.

RE-READ 2ND SAMUEL 6:6 – end

We saw last week that at least 3 serious violations of the Torah Law had been committed by David and his entourage as they journeyed with the Ark to Yerushalayim. First, they put the Ark into an oxcart instead of having it carried on the shoulders of Levites from the clan of Kohath. Second, one of the Levites accompanying the Ark touched it when the oxen stumbled, causing the cart to lurch, and believing that the Ark might tumble onto the ground Uzah instinctively put out his hand to steady it. He died instantly for this infraction against God's holiness. And third, David and the 30,000 participants held a wrong attitude in their minds about the nature of this occasion. We find that they celebrated the return of the Ark in a frivolous party-like atmosphere, rather than with a more appropriate solemn and reverent mindset.

But ultimately it was Uzah's startling death that unnerved David, causing him to postpone the completion of the Ark's journey to Jerusalem.

In verse 8 we're told that Uzah's death at God's hand made David "upset". The Hebrew word is **charah**; it means to be hot, to be angry. As we have gotten to know David I think a good word would be "frustrated". Despite what many women may think, men actually do have

many emotions; but although the array of inner emotions is substantial the outward display of emotions (especially for warriors and strong leaders like David) is often reduced simply to anger. What, exactly, was David so “hot” under the collar about? It was that upon Uzah’s death he knew he could not possibly risk bringing the Ark into his personal compound, the City of David, as he had his heart set upon doing, because the cause of God’s fatal outburst was a total mystery to him.

I said in the opening part of the lesson that David had no working knowledge of the Torah and here is yet another proof. If David knew the Law he would instantly have known why Uzah died by touching the Ark. And if the Levites had known the Law they could have explained to David why Uzah died and that this need not reoccur. But since ignorance was running rampant at the moment, an abundance of caution was the wisest course of action.

This death occurred at a place that is described as ***goren nakhon***, meaning “the threshing floor of the stroke”. After the incident the place was memorialized and given a formal name: ***Peretz-Uzah***, meaning “bursting out against Uzah”. David decided that while he wouldn’t send the Ark back to ***Kiryat Ye’arim*** he would put it into someone else’s charge for the time being. Although it doesn’t say why he chose this course of action the reason is obvious: he’d let someone else be the guinea pig and then see what happens. Verses 10 and 11 explain that the person and family who would take the risk of housing the Ark was Oved-Edom the Gittite (or more probably, the Gathite).

Quite a bit of strange commentary has been written about Oved-Edom, usually centering on his being a gentile resident alien in Israel; therefore David wasn’t even risking a Hebrew life should the Lord break-out in wrath again (for some unknown reason); but that isn’t the case at all. If we merely look to the parallel account of this event as recorded in 1Chronicles 26, we find that not only was Oved-Edom a Hebrew, he was a Levite. It is true that Oved-Edom is not a typical or necessarily appropriate name for someone of Hebrew descent, but the reason could easily have been from intermarriage.

The reason that we should translate Gittite as Gathite is rather self evident. First, both words are spelled identically in Hebrew so it’s just a matter of how the word is vocalized. But second, Gath-Rimmon was a named Levitical city; it was located in Dan’s former territory (Joshua 21:24). And residents of Gath-Rimmon were called Gathites. As ignorant as David was as to Torah protocols, he certainly would have known better than to intentionally turn the holiest object on earth over to a common foreigner for safe-keeping (especially after considering what had just happened).

It seems probable that this Levite, Oved-Edom, lived in greater Yerushalayim, outside the walls of the City of David because later we'll see that it was only a brief journey from his house to David's compound. After a period of 3 months, word came to David that not only had this Levite and his family not been harmed, they had been greatly blessed. What was the blessing they received? Well as we discover in 1Chronicles 26 a list of 8 sons is assigned to Oved-Edom's household, so likely this great fruitfulness of male children was regarded as a supernatural blessing due to the presence of the Ark. That was enough for David; he wanted that blessing to fall on his household. I also suspect that during the 3 months some Torah study was accomplished as well, because in David's next attempt to bring the Ark into the City of David, the earlier errors were remedied.

Verse 12 explains that this time David "joyously" went to bring the Ark home. The Hebrew word is *simchah*, and it speaks of an inner, reverent joy. Thus we have the context for what comes next: that David danced before the Ark wearing only a priest's ephod. In other words, when we picture the procession with the musical instruments, the singing, and the dancing the attitude was appropriately pious. Even if we modern Christians might have some personal inhibitions and feelings about various kinds of outward displays of worship and praise, it is the intent and attitude of the worshipper that matters to the Lord; the rest is only about our personal hang-ups.

Verse 13 explains that the Ark was "borne" by people (that is, it was carried) instead of transported in an oxcart as cargo. Further that after going only 6 paces David sacrificed an ox and a fattened sheep. There are some differences of opinion about what is meant by this. Some say that after EVERY 6 paces another ox and sheep were sacrificed; therefore however far the journey was a substantial number of oxen and sheep were sacrificed. And since many of these same folks advocate a goodly distance to Oved-Edom's house, it could easily have been thousands of animals involved. And since the passage seems to imply that it was David who presided over the sacrifice, then the procession took quite some time as it would stop and wait for David to sacrifice and then begin again. Others say there was only one sacrifice and it happened after the first 6 paces, and was not repeated.

My conclusion is that Oved-Edom's house was in Jerusalem, and so the distance would have been relatively short. Further, saying that "David sacrificed" is probably merely a common way of speaking. In other words all throughout the Bible we'll read how people brought their sacrifice to the altar and "they" sacrificed their animal. But in actuality it was the Priest who did the sacrificial procedure because only the Priest could approach the altar. So it was probably not David himself who actually performed the sacrifice, but rather it was a sacrifice that he both provided and ordered to occur. I also think it highly unlikely that David would consider it a great

thing to sacrifice a total of one ox and one sheep. Therefore I have no doubt that the number of sacrifices was to be representative of every six steps that David took. Since the Ark was in Jerusalem, it likely wasn't more than 600 paces or so, so it's easily imaginable that something on the order of 100 oxen and 100 sheep may have been sacrificed in the process. Even double that is not an enormous undertaking.

We are informed that David danced in an ephod, and that there was shouting at the sound of the trumpet. It was quite the spectacle! But just for the record, it was not a metal "trumpet" that was blown; it was a Ram's horn (a **shofar**). Further when we read of the "shouts" (that is a poor translation) the word is **teruah** and **teruah** is a specific kind of **shofar** blast. A **shofar** was used like a bugle; it was the means of communicating a signal from the leadership to the troops. The **teruah** was one of those signals, and it communicated that people needed to pay attention. So depending on the circumstance it could be used as a victory signal or it could be used to signal that it was time to assemble for battle. Here in Torah Class when we blow the **shofar** it is a **teruah**; it is used to call the assembly to order.

As the Ark of God made its way into the City of David, David's wife Mikhal was watching from a window, and what she observed sickened her. There was her husband, the king, whirling and twirling and apparently in a way that was (to her thinking) quite immodest if not downright embarrassing. But even more, to her mind it was not appropriate for a king to behave in such a manner, especially so very publically.

The Rabbis have noticed (quite rightly) that the Scriptures don't refer to Mikhal as "David's wife"; rather she is the "daughter of King Sha'ul". We'll pick up that thought again momentarily. The Ark was placed inside the tent that David had prepared for it. There has been much argument about the nature of this tent and it often stems around the English translation of "tabernacle". Some commentators prefer to translate this verse as tabernacle instead of tent, and then say that this is proof that either the remnants or some facsimile of the Wilderness Tabernacle was previously brought to the City of David, and this is what the Ark was placed in. The term tabernacle is used in the KJV and other older European era produced versions, and it ought not to be. The Hebrew word is **ohel**, and it means "tent". **Ohel** is a generic term, and it indicates a common tent that a shepherd might use. The word for the Tabernacle (in the sense of a holy place) is **mishkan**, and that word is nowhere present here. We'll get a little clearer sense about the structure and nature of this tent in the next chapter, but it is entirely clear that this was not a Tabernacle; this was not a **mishkan**.

Next we're told that David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. This sentence, when addressed in Hebrew, tells us a lot. First, the phrase "before the Lord" means

“before the place where the Ark is present”. Second, there were two distinctly different categories of sacrifices offered in this passage; the **‘Olah** and the **Shelamim**. The **‘Olah** is essentially the highest sacrifice and with this kind all the meat is cut-up and thrown onto the altar to be burned up into ashes. Nothing is left over; the idea is that it is all given to God.

The other kind of sacrifice mentioned is the **Shelamim**, the so-called peace offering. For our purposes the importance is that only some of the meat is burned up on the altar; the bulk of it goes to the worshippers and the Levites. Originally, NO meat could be eaten that was not first part of a sacrifice (later this command was relaxed). Thus if a person wanted meat to eat they certainly wouldn’t offer an **‘Olah** sacrifice whereby all the meat was to be burned up. Therefore Hebrew history shows that **Shelamim** sacrifices were overwhelmingly offered more frequently than another kind because the person who offered it received most of the meat back for a planned banquet.

This understanding of the sacrifices helps us with the next verse, which says that next (to commemorate the day) David distributed a loaf of bread, a raisin cake and a portion of meat to every last Israelite in attendance. There would have been thousands of people involved. Where would the meat have come from to give to all these folks (since meat was a fairly precious commodity and not at all a part of the daily diet)? From the **Shelamim** sacrifices; in fact there was no other liturgical reason for the peace offerings than to supply the meat for a happy feast to celebrate the arrival of the Ark.

Another interesting tidbit is unearthed when we look at the original Hebrew; the bread that was baked and given away in great quantity was unusual. Various translations say it was a ring of bread, or a cake of bread, or even a cake made in a pan. The words are **challah lechem**; Challah Bread. This is the traditional bread used on Shabbat or (as we have made it a Torah Class tradition served for all of our Feast fellowships except Passover) as a bread reserved for festive occasions.

As the celebration was winding down David went to his palace (or at least to the building that housed his harem) in order to offer a traditional blessing over his household; immediately an incensed Mikhal confronted him. In the most sarcastic tone she verbally attacks David for what she see as his unseemly behavior as the leader of procession of the Ark. She is particularly upset because he supposedly exposed himself to even his servants’ slave girls as he danced in a Priest’s ephod. There are a number of things we can take from this section of chapter 6.

First: there is some modern-day argument as well as some Rabbinical commentary that says that David didn't really expose himself; rather it was that he was merely immodest (for a king, anyway). Unfortunately that interpretation doesn't hold any water because the Hebrew used word to describe his "immodesty" is **galah**. And **galah** means to uncover nakedness. It is a term with built-in sexual overtones and so to say his private parts became exposed at times during his dancing is inescapable.

Second: when Mikhal said he exposed himself to the servant's slave girls, there are two things being communicated. Notice that these slave girls are said to belong to the servants; a servant's servant so to speak. So these are the lowest class of people possible to serve in the palace. And the idea is NOT that these are the only people who saw David's nakedness, it's just that as bad as it is that the tribal elders and leaders might have seen David like this, and that some of the common townspeople might also have had a glimpse, nothing could be more demeaning that for a servant's slave girls to also have such a privilege that, after all, should have been reserved only for the eyes of David's wife.

Third: Mikhal wasn't so concerned for David's modesty as she was for herself. She was humiliated because she was the daughter of a King. Notice: not the WIFE of a king (David), but the DAUGHTER of a king (Saul). She more identified herself with her father (dead and gone for many years) than with her husband. And Biblically speaking this is a spiritually wrong attitude and a breaking of the commandment for a married couple to leave their mothers and fathers and be joined together as one. But it also shows that Mikhal had retained that certain arrogance that most family members of a king have; one that we saw Saul especially exhibit at every turn (his daughter had learned well). And this compares to David's attitude, who as Israel's king (regardless of his other faults), did not seem to harbor the usual level of entitlement and better-than-thou attitude of royalty.

Fourth: Mikhal obviously resented being part of a harem. She was David's 1st wife, given to him by King Saul. Not only that but if we were to take the time to revisit the occasion when Mikhal was forcibly returned to David, there is no hint that Mikhal was happy for this reunion. The reality is that many of the girls that she resented for getting a view of David's anatomy (a view that she regarded as one that was for her alone) were the mothers of many of David's children. But she didn't accept her position as one among many; she saw herself as privileged, and above it all, and this whole dancing-in-the-ephod episode reflected badly on her (as she saw it).

David didn't respond meekly to Mikhal's outburst. However the exact meaning of what he said is yet another disputed part of this chapter. I won't go into the several interpretations (for the

sake of time) so here is how I see it. The first thing David does is to put Mikhal in her place by telling her that she is not the daughter of a king, but rather of a man who was deposed of kingship by Yehoveh. In fact, the Lord took Saul's Kingship and gave it to David. Bottom line: whatever claim to royalty that you may have, Mikhal, it is through me (who was chosen by God) not through your thoroughly disgraced father (who was abandoned by God).

Further David's goal in his dancing in the ephod was not to show off for the people, but rather to show his humility before Yehoveh. Even if some of David's people (including Mikhal) saw his antics as contemptible; even if David himself FELT contemptible by his own actions, those simple slave girls who have no such arrogance or position among men will honor him as King of Israel and that's sufficient.

Here's the thing: David took off his royal clothes and donned an ephod before the Lord. An ephod, being the undergarment of a Priest, was an outward demonstration of David's inner being. A Priest is first and foremost a servant to God. By David refusing to wear his kingly clothes, and preferring instead the simplest of Priestly garments, he showed that when the Lord is present there is only one king that matters. The Lord God is the supreme king of heaven and earth and for a man to stand before Him even as a limited earthly king is most inappropriate (especially for this occasion). So David presented himself as God's humble servant; and then in some ways compared his lowly position before Yehoveh as approximately equal to the servant's slave girl's position before David. The comparison is that there is no comparison. God is supreme and unchallenged. And of course, it would be difficult from a prophetic perspective not to notice that David, as the precursor to Messiah, wore the mantle of a priest (however briefly) that overlaid his role as king, just as Christ would. And even more, it mimicked the person of Melchizedek, the mysterious king and priest of Shalem, the very place where David donned the ephod and now ruled from.

The last verse of this chapter explains that Mikhal remained childless until the day she died. There are a couple of important aspects to this statement. One is that being barren is always seen as a curse from God. The Hebrew belief (and with good reason since it is very much in line with Biblical principle) is that a woman's primary duty in life is to renew life. A woman was created to bear children, and this fulfills God's command to be fruitful and fill the earth. Thus for a woman NOT to bear children is humiliating and she bears great shame, because it is seen as a divine curse (often times for reasons she does not know).

Whether you subscribe to this or not doesn't matter; the women in the Biblical era certainly did and that is a least part of the meaning of this verse. We see Mikhal's sinful and rebellious attitude against God and His anointed, and she pays the ultimate price for it by having no

children.

However there is another aspect to this; the Talmud says that the meaning is that Mikhal had no OTHER children after this event. It says that she did indeed provide David with one child. And this conclusion comes from a statement in 2nd Samuel 3:5:

CJB 2 Samuel 3:5 and the sixth, Yitre'am, whose mother was 'Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hevron.

The ancient Sages say that 'Eglah was Mikhal; and there is at least some possibility that this is true. 'Eglah is NOT a name; it is a term of endearment. 'Eglah means "little heifer". And while that may not be a title any modern Western woman would be fond of, it was quite a loving thing in the old times. I'll leave that up to you to decide if 'Eglah was merely a nickname for Mikhal. The evidence is too incomplete for me to come to any definite conclusion.

Let's move on to chapter 7.

You can set your Bibles down as we won't read 2nd Samuel chapter 7 until next week, but I'd like to say a couple of things about it as a preparation and in hopes that you will read it thoroughly before our next gathering.

2nd Samuel chapter 7 is one of those where entire books have been written about it. No doubt it is the theological pinnacle of the entire Samuel Scroll. Thus the academics that follow the literary criticism discipline of Bible exposition (which just might be the majority of modern Bible scholars) have major misgivings about it. There are many reasons in their repertoire of reasons to claim that this chapter is very nearly (if not an outright) fraud. Some say that that this was a very late insertion (well after the Babylonian exile) done by a Deuteronomist. A Deuteronomist is a theoretical writer from ancient times, who found various reasons to prove a point on a variety of theological positions, so he (or they) rewrote some of the ancient Scriptures to their suiting, or merely added or deleted entire sections. Now to a Bible scholar of the literary criticism discipline a Deuteronomist is not a theory, it is a reality. Of course, the only proof of such a thing is agreement among themselves.

How do the literary critics decide when such a treatment of Holy Scripture has occurred? By means of their own intellect. A literary critical scholar does not accept mystery or miracle. They approach Bible texts no differently than any other ancient literature. They determine that there are things that an ancient Biblical author could not have known, so it must have been written by someone else at a later date after the fact. Or perhaps to their way of thinking there are too many coincidences about things that work too neatly together, so someone must have doctored it up to make it appear that way (or as they would say, to harmonize the Scriptures). Or they decide that a certain ancient writer wouldn't use a certain word or a certain writing style, and thus they conclude that somebody else fiddled with the text. Proof? None; only their own opinion. But since they usually have the PhD. title and are greatly admired in their field, what they say becomes fact.

I read a great deal of material formulated by Bible scholars who are of the literary critical ilk, use some and discard a great deal more. Often they have great insight on the meaning of certain obscure Hebrew words and phrases, or open a line of thought that no one else would dare to (and it can be quite fruitful). But if you could offer one general characterization of the literary critical method of Bible scholarship it would be that it is soul-less. As a general principle, literary critics do not see any spiritual element in the Bible texts. They do not believe in the divine hand. Therefore if what a Prophet like Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or Ezekiel prophesies comes true decades or centuries after it was supposedly uttered, it was all a trick. If what seems to be a prophetic oracle in a Psalm eventually comes to pass, it was a fraud. Because what actually happened was that after something important occurred (such as Babylon destroying Jerusalem), a later writer with an agenda (a Deuteronomist) would go back and put words into a Prophets mouth (a Prophet who lived long before the actual fulfillment) by altering the text to make it appear that there was a valid prophecy and then a real fulfillment.

In other words, there is no such thing as spirit. There is no such thing as a miracle. There is no such thing as divine prophecy except as a category of literature. Of course there are a handful of exceptions to the rule, but my description of literary critical Bible scholars is apt.

As we delve into 2nd Samuel chapter 7 then, you will quickly understand why literary criticism Bible scholars say that this chapter was inserted in its entirety after the Babylonian exile; or it existed earlier but has been so extensively altered at a later date as to bear no truth; or that it has been altered to a small degree but at significant points so as to make it appear to be something that it is not. And their line of thinking goes in this direction because if it IS real and true then it is utterly breathtaking in its impact; it proves the sovereignty of God, the infallibility of Bible prophecy, and the reality of God's plan of redemption through David's royal line.

We'll explore this amazingly deep (and I might add unexpected) chapter next time we meet.