

Abner's Return to Hebron

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance and putting God first in all aspects of life, including ministry.

Duration: 25:05

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 12:33, 1 Chronicles 13:1-3, Galatians 5:16, James 1:27, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Hebron"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith emphasizes the importance of having singleness of heart as a Christian. He highlights the example of the men of Zebulun who came with singleness of heart, unlike the Danites who had double hearts. Pastor Chuck encourages believers to keep their minds and hearts pure, walking in close fellowship with God. He also emphasizes the need for Christians to be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about Jesus Christ, and suggests memorizing and knowing the Scriptures as the key to being prepared. Additionally, he announces the release of Pastor Chuck Smith's through the Bible commentary, which provides in-depth study resources for believers.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that hold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life and make you whole
Welcome to The Word for Today. Broadcast ministry of Pastor Chuck Smith, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently leading us on a verse-by-verse venture through the entire Bible.

And on today's edition of The Word for Today, we'll be following Abner's return to Hebron as we pick up today's lesson in 1 Chronicles 12, verse 33. And now, here's Pastor Chuck Smith with today's message. Singleness of heart, that's the secret of strength.

The men of Zebulun came not with double heart. Singleness of heart. Of Naphtali, 37,000.

The Danites, 28,600. From Asher, 40,000. Then from the other side of the Jordan River, the Reubenites, the Gadites.

Half the tribe of Manasseh. All in all, 120,000 men of formidable force. These were all men of war who could keep rank.

And they came with a perfect heart or a complete heart. Totally to it and totally with it to Hebron to make David king over all of Israel. And all of the rest of Israel also were of one heart to make David king.

And that is why the kingdom of David brought Israel into the apex of its glory and power. The people were excited. One heart in this issue.

And so they were with David for three days in Hebron partying, eating, drinking, for their brethren had prepared for them. Moreover, those that were near them, even unto Ishkar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on their donkeys and on their camels and on their mules and oxen and meat and the grains, the cakes of figs and the bunches of raisins and the wine and the oil and the oxen and the sheep abundantly for there was joy in Israel. Happy days.

David is going to be king. And they brought with the camels and the mules and the donkeys all of the supplies for this big celebration. Now in chapter 13, one of the first things that David desires to do is to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

I think that it is rather significant that his first activity as king stems from a spiritual desire. And it is really a spiritual activity to bring the Ark of the Covenant unto Jerusalem in order that there might be the acknowledgement again of the place of Jehovah in the life of the nation. We're going to bring the Ark of the Covenant back.

In the days of Saul, they did not really use the Ark of the Covenant. They didn't inquire of the Lord there at the Ark of the Covenant. And so one of David's first activities is this desire to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

And so he consulted with the captains of the thousands and the hundreds and with every leader. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, if it seems good unto you and if it be of Jehovah our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere that are left in all the land of Israel and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs that they may gather themselves unto us and let us bring again the Ark of our God to us. For we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.

If it seems right to you and to God, let's get everybody together. Let's do a big thing. Let's bring this Ark of the Covenant back unto us.

It had been captured during the time of Saul's reign by the Philistines. They had taken the Ark of the Covenant and sought to use it sort of as some kind of a magical amulet of sorts. When they were being pressed in battle by the Philistines, they thought, well, let's bring the Ark of the Covenant into the battle.

And surely God will turn back the Philistines. But instead, the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines. It had the exact opposite effect as they were hoping.

As they brought the Ark of the Covenant into the camp, the men all began to cheer and yell and the Philistines said, oh, what's happened, you know? And they said, oh, they brought their God into the camp. They said, boy, we better fight harder. And they did and they defeated the Israelites and captured the Ark.

And of course, as they took it to the different Philistine cities, the men were breaking out with boils. So when they finally decided to bring it to Ekron, the men of Ekron said, no way, fellas. You're not bringing that thing here.

We've heard of the problems you've got. And so they said, well, let's get rid of this thing. We can't keep it in our cities.

And so they took a couple of cows and they harnessed them to a cart. And with sacrifices and so forth, they sent this cart. They said if the cows go directly back towards Israel, then we'll know this was of the Lord.

If they just sort of roam around, then, you know, it's just coincidence. But when they turned these cows loose, they made a direct line towards Israel and they came to Beth Shean. And the people of Beth Shean saw the Ark coming with these cows that were just mooing and they saw the Ark on this cart and they rejoiced and all.

And, of course, you remember that some of them looked in the Ark and God smote them and there was several thousand of them died as a result of that trespass against it. And so they said, whoo, you know, let's just set that thing right over there. And they left it there at Kirjath-Jerim, which is near Beth Shean, probably, oh, four or five miles from Beth Shean over to Kirjath-Jerim.

And so the Ark had remained there. Oh, it's probably 15 miles from Jerusalem. David now wants to bring it back to Jerusalem.

And so the first really activity as king over the whole land is to establish the thing spiritually now. Let's get our priorities, God first, spiritual things first. Quite often as we perform wedding ceremonies, after we have made the pronouncement of the couple standing before us to be husband and wife, because of the request of the couple that their first activity as husband and wife be a spiritual activity, we serve them communion.

And I'm always impressed as I serve communion to the couple who have just made their dedication of their lives to each other, their vows to live the rest of their lives together before God as husband and wife, that their very first activity in this new dimension is a spiritual activity acknowledging the centrality of Christ in their relationship, putting Christ first as they partake of communion. And to me, it's always a good foundation upon which to build the marriage when you put the spiritual things first. After communion, then they kiss.

But spiritual things first, that acknowledgement of the place of the Lord in our marriage, in our future as they receive communion. I think that it's great for David. The first thing he wants to do in the establishing of the kingdom is to establish now this spiritual foundation, this spiritual base.

Let's return to basics. Let's put God first in the activities of our kingdom. The problem, though, is that David inquired of all of the captains and the leaders.

He should have inquired of the Lord and of the priest. For though David's desire was a good desire, what he was wanting to do was the right thing to do, yet he was going about it the wrong way. He was copying the methods of the Philistines rather than seeking the Lord.

When the Philistines sent the Ark of the Covenant back, they sent it on a cart with a couple of cows drawing it. So David, in his endeavor to bring the Ark of the Covenant back, had a new cart built and took a couple of cows and these guys were driving these oxen, pulling the cart with the Ark of the Covenant on it, copying the method of the Philistines. But in the book of Numbers, God had given instructions how the Ark of the Covenant was to be transported.

It was to be carried by the priest, by these staves that were put through the rings in the side of the Ark. No one was to touch the Ark. They were to lift up these staves and carry it, sliding the staves through these golden rings and they were to carry it between themselves.

That was God's instructions in the transporting of the Ark of the Covenant. I think that there is a spiritual analogy here from which we can learn a lot. I think that the church has been guilty of following the methods of Madison Avenue in trying to build the church, in trying to build the attendance, in trying to raise the funds.

And there are professional groups that churches hire that will come in and they will set up a promotional campaign. They will make a sociological demographic study of your community. They will, for the fee, help you to develop church growth using worldly tactics and methods and means. There are also those other groups that the church can hire who will come in, professionals who will raise money for the church.

And professional fundraising schemes. We're always getting letters, you know, to the chairman of the fundraising program and some new concept, idea, method and all to raise funds for the church. But these are, for the most part, borrowing from the world.

They're copying the Philistines. I wonder sometimes that God doesn't strike them dead. Good thing I'm not God.

God wiped out these guys. As they were bringing the ark on this cart, they came to the threshing floor and the ox stumbled and the cart started to shake and Uzzah, one of the guys who was driving the oxen, reached his hand to steady the ark and when he touched it, God smote him and he died. We read in verse 7, They carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab, and Uzzah and Ahio drove the cart.

And David and all of Israel were playing before God with all their might. They were singing with harps and psalteries and timbrels and cymbals and with trumpets. I mean, it was a gala thing.

They gathered all these men of Israel. Big, tough, mighty men. Now they're dancing and they're singing and they're rejoicing.

What a spectacle this must have been. Now this is one of the places I'd like to have been there. It must have been a time of great excitement as we are acknowledging the place of God in our national life and as there is sort of a spiritual movement but suddenly in the midst of the thing, Uzzah, reaching to steady the ark, falls over dead.

And this whole gala, exciting crowd is in a moment hushed. And a fear comes upon them all. And David was afraid of God that day.

And he said, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me? I mean, wow. If being around the ark, one little slip up, man, and you've had it. I can't live with this thing.

And he had a real fear now of it. A real respect and reverence realizing what it means to have the presence of God. It means a purifying, a walking in purity.

And so David called the name of the place Perez Uzzah. Perez means breaking forth for God broke forth on Uzzah. And thus the name of the place, Perez Uzzah.

So David did not bring the ark home to himself, to Jerusalem. But he just set it aside there in the house of Obed-Edom who was a Levite. And it remained there for three months.

And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that he had. So the ark was parked there for three months. Now, we won't get there this week, but next week we'll bring the ark to Jerusalem.

Only we'll inquire of the Lord and find out how to do it. In other words, yes, God wants to do a work. We're convinced of that.

Well, let's sit down and have a planning committee and let's plan on how we can, you know, reach this community. Let's sit down and strategize. No, that's not the way the work of God is accomplished.

God wants to do a work. Yes, let's seek the Lord and find out how he wants to do it. Let's let God guide the activities of the church.

And you will discover, and we have discovered, when God guides, God provides. You don't need finance committees. You don't need the professional fundraising techniques.

You don't need men to come in and to make the demographic studies of the city and tell you how to build the church of God. But God has got a program. And if we seek the Lord, he'll guide us in accomplishing the things that he wants accomplished.

So just the desire to do something for the Lord isn't sufficient. We must do them in the way that the Lord would have them done. Now, that always is the way that will bring glory to God.

When we do things with man's methods, it may be that we get the job done, but because we've done them with man's methods, then man gets the glory. And this professional team puts your name in their advertising, and they tell how they went to this little community, and the church was just 500 people. But after they inaugurated their program, now there are 1,200 members, and they are taking the glory for what has been accomplished there in that community.

We helped this church raise \$70,000 to put in their new education unit, and they're always telling what they have done. And man is getting and taking the glory. But when we wait upon God and seek God, and there's no pressure, there's no hype, we just let God work and seek God to do his work, then only God can get the glory.

People come around, and they want to know, well, what kind of a program did you use? Well, we don't have any program. Well, how do you account for what's happening? Well, it's the Lord. Oh, come on now, you know.

And they're always looking for some gimmick, some secret, but it's just seeking God for the ways that he wants things to be done, letting God be in control. And God has a work that he wants to do, but there's the right way of doing it and the wrong way of doing it. And the right way will be blessed of God and led of God and continues then to be a blessing because it brings such glory to God.

And that's why God so often uses such unlikely people. That's why God has chosen the simple things of the world to confound the wise. And they look at the men that God has used.

They say, well, they don't have their doctorates. How can they do that, you know? Who gave them the authority? And they can't understand how God can use a Raoul Reiss or a Mike McIntosh or a Greg Laurie

or Jeff Johnson. I mean, it's a shocker that God can use people like that to do his work.

And they say, well, he doesn't have any kind of an education. How, you know, hey, it's God. To God be the glory, great things he has done.

We'll return with more of our study of 1 Chronicles in our next lesson as we continue with The Moving of the Ark. We do hope you'll make plans to join us. But right now, I'd like to remind you that if you missed any part of today's message or perhaps you'd like to order a copy for that special friend or loved one, you can do so by simply contacting one of our customer service representatives and they'd be more than happy to assist you with the ordering details.

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And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck Smith continues his verse-by-verse study through the book of 1 Chronicles. That's right here on the next edition of The Word For Today. And now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck Smith.

May the Lord be with you and watch over you during the week, and may God keep you unspotted from this evil world in which we live. There's so much to stimulate you in this world in which we live. It's so easy that our imaginations be directed toward evil and evil things.

Keep your mind pure. Keep your heart pure. Walk with God in close fellowship.

Give no place to the enemy. Walk in purity and righteousness in fellowship with God through Jesus. And thus may you have a glorious week walking in the Spirit.

For they that are in the Spirit shall not fulfill the lust of their lives. May you be in the Spirit. In Jesus' name.

I'd like to talk to you about being ready as a Christian, ready to give an answer to anyone, anywhere, who might ask you about Jesus Christ. And the only way to be prepared is to know and to memorize the Scriptures. For this very reason, I'm excited to present to you the long-awaited release of Pastor Chuck Smith's Through the Bible Commentary, C3000 edition.

Get ready to study the Bible in a whole new way. Listen to Pastor Chuck as he teaches Hebrew and Greek word origins, biblical dates and history, archaeological information, church history, and, of course, practical applications to apply to your life on a day-to-day basis. Get ready to be a great biblical scholar with the help of Pastor Chuck's Through the Bible Commentary.

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