

I. Introduction: Do you want to draw near to God?

II. The desire for God's presence – David seeks to bring the ark to Jerusalem. v. 1-2

A. David is a king who is devoted to worship. Acts 13:22 I Sam. 16:7 Deut. 17:18
I Chron. 22-28

B. What is the ark of God? Ex. 25:10ff

1. The ark was a gold plated wooden box (3 3/4 feet long 2 1/4 feet wide and tall).
2. The ark contained a jar holding manna, Aaron's rod which budded, and the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments. Ex. 16:32-34 25:16 Nu. 17:10 Heb. 9
3. On top of the ark was the mercy seat which was the place of propitiation. Ex. 25:17,21f Ro. 3:25 Lev. 16:2,29-34 Heb. 9:5
4. The mercy seat was symbolically guarded by golden cherubim which represent how access to God's holy presence is restricted. v. 2b Ex. 25:18-19 Heb. 9:5
5. The ark was equipped with gold rings so it could be carried by the Levites using poles. Ex. 25:12-15 Josh. 3:14ff
6. The ark represents the LORD's presence among His people. Ex. 25:22 Nu. 10:35f
 - a. The ark signifies that the LORD rules over Israel. I Chron. 28:2
 - b. The ark signifies the way God's people can be reconciled to Him. Le. 16:14-15
 - c. The ark signifies God's revelation to His people. Ex. 25:16,21 Deut. 10:1-5
7. The ark was holy to the LORD -- Don't touch. Don't even look. Num. 4:15
8. Where had the ark been prior to David's plan to move it? I Sam. 4-6

C. David's intentions are good – he wants to restore proper worship. Ps. 132:2-5

III. The failed pursuit of God's presence – David learns about the LORD's holiness. v. 3-11

A. As the ark is being transported to Jerusalem, disaster strikes. v. 3-7a

1. They put the ark on a new cart under the supervision of Uzzah and Ahio. v. 3-4
2. David and all of Israel accompany the ark in joyful procession. v. 5
3. Uzzah tries to lend a hand when the ark starts to fall off the cart. v. 6
4. The LORD strikes Uzzah dead. v. 7a,8

B. Why did Uzzah die?

1. Some might think this is harsh, arbitrary, or unfair.
2. The LORD had specifically revealed how the ark was to be transported – by certain Levites using poles. Num. 4:4ff Deut. 10:8 I Sam. 6:7
3. The LORD had made it very clear that the ark was not to be touched or even looked into. Num. 4:15 I Sa. 6:19
4. Uzzah, along with David and all Israel, failed to show proper reverence for the LORD's holiness. v. 7b I Chron. 15:13
5. Instead of complaining about the LORD's harshness we should marvel at His mercy – that He let them get this far and that He didn't wipe them all out!

C. David experiences a variety of emotions in the aftermath. v. 8-11

1. First he is angry. v. 8
2. Then he is fearful. v. 9-10 Pr. 1:7
3. Then he becomes hopeful. v. 11-12
4. Then he moves the ark into Jerusalem in the LORD's way, resulting in great joy. v. 13ff I Chr. 15:12ff

IV. The LORD is still holy and is not to be trifled with.

- A. Those who fail to respect His holiness will suffer His judgment. Lev. 10:1ff Dan. 5
 - 1. Do such judgments occur under the New Covenant? I Cor. 11:29f Acts 5:1-11
 - 2. The LORD's people are often guilty about being careless about the things of God.
 - 3. God's work must be done by God's people in God's way – sincerity and good intentions are not enough.
 - 4. Judgment begins with the household of God. I Pe. 4:17
- B. God's Name is holy. Ex. 20:7
- C. God's Word is holy. II Ti. 3:16-17 Deut. 18:19 Rev. 22:18-19 Js. 4:17
- D. God's church is holy. Eph. 2:21-22 I Pe. 2:5 I Ti. 2:15
- E. God's worship is holy. John 4:24
 - 1. God has revealed how He wants to be worshiped. Heb. 12:28f Acts 2:42
 - 2. We are not free to replace what God has proscribed with our own traditions. Ex. 20:4-6 Mt. 15:6 I Pe. 5:8 I Sam. 15:22
 - 3. Take our participation in worship seriously. II Ti. 2:15 I Cor. 11:29ff Acts 2:42

V. Conclusion: The LORD still desires us to come into His holy presence.

- A. How then can we who are unclean approach God? Heb. 9:1ff
- B. Jesus fulfills what the ark represents.
 - 1. Through Him God is present with us. Isa. 7:14
 - 2. He reveals God to us. John 1:1,14,18 Col. 2:9
 - 3. He is the bread from heaven. John 6:31ff
 - 4. He reconciles us to God having made propitiation for our sin. I Jo. 2:2 Ro. 3:25 Heb. 9:11ff 9:27 II Co. 5:21
 - 5. Through Him we draw near to God. John 14:6 Heb. 9:8 4:16 6:19ff 10:19
- C. We have a great challenge presenting this message to the world.
 - 1. People today, like Uzzah, don't realize how dirty they are and how holy God is.
 - 2. People are offended by a God of holiness and justice.
 - 3. Most believe they can approach God any way they please, as long as they are sincere.
 - 4. Jesus is the only way to approach God. John 14:6 Acts 4:12

Discussion questions

- 1. How did David advance the worship of the LORD in Israel?
- 2. What is the function of the ark of God?
- 3. Why does Uzzah die?
- 4. What can we learn from the range of emotions David experiences in this passage?
- 5. What are other biblical examples of judgment falling upon those who fail to respect the LORD's holiness?
- 6. In what ways do people today honor or dishonor:
 - The LORD's Name.
 - The LORD's Word.
 - The LORD's church.
 - The LORD's worship.
- 7. How does Jesus fulfill what the ark represents?
- 8. Why is it especially hard to present the message of God's holiness and Christ as the only way to draw near to God today? What should we do to get this message across?