

The Ark Brought Back

by George Warnock

God longs to return to His people, but requires a needful preparation in their hearts and lives, and will not be kept under control by man's attempts to keep the move of the Spirit steady.

Scripture: Genesis 32:28, 2 Samuel 6:3, 1 Chronicles 15:13, Hosea 5:15, 2 Corinthians 12:9

Topics: "Revival And Renewal", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

George Warnock preaches about the importance of seeking God's way and intention for His people, emphasizing the need for revival, restoration, and renewal. He warns against relying on man-made structures or movements to carry the glory of God, as God desires His people to seek Him earnestly and move with Him in full communion and fellowship. Warnock highlights the danger of human leadership trying to control or supervise God's work, stressing that God's power is made perfect in man's weakness, not in his strength.

Transcript

What we have said thus far, of course, is to bring us to the place where we can appreciate what God had in mind concerning His House. What about the ark of God? The place of His Glory? The place of His Rest? Truly the Lord longs to return to His people; but there must be that very needful preparation wrought within their hearts and lives, or He cannot rest in their midst. God said on one occasion, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early" (Hos. 5:15). He longs to return to us far more than we long to return to Him. But He does not come unwanted, undesired, unsought, unappreciated. For He would return to us that He might dwell with His own in full communion and fellowship for the delight of His own heart.

How then shall we bring back the ark of God into our midst? The same question has been raised time and time again in the history of God's people. Revival! Restoration! Renewal! Can we have it today? How? Where? When? All kinds of movements and schemes have been devised. Or men will search out the records of Church history, and try to duplicate a method that seemed to work back then, only to discover that nothing will work except as we move with God, and seek to know His way and His intention for His people in this present hour. We are not able to initiate anything. Once we discover God's intention then we must seek Him earnestly that He might show us His way.

The Wrong Way

The natural thing to do then, of course, was to make a new cart and bring back the ark. Invariably when God begins to stir the hearts of His people we find men or women binding themselves together in some kind of a structure to make a "new cart" to carry the glory of God. A lot of excitement follows, and God's people rejoice in the knowledge that God is once again visiting His people. But suddenly something goes wrong, and there is perplexity. "Just what happened anyway?... Where did it go wrong?" The fact is that God never ordained the "cart" to begin with. Certainly God will bless His people as they open their hearts to Him, but they very often fail to realize that He blesses them in spite of the "cart," in spite of the new structure, in spite of the new movement, and not because of it. The "new cart" is man's device to keep the move of the Spirit steady--free from error, free from false doctrines--and to keep the ark of His presence and glory from going on the rocks. "Uzzah and Ahio" who were the sons of Abinadab "drave the new cart" (2 Sam. 6:3). They were quite knowledgeable about the ark. After all it had lain in their father's house for many, many years. "Uzzah" means "Strength," and "Ahio" means "His brother." They could give the proper watch-care and guidance that the ark required. They did not profess to be bringing back the ark, the oxen were doing that. They were just strong, able, qualified men of God who knew exactly what to do if things went wrong. And so when the oxen stumbled near Nachon's threshing floor the ark was shaken and the strong man put forth his hand to steady it, and God smote him dead. Invariably this happens when men invent new carts, new fellowships, new movements--or whatever-to keep the move of the Spirit from falling on the rocks. Some strong man is right there on hand to keep things steady when the way gets rough, and this leads to disaster. God is very jealous for His own glory. And no man can touch it, no matter how great he is, without bringing disaster into the midst of God's people. We may all point our fingers at some great man, some great ministry, and give our version as to how he went wrong. But it is not always his fault. It is often the fault of the people who idolize him. It is often the fault of the religious system that men feel they must try to uphold. And it happens over and over again because we are ignorant as to how exceedingly jealous God is for His own glory.

God hasten the day when God's people will come to the solemn realization that the Spirit of God is in the earth today as the Representative and Vicar of Christ in the Church, and that He must have His due Lordship in the midst of His people. True He raises up leaders from among the people; but we must know that their leadership is only valid by virtue of the Anointing they carry, nothing more and nothing less. "Uzzah" means "Strength." It is invariably the strength of human leadership, not their weakness, that extinguishes the spiritual flame that had been kindled by the presence of the Lord. God's power is made perfect in man's weakness--not in his strength. God does not require the strong, dynamic, charismatic personality. He requires one who like Jacob of old has been robbed of his natural strength by the touch of the hand of God, and who then arises from his confrontation with the Lord a different man, bearing a different name--"Israel." Israel means "Power with God." And from that day on he bears about in his body the indelible mark of his confrontation with the Lord of Glory. From that day forward Israel walks with God with faltering step because of "the sinew that shrank," a constant reminder to him of that day--or rather that night--when Almighty God crippled him by the touch of His mighty hand.

David was afraid of the LORD because of this sudden, drastic action on God's part, and he left the ark in the house of Obededom the Gittite. There it remained for three months. But a strange thing happened. The LORD blessed the house of Obededom, and all that he had, because of the presence of the ark of the covenant. David had to seek the LORD to discover just what went wrong... and why. Many of God's people have been discouraged and dismayed when they have witnessed some strange calamity take place in the Church, where once they had witnessed God's blessing. (But seldom do they call a halt to it all, and seek God for answers; they just make another new cart and carry on as if nothing happened.)

Usually we are going to discover that it is a case of human leadership who, because of their great office and gifts, feel they have a mandate to supervise and control and exercise lordship over the people of God because of that office.

God's Way

After seeking God David soon found out the reason for the calamity. He discovered that the ark was to be carried upon the shoulders of the Levites, and in no other way. David acknowledged, "The LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order" (1 Chron. 15:13). When are we going to learn that God does not originate new carts, new movements, new fellowships, new organizations, every time He would do a certain work in the earth? It is really man's attempt to keep things under control... to keep the revival from falling apart... to keep the doctrines pure... to keep the people from getting scattered... but in the long run it hinders what God is doing, and brings it to a halt.

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