

1 Chronicles 13-14 - Lessons for King David

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1 Chronicles, chapter 13.

“David consulted with the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, with every leader. (In other words, he talked to his leadership. He had an idea) ² And David said to all the assembly of Israel, “If it seems good to you and from the LORD our God, let us send abroad to our brothers who remain in all the lands of Israel, as well as to the priests and Levites in the cities that have pasturelands, that they may be gathered to us.”” (ESV)

Now, David hasn't given the reason for why he wants to gather everybody together, but this is the first thing that we learn. David gets his leaders together and he says, let's get the people from all of Israel and let's come together, and I want to briefly comment on a statement that he makes there in verse 2. He talks about getting the people together who remain in the land of Israel. Did you hear that? Did you see that in there? Yeah. Let me read that again.

“David said to all the assembly of Israel, if it seems good to you and from the LORD our God, let us send abroad to our brothers who remain in all the lands of Israel.”

In other words, who remain. You know what that means literally? It means, our brothers who are left, which is a really interesting statement. And I think it could reflect the seriousness of all of the many battles that Israel had with the Philistines up to this point because even though David was starting to get a handle on these battles with the Philistines, in fact, by the time we're done tonight, we're going to find that David is going to put the Philistines militarily in a place where they're not going to bother Israel much more. Occasionally, but nothing near like they've been doing.

But that's not the way it was under king Saul. Under king Saul the Philistines were a constant military threat, and they would constantly raid the area and kill people, and it's very possible that this statement here, that David is making about those who are left, could express some of the seriousness of how much they had lost to the Philistines during that time.

Here's what David wants to get the people together to do. Look at verse 3. He says, *“Then let us bring again the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul.”* What's David saying? He's saying, let's bring the Ark back. Let's bring it back into the center of our worship.

Remember, David is the one who, after becoming king, conquered the city of Jerusalem, bringing it into Judah's control. Now, he has established his own home there in Jerusalem, and he wants to bring the Ark, because remember the Ark of the Covenant is to be the center, at the center of Israel's worship experience, but it hasn't been for a long, long, long time. By the way, this is the same Ark of the Covenant that Moses was commanded to build over 400 years earlier than this event.

You'll remember that the Ark was just, it was a box basically, built from wood, but in fact the word Ark means box, or chest, if you will, and it was covered entirely with gold. Let me put a picture up on the screen. We don't have any photos of the Ark of the Covenant. This is a rendering of what the Ark may have looked like.



We know that it had a very ornate top or lid which was referred to as the mercy seat, and even though it was made of wood it was completely covered by gold. It was probably very beautiful to look at. As you're looking at that picture, I'll let you know that the Ark of the Covenant was 3 feet, 9 inches long. It was 2 feet, 3 inches wide. It was 2 feet, 3 inches high, and inside the Ark were the tablets of the Law that Moses had been given to, or been given from the Lord, and brought down from Mount Sinai. It also included a jar of manna.

It also was said to include Aaron's rod which had miraculously budded to show that he was in fact the chosen high priest. Let me give you a little review of the history of the Ark so that you'll catch up to where we are right here in the story.

You will remember that during the beginning of the ministry of Samuel, Samuel's life and ministry, the Israelites were going to war against the Philistines, and they really wanted to win. Of course, they always wanted to win, but this time they knew that they were outgunned so they decided to take the Ark into battle with them. They did it more like a lucky rabbit's foot. It was like their lucky charm.

And so, they took it into the battle with them and they ended up getting defeated by the Philistine army and the Ark was captured. Now, you'll remember in the story though, that the Lord afflicted the Philistines with all kinds of diseases and maladies while they had the Ark in their possession and so eventually they returned it to Israeli land and it remained on the property of a Jewish man by the name of Abinadab. And it had been there for a long, long time. And in fact it had stayed there up until this point in time when David said, hey guys, what do you say we bring the Ark back to Jerusalem? And we're told in verse 4 here, look with me in your Bible that,

“All the assembly (and this is a very important verse) agreed to do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.” And I want you to take note of that statement, because we're going to come back to it.

Verse 5 *“So, David assembled all Israel from the Nile of Egypt to Lebo-hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. ⁶ And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, that is, to Kiriath-jearim that belongs to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord who sits enthroned above the cherubim. ⁷ And they carried the ark of God on a new cart, from the house of Abinadab, and Uzzah and Ahio were driving the cart.*

⁸ And David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all their might, with song and lyres and harps and tambourines and cymbals and trumpets. ⁹ And when they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzzah put out his hand to take hold of the ark, for the oxen stumbled. ¹⁰ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and he struck him down because he put out his hand to the ark, and he died there before God. ¹¹ And David was angry because the LORD had broken out against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzza to this day.”

And the name Perez Uzzah means, outburst or outbreak against Uzzah. Talk about raining on your parade. I mean, David's got this celebration going as he's, have all of these instruments and playing and praise and so forth, and Uzzah drops dead because he touches the ark. It says in verse 12,

“And David was afraid of God that day, and he said, “How can I bring the ark of God home to me?”¹³ So David did not take the ark home into the city of David, but took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.¹⁴ And the ark of God remained with the household of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the Lord blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that he had.”

All right, stop there for a little bit. Very important chapter. What went wrong? That's the question we have to ask. What went wrong? Well, here's the first thing, we'll answer the question by asking a question. First of all, was it wrong for David to want to bring the Ark and to even attempt to bring the Ark into Jerusalem? No, it wasn't wrong at all. God wanted the Ark at the center of Israel's worship. He wanted it to be among His people. He wanted it to be in a place where the people came and worshiped, and where the priests would minister with the Ark and so forth and so on. If God wanted the Ark there, what went wrong? Well, the error of David, and make no mistake about it, it was an error of David, is seen in a couple of places in this chapter.

And the first error is right off the get go in verse one. And I want you to look at it with me, specifically where it says, *“David consulted with the commanders of thousands (that's basic that's just military commanders) and of hundreds and also with every other leader of the people,”* and you can see from this verse that he basically talked with everyone.

But there is no record of David talking to God, or seeking insight from God in any way, whether through prayer or through the Scriptures, because they had the writings of Moses, and had he done that, he would have found out that God had established a very specific way for the ark to be transported, and the Law was very clear about the fact that it forbade anyone touching the Ark, including the priests. Including the priests. They were told to carry the ark.

You say, well, how could they carry the Ark without touching it? Well, they were to carry it on their shoulders using poles that were placed through the rings on the ark and carry it that way, but they were not to touch the Ark. And in fact, we're going to find out that when they did transport, or when they were supposed to transport the Ark, it was to be covered at all times. People were not to look at it. It was not to be seen because it was a reflection of the glory of God.

And I want you to take a look at a couple of passages here because these are from the book of Numbers, and they give some of the instructions that Moses had given to the people of Israel. It says,

Numbers 4:5-6 (ESV)

When the camp is to set out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it. Then they shall put on it a covering of goatskin and spread on top of that a cloth all of blue, and shall put in its poles.

When the camp is to set out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and take down the veil of the screen (and that's the screen that separates the holy place from the most holy place, and it says that they're to) and cover the ark of the testimony with it. (okay?) Then they shall put on it a covering of goatskin and spread on top of that a cloth all of blue, and shall put in its poles.

The transport of the Ark had some very specific guidelines. They were to cover it 3 times. First with the veil that separated the Holy Place and The Most Holy Place, and then these goat skins, and then this blue covering. It probably looked very beautiful but the poles were to be put in the rings and only the sons of Aaron were to carry this thing. And then look at Numbers 4:15. It says,

Numbers 4:15 (ESV)

And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry these, but they must not touch the holy things, lest they die. These are the things of the tent of meeting that the sons of Kohath are to carry.

And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, after that the sons of Kohath (who were of the Levitical line) shall come to carry these, (but look at this) but they must not touch the holy things, lest they die. These are the things of the tent of meeting that the sons of Kohath are to carry.

Now, the Levites who are the sons of Kohath or a tribe in the Levitical line, they were to come along and help the sons of Aaron, the priests. But in this passage you see, that even the Levitical priests the line of the Levites, even though they were to carry many of the implements related to the worship of Israel, they were not to touch the holy things, the most holy things and God made it very specific in this passage. If they touch them, they will die.

Now, had David taken time to read some of these instructions related to the transportation of the Ark of the Covenant, he would have done this completely different.

And the fact of the matter is when he finally gets around to bringing the Ark into the city, he will do it just like is prescribed. So, obviously he went back and read the Scripture, and they looked into it and they discovered the right way to transport the Ark, and we'll see that, we're not going to see it tonight but we're going to see it in fact next week, Lord willing we'll get into that area. But you can see this was all very clear.

Now, if some of you are thinking to yourself right now, I don't know, this sounds unfair. Uzza reached out with every good intention. It says the oxen stumbled and I'm assuming, I'm picturing in my mind that Uzza and Ahio are there, like in the cart, they're driving the oxen, and maybe they're sitting, I don't know if it looked like, I'm not sure what it looked like exactly but I think they're in very close proximity to the Ark of the Covenant that's on this new cart, and the oxen stumbled, who knows, probably a hole or something in the road, and the oxen, and the thing shifts to the side and Uzzah reaches back to keep the thing from falling onto the ground, and he drops dead.

And we're all like wow! It's like, God, are you having a bad day? It seems like you're a little bit touchy here. But what we don't understand, and the reason we struggle to reconcile this action of the Lord in our minds is because we don't understand the holiness of God.

You see, we're the ones who don't get it. We're the ones who have not fully taken into consideration the holiness of God. Secondly, God made it very clear in the Scripture how they were to transport this thing. David just didn't take the time to look into it. That's on him, right? The death of this man is on him. It was right there, and it was spelled out clear as day.

Those two things put together give us this first blunder of David, but I want you to look at the next one which is expressed in verse 4, where we read, "*all the assembly agreed to do so, (that means bringing the Ark back) for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.*"

In other words, the people thought that their collective agreement was enough to make it good. And that's really important that you and I see that because we tend to take comfort when a lot of people come together in agreement, and we'll look at something or we'll believe something or whatever and we'll say, and we'll wonder maybe for a while, well, is that true?

Well, you think about how many people believe, right? Think about how many people believe. That's got to be true! All these people couldn't be wrong! Oh, yeah? Listen, the masses are often wrong. Look at the world in which we live. The amount of lies that are believed by the majority of the people. One thing that you and I've got to remember is that Jesus told us that the way to destruction is broad and easy. It's easy to go down that road, right? The way to life is narrow and it's hard, okay?

The easy way, the broad path is where the majority of the people are going. Right? The majority of the people. Listen, in this case, the majority does not rule, and this is one of the problems, and this is one of the mistakes that David and the people made. They all got together and said, yeah, we agree, let's take a vote. Yeah, it's unanimous, let's bring back the Ark, and everybody's was like, yeah, and they allowed that collective agreement to keep them from pressing in on the Lord. Let me show you a passage from the Book of Proverbs. It says,

Proverbs 14:12 (ESV)

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

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And you know what? That's no more true than in this passage. There is a way that seems right to a man. It seemed right to them to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. You know what we'll do, guys? We'll get a new cart, that's what we'll do. Make sure there's no, nobody's ever used this cart for any, God deserves the best. We're going to get a new cart, and we're going to bring this, and yeah, this is a good idea. There's a way that seems absolutely right, but in Uzza's case, it ended in death. And it was a very costly lesson for David.

But one thing about David that I appreciate very much, and I appreciate this about some of you as well, those of you who I know, David was a man who learned from his mistakes.

And we're going to see as we move on here in the life of David, he's going to get it, as far as this whole idea of, I need to talk to God. Getting the collective agreement of the masses isn't enough. I'm going to talk to God, right? You know how we dislike it so much when we're raising our kids and they want to do something and they go, well, everyone is doing it. And we're like, if everyone jumped off a cliff, would you follow them, which is a dumb thing to say, but I probably, I'm sure my parents said it, and I'm sure I said it too,

probably to my kids, but that's just the way we think, and we will substitute that for actually talking to God.

But we're going to see here as we move on into chapter 14 that David gains a new respect for God's holiness, as well as consulting the Lord. Here we go, verse 1 of chapter 14.

“And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also masons and carpenters to build a house for him. ² And David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of his people Israel.”

Stop there please, for just a moment. The reason I'm stopping you is because verse 2 is so incredibly important but if you read it too quickly or you scoot past it too quickly, you're not going to get the power and the insight that this verse offers us.

First of all, David saw his success. Well, let me back up. When Hiram, the king of Tyre, began to offer David all of this wood, the cedars that grew in that area were great for building. Huge, tall cedar trees. And so, when Hiram began to offer David, not only the wood, but also the craftsmen to build his palace, David understood. He thought about it, he thought it through and he was like, wow, God has established my throne, okay?

But he understood this success, this favor in 2 ways. First of all, number 1. He knew that it was a work of God. He understood, and you might say well, yeah, isn't that obvious? No, not with most people. When we go through times of success, when we experience times of abundance or something, it's very common for us as human beings to look at our own effort and to credit that for our success. It's like, well, I worked hard or I did it, I went and got my education, I got my degree, or I did this, or I went to work every day, and I was faithful, and I kept my nose to the grindstone, and I was polite, and obedient, and loyal to my company, or my boss, whatever, and I worked hard, and I've brought myself to where I am today.

David didn't think like that. That's a human way of thinking. David didn't think like that. David looked at all that he had, and he said, look what God did. I want you to check out on the screen here, a prayer that David made before the Lord. He's saying this to God,

2 Samuel 7:21 (ESV)

Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it.

Because of your promise, (2 Samuel 7:21) and according to your own heart, (look at this) you have brought about all this greatness, (and why?) to make your servant know it.

Isn't that amazing? David not only credited God with all of the success and greatness that he had in his life, but he also said that God made him to understand these things, making him to realize this was Him. It's an interesting sort of a twist on it. God, You not only gave me these blessings, You gave me the illumination, the understanding, to see and to know with a certainty that they are from You.

See, he even credited God with seeing it, being able to see it. He didn't even look to himself in that. If we don't give ourselves credit for our success, at least we're going to give ourselves the credit for recognizing it's from God.

Like, God has really blessed me. I have, I look around and I'm just, I know for a fact that God has just blessed my socks off. It's just great. David didn't even take credit for that. He says, God, you gave me the ability to see. You opened my eyes to see that you blessed me. What an incredibly humble man. Secondly, secondly, can we put that passage back up on the screen? Why?

2 Samuel 7:21 (ESV)

Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it.

Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it.

Because of your promise and according to your own heart, you've brought about all this greatness to make your servant know. Oh, I'm sorry. What I really wanted to focus you back on was verse 2 of the passage we just read here in your Bible.

Would you look at verse 2 because this is where the second thing about this is. He says in verse 2, “*And David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, that his kingdom was highly exalted. (Why?) For the sake of His people Israel.*” For the sake of His people Israel.

Why does God give you what He gives you? Because He wants me to be happy. That's our modern way of thinking, isn't it? We just, our goal in life is to be happy. Well, I say we, people of the world. As Christians we've gotten that through our hearts too but it's a pretty worldly way to look at life. To go through life just wanting to be happy.

David wanted to be useful. David wanted to be a blessing to others. David recognized that he was the king of Israel, placed there by God, on the throne, for the sake of Israel. In other words, to be a blessing to Israel. Why has God put you where you are? Why has God given you the children that He has given you to raise?

So that you might be there for their sake. That you might be a blessing to them. How about at work? God's given you work. God's given you a job to do. He's given you that so that you might, that the income might be a blessing to your family and that you might be a blessing to the people with whom you work. So that they might see something of the reflection of Christ in your life.

God you've given me this for the sake of, you fill in the line there. God, you've given me this for the sake of. Who does God want you to bless? Who does He want you to serve? For whose sake?

See, we're so focused on living for ourselves today. So thankful God that you've given me these things so I can enjoy them myself. This is not for you. This is for others. Right? To be a blessing to others. I love that.

Now verse 3 is a hard one to read because we've come from this incredible favor. And verse 3 says, "*And David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David fathered more sons and daughters.*" And I read this statement to you here in verse 3 as not just a historical fact but also as a proof of a failure in David's life.

You see, God had expressly forbidden the king of Israel to do this. Let me show you this from Deuteronomy chapter 17, which says,

Deuteronomy 17:17 (ESV)

And he, the king, shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away...

And he, the king, shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away...

Now, David disobeyed this, not nearly like his son after him, but still he disobeyed it, and this sin led to a whole series of family drama disasters down the road in David's life.

You would have thought with the wisdom God gave Solomon he would have looked at his father's life and learned a thing or two. Smartest man on the face of the earth. No man had been given more wisdom than Solomon, the son of David, and yet Solomon took his father's sin and multiplied it many times over. 300 wives, 700 concubines. Goodness gracious. And was his heart turned away? Yes, it was.

So, that's why I say, verse 3 is a challenging verse to read because we were, we've been going through the blessings and the favor and the great attitude, and then we see that there was this area of weakness in David's life. He was a, David was a passionate man and that was a blessing to him as it relates to his walk with the Lord.

He was very passionate about his walk with the Lord, but he was also a very passionate man about women. He loved women, too and that was a problem. Verse 4 says, *“These are the names of the children born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,”* and then some of the others are listed there.

Skip down to verse 8 because after the names of David's children here we come back to some skirmishes with the Philistines. Let's see what David has learned from some of the mistakes that he's made.

Verse 8 says that *“When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. But David heard of it and went out against them.”*

Now stop there for a minute. What's the time frame of this statement? It says that when the Philistines heard that he'd been made king over all Israel. Remember, after Saul died, David only became king of Judah at first. Seven and a half years he reigned in Hebron over the southern kingdom of Judah. Then, after seven and a half years, the rest of Israel came and said, okay, you're our king too, and then he reigned over all of Israel.

Well it was at this point that the Philistines heard that David had now been crowned king of Israel, and they decided they needed to strike. Probably thinking to themselves, let's strike while his kingdom is still young and fresh

and maybe he's not that organized militarily. We'll catch him while he's still in the process of building his army and so on, and so on.

And by the way, these events are, like I have alluded, they're probably out of chronological order, but that's really not a big deal for you and I, as we look at these.

Verse 9 goes on and tells us why David went out to meet the Philistine army. It says, *“Now the Philistines had come and made a raid in the Valley of Rephaim.”*

Look at verse 10. *“And David inquired of God, (That's a very important verse for you and I to see because David has learned a very important lesson here from the failure of the past. But it says, David inquired of God) “Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?” And the LORD said to him, “Go up, and I will give them into your hand.”*

Here we see David, he went out at the directive of the Lord, and this is where we begin to see a more confident David operating in the attitude of submission and surrender to the Lord, and that statement that *“David inquired of God”* is critical to both understand David's personal growth as well as the key to his military victory. David inquired of God. David inquired.

You know what? I see the same thing with Christians today. If I'm looking for growth in the life of a believer, I'm going to look for how much they're talking to God about their life.

I shudder to think of how many battles you and I just rush headlong into without the slightest thought toward ascertaining the mind of the Lord. We do it all the time. Now, David had learned some costly lessons about not inquiring of God, and so now he's coming to the Lord, he's asking for the direction of the Lord, and I want you to see specifically what David asked, because this is so important Christians, for you and I to see this and to apply this in our own lives. Look at verse 10 in your Bible. It says,

“And David inquired of God, “Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?” Did you notice the two things that David asked there? First of all, shall I attack? He didn't assume, just because the enemy is coming against you, just because you have a threat in your life that is going on, doesn't mean that you need to go into attack mode or that you should go into attack mode necessarily. And so, the first thing David asked the Lord is, shall I attack? He didn't assume. Here's the Philistines on his doorstep, you know you might

even be wondering if some of his commanders are nearby David, while he's making this request of God, shall I go and attack?

And maybe they're sitting back there going, oh he's asking him. I go, what's he talking about? These guys are here. They're coming. Our scouts out in the perimeter of our land are telling us that the Philistine army is advancing. What do you mean should I go and attack? They're coming, buddy. Don't you see the threat? Don't you see what's in front of you? Pick up your sword and let's get busy. Ah, wait a minute here. David already lost a man because he moved too quickly, and he went with the general consensus of the people and did not inquire of the Lord, and so he stops, and he doesn't assume anything. I like that.

Are you facing some, a difficulty in your life? Are you facing some sort of an attack of something or other? Could be a person or a circumstance or a situation. What are you experiencing in your life, and what position are you taking related to what you're experiencing? Are you just instantly going into attack mode and thinking, well, this is a threat. See, we get scared, don't we? We get panicky. We see a thing and it like, scares us and we're like, Ah!

And we go into defense mode, just like, it's just, it's like a knee jerk reaction, right? Well, David has an army advancing against his kingdom, but instead of going into this instantaneous defense mode where he just reacts to the thing, he comes to God. God, shall I attack, or do you have another plan?

You think, well, what other plan could there be? Hey, it's endless with God, right? Is God limited on how He can meet the threat in your life? Again, what are the threats in your life? Do you think He has to go through you to solve that issue? Of course not. Nothing is impossible with God, He can do anything He wants to do.

Question is, are we even asking, are we even asking God, what would You have me to do here? He says, shall I attack? But I want you to notice the second question that David asks here in verse 10 he says, "*am I going to win?*" Again, no assumption here. Not just shall I attack, but will I win? Will we win?

He doesn't say it quite that way. He says, "*...will you give them into my hand,*" which is an ancient way of saying, will we win? Are we going to be victorious in this situation? You might say, well, that's an interesting question to ask, isn't it, huh? But the answer to that question probably would have a lot to say with why, or if you would attack. What if God came back and said, yeah, you're not going to win this one pal. You see what I'm saying? Let's see what happened.

Verse 11, “*And he went up to Baal-perazim, and David struck them down there. And David said,* (look at this. I did it with my strength. I've broken through to my enemies by my hand like a bursting flood. That's not what he said, is it? What did he say?) *God has broken through. God* (and by the way, I love this. It says) *God, (David says God) has broken through my enemies by my hand,* (He didn't have to do it by my hand. He chose to do it by my hand. But he didn't have to. Then he says, how did it happen?) *like a bursting flood.*” (and then it goes on to say) *Therefore, the name of that place is called Baal-perazim.*” Which means Lord of breaking through or the Lord of the breakthrough.

Isn't that cool? Do you need to have a breakthrough in your life? Is there something that's challenging you at home, or at work or in your, whatever, and you've been battling this thing, and battling this thing, like the Philistines, constantly coming against you? This constant army this attack, just haranguing you, and you need a breakthrough. You need to have a genuine breakthrough.

Well, maybe the reason that you haven't had a breakthrough is because you've been fighting the battle in your own strength and with your own wisdom and by your own directives, and I think that's something we all have to admit to because we've all done it, myself included. See a situation, become alarmed, even get a little panicky, get into attack mode. Go for it. Boom. What are you doing? I'm fighting. I'm fighting this thing. Did God tell you to fight? What? What do you mean did God? No, I'm just fighting because there's a fight. I've got a fight on my hands, right?

I'm going to fight. David didn't assume, God do you want me to fight? I mean you can blow these guys out of the water all by yourself. Just give the word right, and didn't God do that sometimes?

Remember during the years of Hezekiah, and we'll get into that by the way as we get farther on here in Chronicles, but we're going to find some incredible battles where the Lord said, you know what? You guys just stay home and whether it's thunder that scares them out of their minds, and they start fighting each other and killing each other, or whether it's an angel of the Lord that goes through the camp and they wake up the next morning and they're going, these guys are all dead, and we didn't even fight them. We didn't even leave the city.

Those are the kind of things that happened in the history of Israel. And yeah, they're extraordinary, but you know what? We serve the God of the extraordinary, and so, David is not taking any of this under assumption, but simply saying, Lord, what do you want me to do? And once God gives him the instruction, he follows the leading of the Lord.

He says, we're going to call this place here, the place where the Lord broke through. And verse 12 tells us, "*and they, (referring to the Philistines) left their gods there...*"

Boy, if you have to leave your gods behind, those are bad gods. Then I, I wouldn't, yeah, they left their gods there, and it says, "*.....David gave command, and they were burned.*" By the way, not all of the kings of Israel, after a victory, burned the gods of their enemies. Some of them picked them up, and took them home, and worshipped them. We're going to skip a passage Jane and go to Deuteronomy 7:5. Let me show you this.

Deuteronomy 7:5 (ESV)

But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.

But thus shall you deal with them: (the people you come up against militarily) you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.

David did that, but as I said, some of the kings who came after him didn't, and it led to incredible spiritual and moral corruption, and it does in our lives too, because you know what? Those little idols, those wooden idols of David's day have been replaced in our day with idols like money, and sex, power, and pleasure, thrills, new cars, new houses whatever we just choose to love.

We can even make love an idol. We can worship at the feet of love. Romance, it's a delightful thing but we're never created to worship it. All of those things, in and of themselves, can be okay things unless we worship them, and when we do begin to worship them, they become idols, and when we bow at the feet of these idols, we invite untold spiritual and moral decay into our lives. What are we supposed to do? Burn them, right? Get rid of them!

Alright, Philistines aren't done attacking. Verse 13, "*And the Philistines yet again made a raid in the valley. (So, they mustered their army after getting their nose bloodied here) ¹⁴ And when David again inquired of God, (notice that, we're still not jumping off on our own) God said to him, You shall not go up after them, rather go around and come against them opposite the balsam trees.*"

Your Bible may say mulberry or poplar trees, doesn't matter. The point is, God had a plan for David, and it basically was this, instead of going and facing the army or going to meet them face to face, He told David and his army to use

stealth and to circle around when the other army wasn't looking and to come at them from behind, and here are his instructions. You ready?

Verse 15. *“And when you hear the sound of marching (Where, on the road? No) in the tops of the balsam trees, (That's weird God. That doesn't make any sense. I know, just go with it here) then go out to battle, for God has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines.”*

And it says in verse 16, *“And David did as God commanded him, and they struck down the Philistine army from Gibeon to Gezer.”* That must be a town of old men.

Anyway, here's what's interesting about this particular story. God, this time, tells David to do something different. Don't just go up and attack him, I want you to go around and create a surprise attack, but you're supposed to wait for the signal. And he gives him this signal and he doesn't, it's the sound of marching and we don't, I've heard people say, it was the angels of God marching out, and maybe it was, I don't know, but he didn't say, we don't know if it was angels marching.

We don't know if it was just simply a sign or a sound to fool the enemy into thinking that there was a larger army that was attacking than what Israel was, or if it was just a signal. I mean, it could have been any signal, but whatever it was the signal that God gave. Now, again, it's a weird signal, isn't it? When you hear the sound of soldiers like marching. You're going to hear this marching sound up in the trees. You know, when you hear it in the trees. If you'd told that to somebody, they'd go yeah, I think you're ready for that little padded room. I mean, that sounds okay, guys, here's what we're going to do.

We're going to just we're going to go around to the back. We're going to get down low. Nobody can see us. And then, okay, when are we supposed to go? You're supposed to wait till you hear marching up in the trees. We chuckle, but you know what? Sometimes the direction of the Lord doesn't seem to make sense to you and I, but if you and I are going to judge that direction by our own understanding, or if we're going to say to God, uh, that doesn't make any sense, let's go with plan B. We're going to miss out on some of the greatest blessings of what it means to walk with the Lord and follow His directives.

Sometimes the things that God tells you to do don't make a whole lot of sense from a worldly perspective, like listening for the sound of marching up in the trees. There was a time when Sue and I were directed by the Lord and we felt very strongly that it was a directive from the Lord to sell everything we owned

and move. And we were really pretty new Christians, and there was a lot of reason to doubt that we were really hearing from God. But, we were sure. I mean, we were just really certain, and so we even prayed, Lord, whatever you don't want us to take with us, just help us to sell it.

We sold everything, except our bed, and we had a five-month-old child, our little baby, and we had nowhere to live. He just said, go that way, and it was out to Seattle. We were living in Montana, and we were being directed to go to the Seattle area. No job, no place to live. Five-month-old baby. Sold everything we owned except our bed, and we had our clothes of course. Yeah, sounds pretty stupid, doesn't it?

But it was the Lord. It was the Lord. Every step of the way, God took care of us, supernaturally. I mean, it was just, it was one of the most exciting times of our life. It just so happened that there was a gal there in Montana, where we were leaving from, who had come for a wedding. She lived in the Seattle area and didn't have a way to get home, so we're driving in this big van, right? And she's like, hey, can I catch a ride with you guys back home because I don't have a way to get back home. Yeah, sure. We bring her into, we drive to Seattle and we get there and it's late.

Hey, you guys stay at our house, for the night because we didn't have any place to stay, it's like, yeah, and everything, every step. We see this apartment complex, huge apartment complex. We thought this would be a nice place to live, but we thought, well, they're not going to let us have an apartment. I don't have a job.

But we thought, hey, God's with us, so, we walked in and had an interview with the lady and she said, so where are you working? I don't have a job. We just moved here because we felt the Lord was leading us to come. And we, yeah, we don't have any money. And she's like, that's okay. She writes it all down here. Here, just sign here and yeah, it'll all work out. And we didn't have any furniture. She goes, you know what? We have one furnished apartment. We'll let you stay in there, but they'll probably come and get the furniture here in about a week or so.

They left it there for 3 months while we had time to get jobs, get some money rolling in and buy our own stuff. Every step along the way, God took care of us. It was an amazing time, but it didn't make any sense and there were people, believe me, who looked at what we were doing and said, you guys nuts? I mean, I might just as well have told them I was going to leave as soon as I heard the sound of marching in the tops of the trees.

Verse 17. *“And the fame of David went out into all lands, and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations.”*

Can I, even though I talked a long time here between verses 16 and 17, can I connect the two for you? Can I connect the dots? Verse 16 says, if you look with me there. *“And David did the same as God commanded.”*

Verse 17 says, *“and the fame of David went out into all the lands and the Lord brought fear, the fear of him upon all nations.”*

You see here that as David carried out the plan of God, as he walked in obedience to the Word of the Lord, God not only granted him victory but his fame spread, his kingdom was established.

By the way, with this battle right here, the Philistines are brought to a place where they will no longer bother Israel in the same fashion they're used to. They'll pop up from time to time with a fairly little minor skirmish, but they will not be at the center of the military issues that Israel had to deal with from this point forward.