

# ISSUES & ANSWERS

Bible Answers to Contemporary Issues

Pastor Rich Wilkerson, Sr. / May 3, 2020

## God is Good All The Time

There are some stories in Scripture that are puzzling at first glance. In fact, there are some stories that will not make sense or seem applicable to your life until the Holy Spirit reveals its purpose to you.

One of those stories for me is the story of Uzzah touching the Ark of God and God striking him dead.

We've been talking about Issues and Answers, and I've focused on the Character of God. In this Bible study we will continue that theme, but I want to pay special attention to the fact that people are QUESTIONING God.

Here's the truth, friend. It's okay to ask God questions, but it's not okay to Question God.

During this season of pandemic, people want to affix blame. Political blame, education blame, blame the capitalists, hi-tech blame. Folks want to affix blame so they can wash their hands of the problem and walk away. They don't want to struggle with the why, and the how, and the how can I do my part.

Ultimately it turns to religion and people asking, "How can a loving God, if there is a God, let these things happen?"

The poor get poorer and starve.

The rich get richer.

The sick get sicker and die.

Natural disasters happen and people lose their homes.

The innocent are preyed on.

Does this mean God is Unjust?

Here's what I know. We see only a moment in time and God sees eternity. We see what is happening right now; He sees the results, the ripples in time, that will happen in 30 years.

God has it under control, even when we feel like it is spiraling out of control.

- "And we know that all things \_\_\_\_\_ for good to them that \_\_\_\_\_ God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28, KJV).
- "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14, KJV).

## GOD HAS HIS WAYS

This week I preached on 2 Samuel 6:3-8, and we will look at this passage again in this study, but first I want to give you the background you need to truly understand what happens when Uzzah is struck down.

### **Let's start with the Ark of God and "The Kohathites" (Numbers 4).**

When God gave Moses **The Law**, He gave strict instructions on how it was to be housed. He called for the creation of 4 religious orders, and each had specific duties in carrying out the Law. One of those groups was the Kohathites.

The Kohathites took care of the items housed behind the curtain in the inner sanctum. Of primary importance was the Ark of God, which housed the Ten Commandments and the very presence of the Lord.

Look at Numbers 4:4-6:

*"This is the work of the Kohathites at the tent of meeting; the care of the most holy things. When the camp is to move, Aaron and his sons are to go in and **take down the shielding curtain and put it over the ark of the covenant law**. Then they are to **cover the curtain with a durable leather, spread a cloth of solid blue over that and put the poles in place.**"*

What are the 4 steps Aaron and his sons must take as they prepare to move the Ark?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think this very specific way of moving the Ark was so important to God?

Now look at verse 15:

*"After Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy furnishings and all the holy articles, and when the camp is ready to move, only then are the \_\_\_\_\_ to come and do the \_\_\_\_\_. But they \_\_\_\_\_ the holy things or they will \_\_\_\_\_. The Kohathites are to carry those things that are in the tent of meeting."*

### **God has His ways, and His ways are unchangeable.**

What does God say in Isaiah 55:9?

God has been the same and will remain the same for all of eternity. He is merciful, but He commands obedience and His laws are irrefutable. As part of His Law, He gave Moses specific instructions on how the

people were to worship Him and how they would care for the gifts He had given.

*"So Moses \_\_\_\_\_ this law and gave it to the Levitical priests, who \_\_\_\_\_ the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel" (Deut. 31:9).*

The Israeli people at that time were a storytelling people. They passed the lessons of God down through the generations with the written word. The Law was so important that God wanted it written down! He left no room for doubt or misunderstanding.

Now we jump forward in time to 1 Samuel 4. The Ark of God has been captured. The most Holy of all of God's physical articles in the Old Testament, the item that housed the physical presence of God, had been captured by the Philistines.

In their ignorance, they thought they had won a major prize.

Losing the Ark of God struck a mighty blow to Israel. They lost over 30,000 men in the battle, including Eli's sons, the priests who were charged with caring for the Ark.

When he heard the news of the loss of the Ark, Eli, who was the ruler of the people of Israel at that time, fell and broke his neck, dying instantly.

Eli's daughter-in-law, Phinehas, was so distraught by the news of the capture of the Ark and her husband's and father-in-law's deaths that she went into labor. She named the child Ichabod (No Glory), and said:

"The \_\_\_\_\_ has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been \_\_\_\_\_" (1 Sam. 4:22).

The Philistines thought they had won a major prize, and they put the Ark of God in the temple of their god, Dagon. What they didn't know is they had angered God.

God immediately toppled the image of their God, Dagon. They stood it back up, and the next night, He toppled and broke the statue:

"His \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ had been broken off and were lying on the \_\_\_\_\_; only his body remained" (1 Sam. 5:4).

And then the Lord made life miserable for the Philistines:

"The Lord's hand was \_\_\_\_\_ on the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought \_\_\_\_\_ on them and \_\_\_\_\_ them with \_\_\_\_\_" (1 Sam. 5:6).

The people of Ashdod refused to keep the Ark of God any longer and it was moved to another city that was similarly afflicted.

By the time the Ark was moved a third time, the people called on the Philistine leaders to send it back to Israel.

"So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and said, 'Send the ark of the god of Israel \_\_\_\_\_; let it go back to its own place, or it will \_\_\_\_\_ and our people'" (1 Sam 5:11).  
The Philistines kept the Ark of God for only 7 months!

They were so terrified by what had happened that they not only sent the Ark back, they also sent back a guilt offering.

## Look at how the Philistines sent the Ark back:

*"Now then, get a new cart ready, with two \_\_\_\_\_ that have calved and have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the \_\_\_\_\_, but take their calves away and pen them up. Take the ark of the Lord and put it on the cart, and in a chest beside it put the gold objects you are sending back to him as a guilt offering. Send it on its way" (1 Sam. 6:7-8).*

When the cart arrived in Beth Shemesh, the people rejoiced. The Levites (the priests) immediately came to care for the Ark. They broke up the cart and killed the cows and gave an offering to the Lord.

But 70 of the people died that day because they looked into the Ark. And the scripture says:

*"The people \_\_\_\_\_ because of the heavy blow the LORD had dealt them" (1 Sam. 6:19).*

They mourned. They didn't get angry or call God unjust. They mourned because they knew those 70 had broken the law.

The Israeli people *"brought it (the Ark) to Abinadab's house on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the LORD" (1 Sam. 7:1).*

The Ark of God remained there during Samuel's rule and Saul's reign. When David becomes king, he wants to bring the Ark back to Jerusalem. He takes 30,000 men with him as an escort.

Abinadab and his two sons seem to be clueless on history when they prepare the Ark for transport. Remember that only the Kohathites are supposed to touch the Ark of God. And the process for moving it, carried by the Kohathites with staves and carefully wrapped, is clearly defined. It is God's way.

Instead, they choose to transport the Ark the way the Philistines did. The difference is, the Philistines were ignorant to the Law of the Lord. The Israeli people were not.

They pick the ark up, put it on the cart. That is sin # 1. **How is the Ark of God supposed to be carried?**

The cart is pulled by two oxen. That is sin #2. **Who is supposed to carry the Ark of God on their shoulders?**

God has given them a pass thus far. They have clearly broken the Law that they should be well versed in, but He has allowed it to go unpunished.

Ahio, one of Abinidab's sons, is leading the cart and Uzzah, the other, is walking next to the cart. Everyone is celebrating and feeling victorious as the Ark is returning to Jerusalem. And then:

*"When they came to the threshing floor of Nakon, Uzzah reached out and \_\_\_\_\_ of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah because of his \_\_\_\_\_ act; therefore God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God" (2 Sam. 6:6-7).*

David immediately stops dancing and is angry with God. Instead of continuing with the journey, he delivers the ark to Obed-Edom's home and leaves it there and returns to Jerusalem. The Ark remains in Obed-Edom's home for 3 months and Obed is blessed for that time. Everything in his home and everything he does is blessed.

David hears of this blessing and goes back and brings the ark back to Jerusalem. Properly this time.

God has His Ways!

Are we supposed to not agree with God's way? The people of Beth Shemesh did not get angry with God, they knew they had broken the law.

God Is Good All The Time.

## **GOD IS PERFECT IN ALL OF HIS WAYS**

His work is perfect and all His ways are just.

This statement was made after Moses had sinned by striking the rock instead of speaking to the rock. He made it after he knew he wouldn't be leading the people into the promised land. Because of one mistake, he's not going to lead them in, and he still says: God is perfect in all his ways. God wants to bless you but you have to go with his ways to get the blessing.

David got mad and parked the Ark and all that happened for 3 months was unparalleled blessings coming down on that house because His blessing was on that house.

You've got to get God's presence in you, with you, by you, in your home. You can ask God questions, but you mustn't question God. When you question God's ways you drive him away.

What ultimately killed Uzzah? His unwillingness to know God. To understand His ways. He's raised in the house of a Levite, among ministers. But evidently the family had refused to study God's word. They should have memorized the Torah by 13. The laws were all there. But evidently, they didn't keep it in their hearts because they copied the Philistines instead of following The Law.

He thought that he was supposed to save God. He forgot that God is **his savior**. We must be careful to not make the same mistake.

## **GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME.**