

Some Dos and Don't of Worship (B) *Worship and the House of God*

July 2018

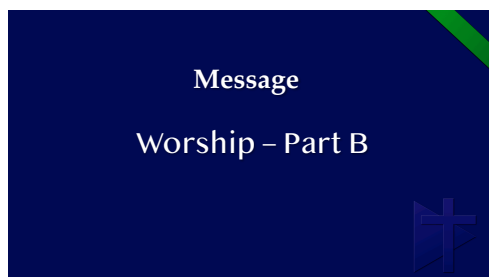
2 Samuel 7:1-14 (ESV)

The LORD'S Covenant with David

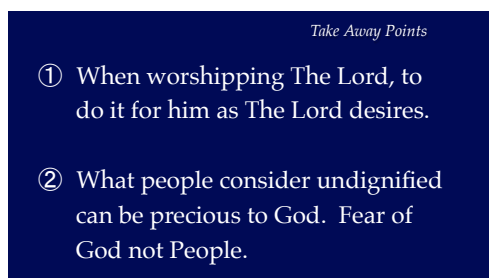
7 Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ² the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent."³ And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you."

⁴ But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, ⁵ "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in?'⁶ I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. ⁷ In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"⁸ Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹ And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men,

Intro:



- Second of two messages on worship
- Follows David's 2 step process of bringing the ark of the covenant into his city – Jerusalem.
- To be read or heard on-line @ TCE website.
- Concluding points from last week:



1. When worshipping The LORD, to do it for him we need to do so as The LORD desires – or it's misguided hypocrisy.
2. What people consider undignified may be precious to God. We need to be clear on whose values of dignity and worth we are tuned to - fear of God or fear of man?

David now continues to learn about worship and we may learn from him.

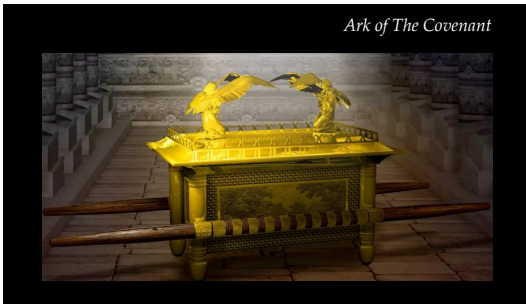
Two features to note from this story:

1. God's initiative in providing what is needed for worship.
2. The possibility of God speaking and prophecy breaking out well beyond what we might be concerned with.

Text

Remembering David's kingdom and nation building process, he is still wanting to consolidate and move everything forward.

The ark of the LORD is now in the city but housed in a tent. Perhaps something like this:



Q: Why a tent?

A: Because it had always been housed in a tent among a people who had long lived in tents.

From the exodus story I suggest the tent was YHWH's honeymoon shelter with his people.

To get a feel for this hear YHWH's lament 300 years after David in Jeremiah 2.2b-3a:

"I remember the devotion of your youth,
 your love as a bride,
 how you followed me in the wilderness,
 in a land not sown.

³ Israel was holy to the LORD,
 the first fruits of his harvest.

That is the memory of happy times, a young couple living simply in tents and that was enough.

The tent housing the ark as specified to Moses represented this life of a people living in trust and close to their God. When God moved, they moved.

Even after settling in the land and building houses YHWH sought this first-love devotion from his people. The tent or canopy housing the ark of the covenant related back to this.

Yet with the monarchy and a royal capital things were being moved along.

David was ambitious for himself and God's glory as he understood that.

His vision was going from tent to at least to wood and then possibly stone.

He had a house fit for a king built for himself.

In his mind he could now raise worship to the next level.

From Lebanon he had received cedar logs and artisan craftsmen so it was possible.

Meanwhile the precious ark of the covenant – God's footstool among the nations was in a tent.

From the oxcart experience he had learnt the lesson of not presuming without careful consultation so he asked his court prophet -Nathan- about whether the Lord would appreciate an upgrade from canvas or linen to cedar?

Nathan's spontaneous response was green-light. "Yes, do it." God is with you.

Then that night Nathan heard from the LORD but it was not what he had expected.

This question plugged into something much, much larger than what either David or Nathan could imagine.

It was an issue of houses.

Houses

Houses are physical objects but they are also metaphors.

The house can be a metaphor for a person/couple and their family or dynasty – eg: the House of Orange designating the Dutch royal family.



In modern times after Carl Jung, the house is also a metaphor for the individual person and their inner life. We can describe ourselves in terms of a house.

Then in many cultures there are spirit houses or houses for the god(s). They are places where the gods are deemed to live to be worshipped and consulted there. We might call them ‘shrines’ or ‘temples’.

David wants The LORD to have a house and he wonders if he can design and build it. This would be good for the LORD, good for the people and good for his capital city and the nation so why not?

But after hearing the LORD in the night Nathan brings a stiff message back to David which I think we can learn from.

The great I AM let it be known that he was driving things and not David. Two themes come through:

- YHWH did not need David to provide a house for him - “Thank you but no thank you.”
- David’s focus was to be worshipping the LORD and staying close to him – as the sheep and the shepherd’
 - David is reminded that God’s grace has been all over him for decades. God had established him from shepherd boy onwards -and note this- for God’s purposes.

David is still under the illusion that he can advance God’s House or the LORD’s interests on earth. That is not how it is.

Something is being ironed out here:

‘The tail was not going to wag the dog’ here.

The LORD was not going to be upwardly managed.

Big Statement:

The LORD seeks pure worship of heart driven devotion and through that he advances his purposes.

The purposes of the LORD are being worked in and through David and this will continue.

David does not need to grasp what the LORD is giving him within his wider purpose.

This is not all about him. It bigger than him but involves him.

So the LORD turns the tables and says he will build a house for David that will fulfill the purposes of the LORD in human history.

This reminds me of the way I sometimes hear people speaking about them advancing the Kingdom of God. Really? - Us advancing God’s Kingdom? I would say that God advances God’s kingdom in and through those who worship him in spirit and truth.

What the prophet Nathan brings here is jaw dropping in its prophetic power.

Only after the coming of the Messiah in Jesus Christ would its fulfillment be recognized. Hear this from v.12 when the LORD says:

2 Samuel 7:12-14

I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men.

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Who was David's offspring here?

Fulfillment 1: Solomon – David's son and successor- built a temple but does not completely satisfy this description.

Fulfillment 2: David's greater son was Jesus the Son of God. He would build a house and kingdom to endure forever. ¹

So as a worshipper:

David wanted to build a house for the LORD, but the LORD says he is building David's dynasty into an eternal house from which will come one whom the LORD will designate as his house on earth – a son who will be disciplined and striped with humanity's wounds.

So gloriously deep!

Here is the point about worship:



Potter's Hands With Soft Clay

Worship involves an engagement with God where we become soft clay in God's hands for his purposes both in and through us – even beyond what we can possibly imagine.

He is the potter, we are the clay.

That is where true worship takes us.

The normal or natural human approach to worship is that through worship God will allow us to do things for him and prosper us. That is what David still operated in and what YHWH's prophet was turning him from. I think age 30 is about when someone is ready for that.

The natural human engagement with the spiritual realm is some form of witchcraft or manipulation. If I do a, b or c, then the 'god' or great spiritual power will do something good for me.

The LORD is not a tail to be wagged or program to be run. This is not how the great I AM works. Worship of God is not part of that.

In a related way much later Jesus would say to Peter:

¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

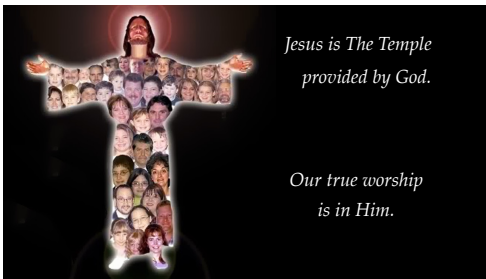
¹ The one phrase that has me wondering is 'When he commits iniquity' so there might be textual issues or just a wrong note in the prophecy? Yet this is so clearly a 900 BC reference to David's house being represented by and realised in Jesus who would be the house that God's name would indwell.

Likewise, Jesus will build his house. The church is the house of Jesus. He does not need us to build it. He will build it. He wants us to receive him and live in him as our house. Christian worship in all its dimensions is how that is established in spirit and truth.

The second point to note here is about prophecy or God's revelation.

When God is really sought in worship, he will make his purposes clear to us. That prophecy from Nathan went to the heart of God's saving work for humanity and the center of all time. God was not eager to have a building for his presence as all the other gods supposedly did. As would be revealed over time, God wanted living hearts cleansed of sin as his shrine of meeting and that would take a cross.

David's consideration of a house for worship pointed 900 years ahead to Jesus - the house of God's presence and where all worshippers may meet to worship the Father. The 'house' where God meets humanity and heals our broken condition is achieved for us through the cross and resurrection.



Jesus in his ministry had hard things to say about the temple of his day – the second house of God built in Jerusalem. He loved his heavenly Father but he hated what people did in the His house. He presented himself as the replacement for the Jerusalem temple. This was the number one reason why he was executed.

As he was accused of saying during his trial:

“ I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.”²

In support of this he claimed himself to be the Living Water, the Light of the World and the Bread of Heaven, all things part of worship in the temple-house of God.

Jesus was the fulfillment of the house YHWH promised David. Jesus fulfilled the centuries of temple experience and presented himself as the House of the LORD, the shrine of God, the place to meet God and worship, what had been promised to David through Nathan 900 years earlier. We meet the LORD God in Jesus.

Praise the LORD!!

This is where true worship needs to happen.

² Matthew 26.61 & 27.40