

The Trouble with Ox-Carts

Breaking free of the paradigms of the old order

By Michael Clark and George Davis

When David was king of Israel, God put it into his heart to bring the ark of the covenant from the house of Abinadab to Mount Zion, his new city of Jerusalem. The ark was lost to the Philistines by the previous soulish administration, the reign of King Saul. It had been captured by the Philistine army when the high priest, Eli, sent the ark out in front of the army of Israel with his sons, thinking that it would do magic for Saul against the will of God. God's judgment was against the kingdom of Saul. God let the Philistines win the battle in order to deal with Saul's rebellion, even though the ark of His presence was lost to this heathen nation.

God was able to protect Himself and didn't need the armies of rebellious Saul to do the job. The ark was placed in the temple of Dagon, the fish god of the Philistines. It wasn't long until God started to make a point. First Dagon fell off his pedestal on his face before the ark, and the heathen priests set him back up. Then the following night he fell again, this time breaking off his head and hands.

The pagan priests saw that the ark was too hot for Dagon to handle so they carried it out of the temple to another city. God started smiting all people of their land with hemorrhoids and a plague of rats. Finally, frantic over the situation, the lords of the Philistines met and decided that after months of turmoil caused by the presence of the ark in their country, they must return it to Israel. Eventually it ended up in the house of Abinadab.

This is the story of how the Philistines transported the ark:

Now the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it to its place."

So they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but by all means return it to Him with a trespass offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you."

Then they said, "What is the trespass offering which we shall return to Him?"

They answered, "Five golden tumors [hemorrhoids] and five golden rats, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines. For the same plague was on all of you and on your lords.

Therefore you shall make images of your tumors and images of your rats that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will lighten His hand from you, from your gods, and from your land. Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He did mighty things among them, did they not let the people go, that they might depart? Now therefore, make a new (ox) cart, take two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them. Then take the ark of the LORD and set it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you are returning to Him as a trespass offering in a chest by its side. Then send it away, and let it go. And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that it is not His hand that struck us--it happened to us by chance."

Then the men did so; they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. And they set the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the chest with the gold rats and the images of their tumors. Then the cows headed straight for the road to Beth Shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth Shemesh. (1 Samuel 6:1-12, NKJV).

As you can see, the Philistines were able to transport the ark of the covenant without the use of God's anointed priests. When it came time for David to move the ark from the house of Abinidab to the city of Zion, he remembered how the Philistines, his old friends and allies, moved the ark. With his traditional thinking, he decided that if it worked for his old allies, it ought to work for him.

This is what happened as a result:

Again David gathered all the choice men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Uzzah [Hebrew - "Strength"] and Ahio [Hebrew "Fraternity"], the sons of Abinadab [Hebrew "My father is willing"],

drove the new [ox] cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark.

Then David and all the house of Israel played music before the LORD on all kinds of instruments of fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals. And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error; and he died there by the ark of God.

And David became angry because of the LORD'S outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day. David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" So David would not move the ark of the LORD with him into the City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. (2 Samuel 6:1-10, NKJV).

So, we see that everyone was willing and strong in their soulish fraternal zeal to get this show on the road and move the ark of God's presence into the City of David by whatever means necessary. After all, Abinadab and his two sons were of the Levitical priesthood, so God shouldn't have a problem with that, should He? All seemed to be going well until the inevitable stumbling of the ox, a symbol of brute strength, for it takes more than a traditional priesthood and the strength of an ox to please God.

Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; But much increase comes by the strength of an ox. (Proverbs 14:4, NKJV)

Well meaning Uzzah, a man of soulish strength, saw the oxcart system failing, and tried to help God by reaching out to steady the ark, least it fall from the new oxcart that they had built in their zeal to see God move.

Does anyone else see a lesson to be learned here or is it just me? When men look to that last move of God to figure out how to get Him to move in their structures and organizations this time around, they always miss it. Men are all too ready to give God a hand as if He were like Dagon who would fall on His face. It is not God who they really care about anyway; it is their own face that they are trying to save. How many more must die before this carnal priesthood figures out that God is not going to bless their presumptuous efforts?

God is not a man that He should change, but God is not like unimaginative, carnal men and Satan. He does not do the same thing the same way twice (See Isaiah 43:19, 2 Corinthians 5:17 & Revelation 21:5). Just as David learned from the death of Uzzah, we must learn to humbly seek His face and His ways if we are to see Him move among us in His power once again.

Eventually, David found out that God has a due order of things and it is not after the order of the organizational structures nor the traditions of carnal men. The text continues:

And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites: for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. He said to them, "You are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to the place I have prepared for it. For because you did not do it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order."

So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD. (1 Chronicles 15:11-15, NKJV).

There is a "proper order" in following God and after indirectly causing the death of Uzzah, David feared the Lord and sought His will in how the ark should be moved. It amazes me how many reports I hear today about pastors and their wives coming down sick and suffering all manor of ailments as they try to carry out their "pastoral duties." Since taking the position of pastor last year, one man I know personally has had a broken ankle and two broken ribs, all from separate accidents. They were nearly killed on a recent trip when they fell asleep at the wheel with no warning while the cruise control was set at seventy miles per hour. I think I would be searching the Lord for answers if I were him, but he just keeps doing the traditional "pastoral thing" and expects God to bless it.

The Anointing that Comes from Waiting

In the Book of Acts there is a story of a group of men in the Church of Antioch who waited on God to move and spent their time fasting and ministering to Him. We do not know how long they did this, but ministering to God came first, before ministering to

men. When we minister to God first and satisfy Him alone, then men will be satisfied with His ministry through us. As Jesus put it, fruit comes from abiding in Vine and not from doing! Here is the story of these brothers in Antioch:

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. (Acts 13:1-3, NKJV)

This "sending out" made Saul (Paul) and Barnabas "sent out ones" or apostles; until then they were "teachers and prophets." They were not apostles until God separated them out and sent them to do HIS work. You cannot take this title or ministry of apostle to yourself because you--or mere men--send you out. The sending must be done by God as we first minister to Him. Paul was ordained an apostle by God and not by men. In Paul's own words,

"Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)." (Galatians 1:1, NKJV)

Just as Zadok and His sons were to be the priests that ministered before the ark in the tabernacle of David, and also in the temple of the Lord in Ezekiel's prophecy (see Ezekiel 44), so it was with Paul who waited before the Lord and ministered first and foremost to Him. This is the same Paul who had heavenly visions and saw Jesus on more than one occasion and had been taught by Him for years in the wilderness, before the Antioch encounter with the Holy Spirit ever happened. How many have we seen today that go running off to do God a service as soon as they get the slightest hint that God is calling them. As soon as they get have a vision or an angelic visitation, BAM!, they have a ministry and are telling everyone about it. Tapes and books are sure to follow. They become "Madison Avenue ministers," hocking their wares.

At one time, Paul "ministered" and was "sent out" by the power of carnal men, the elders of Jerusalem, to go forth and kill those of the new move of God. He sought to stretch forth his hand and touch what God was doing in the earth, but God struck him down on the road to Damascus instead. He was ministering from the traditions of the last move of God and was the persecutor of the new move of the Holy Spirit. He had a

zeal, but it was not according to "the due order" of God. The old order as it was prophesied for centuries, was now lchabod (Hebrew - the glory has gone out). The new order of the holy priesthood of all believers was now in.

There is a lesson to be learned here, my friends. God will not bless our traditions and structures, even when we put wheels under them, when they bind us and nullify what He desires to do and is doing. As Jesus put it so well,

Then He spoke a parable to them: "No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'" (Luke 5:36-39, NKJV).

Oh, how men say, "The old wine is better. Who wants new wine, anyway! It is just made of sour grapes. It is not happening in OUR church, so it must not be God!" Or, as I have heard so often, "God did not move this way in the founding of our denomination, so this can't be Him!" How we love our old wineskins and old moth eaten vestments and garments. Be assured of one thing, my brothers and sisters, "the piece that was taken out of the new does not (and will not) match the old."

Some things never change. Men of established ministries always tend to resist what God is doing in the Church. As Stephen warned the Pharisees who killed him:

"But Solomon built Him a house. However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: 'Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, Or what is the place of My rest? Has My hand not made all these things?'

You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it." When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. (Acts 7:47-54, NKJV).

As a footnote to this story, As they were stoning Stephen, they laid their coats at Saul's (Paul's) feet. God was so gracious to Paul and it forever humbled him.

A Lesson from the Jewish leaders

When Jesus taught the common, unlearned folks, they followed Him as children and ran to Him, listening intently, hanging on His every word. These simple folks from the hated regions of Galilee could see the difference.

And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (Matthew 7:28,29, NKJV).

He upset the whole apple cart, or should I say "oxcart," of the Jewish leaders. They were so upset with Him and so jealous that they plotted to have Him killed.

Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." (John 11:47,48, NKJV).

Isn't it ironic that in the killing of Jesus, the Son of God, God punished them with the very thing that they feared? The Romans came in 68AD and took their places as leaders and destroyed their nation.

Men who cling to their ministries and garnish their old wineskins while they decorate the sepulchres of the prophets (whom their fathers killed) will have the very thing they fear the most come upon them. Even in our day, men do not want to lose their places or their denomi-nations to Jesus. They seek to find their lives, their niche in the power structures of men, and in doing so they will lose them. It cost Saul of Tarsus everything to follow Jesus. He wanted the will of God so much that he referred to everything of the old order that opposed the new as dung.

Paul saw how the traditions of his former ministry wanted to kill the new moving of God. In his three days of blindness, Paul saw more truth than many ministers will ever see with two good eyes. He knew beyond a doubt that his restored sight was not the "seeing" that he once knew as an elder of the old order. God had to take away his

former "eyesight" so that he could be given spiritual eyes. As it was when Jesus was born into the kingdom of Herod, the old always seeks to kill the new thing that is born from above. The more things change the more they remain the same.

Today's New Oxcart

Today we have an "new oxcart mentality" in the visible church. We say to ourselves, "If the Philistines were able to bring in the glory of God on their new oxcart, then why can't we bring in His presence with OUR new one?" Men just can't figure out that God is not going to wink at their presumption any longer. They go on building their new programs and buildings and ask God to bless them. This move of God will not fit in their old wineskin mentality! Many who reach out in their own strength to put a carnal hand to what God is doing now will also die like Uzzah.

If God has called you out of Egypt into the wilderness to minister to Him and you have seen His new order coming forth, beware of the counsels of the "old prophets" who want you to turn aside and have supper with them in their old houses and traditional mindsets. This will kill the anointing on you as surely as it killed that young prophet who sought refuge and counsel from the one who God quit using years earlier in his own town (read 1 Kings 13).

Jesus is once again turning over the money changers' tables, the tables of those who make merchandise of His Church. We are going to see even greater destruction of the old wineskins in the future. These hardened skins will either burst as they try to contain what the Spirit is doing, or these leaders of the old paradigm will say, "Surely the old wine is better" and resist God's Spirit like the Jews before them.

The truth is found by those who do not have a vested interest in what the effect of obeying the truth will be. So many in ministry today have too much to lose to allow themselves to "hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches." They have a vested interest in what they want the truth to be and because of this they no longer have ears to hear. They will either forsake their old ways and repent like Paul did, walking away from everything that he once held dear, or they will fight to the death to keep this current move of God from upsetting their oxcart. Their money, book, and tape tables must not be turned over, no matter what it costs to preserve them. These are the ones who stone the prophets and those the Lord sends to them. These ["will not see Him](#)

again until they say, 'Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.'"(Read Matthew 23).

The Tabernacle of David Restored

The prophet Amos spoke of a great restoration coming at the time of the end of man's kingdoms. Many in ministry want to see this tent of David restored, but they want it to be build in their temples. God will not allow that to happen. Once I was praying for revival to come here in northern Idaho where we live. One day as I was praying this way, I heard the Lord speak to me. He said, "Do you really want to see a bunch of spiritual babes born to these women who would just as soon cut them in half as to let the others have them?" I said, "I see your dilemma, Lord. You will not send revival to this old self centered order."

The tabernacle of David stands alone. Only it can withstand the storms that will soon be raging against the Church.

"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name," Says the LORD who does this thing.

"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, And all the hills shall flow with it." (Amos 9:11-13, NKJV).

The apostles saw the importance of this prophesy and referred to it in Acts fifteen when certain Jews among them were trying to force the Gentile believers under their law and traditions. If we hang onto our traditions, our ox carts, we will reject the anointing that comes with the Son of David. He is rebuilding a tabernacle with only three sides, making the ark, the anointing of His presence, available to "whosoever will" and not to a select few priests as before. The false structure built on clergy/laity separation is coming down.

The ark has been held captive for too long in the house of Obed-Edom (Hebrew - "a worker of Esau" [the one who traded away his birthright to feed his flesh]). "The remnant of Edom" will belong to those who work with God in this effort. God has been showing His priests of the new order how to make themselves ready. They are being

stripped of their old coverings (mantles) and given new white, linen garments purchased from Jesus, tried in His fires of purification to cover their nakedness. These "mountains" were once lowly valleys, the cast down ones rejected of men, but as the Stone which was rejected by the builders has become the Chief Cornerstone, so these outcasts of today's systems of men will be the anointed ones who "drip with sweet wine" and "the hills [those who recognize the anointing] will flow with it."

Rejoice, dear saints of God. All things are becoming new in Christ and the old is passing away.

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