

The Almost Forgotten TABERNACLE of DAVID

Part 1 of 2

by Philip Shields

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You've heard of "*the*" Tabernacle – but few have been taught about my favorite: the Tabernacle of *David*, which is vastly different from the Tabernacle Moses built. This fast paced part 1 message will inspire, excite and teach you about worshiping God in ways you may have never heard before.

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Good day brethren, this is Philip Shields with something today I predict will be brand new material to many of you. **Today's sermon is *not* "new truth"** – for it has always been in the Bible, and there certainly have been others who have preached eloquently on this topic. But not in the church I attended. Now hold on to your seats, because **I'm hoping it will inspire and motivate you as it has me to want to worship and praise your God more than ever before when you learn more today about a tabernacle that almost seems to be *forgotten*** – and yet holds the keys to some of the most exciting clues about God and our worship of Him.

Today's message is about a mysterious Tabernacle that is the *only* Tabernacle God says He is interested in restoring! Did you get that? You'll learn more through this message today about King David, about how he worshiped. **You'll learn from this mysterious Tabernacle that God shows us that He wants us to worship Him with gusto, with our whole hearts, and sometimes in different styles and approaches at different times in history.** God is not to be stereotyped into any one form of worship, as you will see.

Turn with me to Amos 9, written about 240 or so years after King David's death. Israel is falling asleep spiritually and in a few years they would be taken captive by the Assyrians ... but there's a puzzling couple verses. In Amos 9:8-10, God is prophesying the coming destruction of the northern 10 tribes of Israel – and then their subsequent revival. As God also gives hope of a better time coming after their destruction, here's what He says:

Amos 9:11-12

"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.
12 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."

What's this? The "Tabernacle of DAVID"? What was *that*? *When* was it? *Where* was it? What do you know about it? So what? What meaning does it hold for us today, you ask?
And what's this about *Gentiles* being called by God's *name* – and somehow having Gentiles be associated with the Tabernacle of David? Wasn't the Tabernacle mostly about God's interaction with *Israel*?

Turn now to Acts 15. Now about 800 years after Amos wrote this, the early Christians after Christ have assembled to discuss the matter of circumcision and Gentiles coming into the church. When **James, a leader in the Jerusalem church** summarizes their conclusions to allow Gentiles to be church members, something very different from what the Jews had believed up til now, here's what he says:

Acts 15:13-17 JAMES – at the Jerusalem conference – also refers to it.

“And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men and brethren, listen to me: 14 Simon has declared how God at the first visited **the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name**. 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written [**In Amos 9:11-12**]: 16 ‘After this I will return And **will rebuild the tabernacle of David**, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; 17 *So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the Gentiles* who are called by My name’, says the LORD who does all these things.”

The Tabernacle of David was intrinsically connected to Gentiles. Those of you who are *not* physical descendants of Israel – those of you in Africa or of African descent, or Asian descent, and so on – you *especially* want to listen carefully. Those of you of Israelite heritage, also are about to hear some exciting things! And in the end, remember that ***all who are in Christ, are ALL spiritual Israel, regardless of color or ethnic background*** – and those who are white, and of Israelite heritage but who have *not* taken Christ as Savior – are *Gentiles spiritually*. So there can be no racial or tribal prejudice in Christ.

Put it another way: I’m a white male, but I’d rather be with black men and women or Asian men and women who are in Christ – than be with other whites, if they are not in Christ. And among people who are all in *Christ*, we become racially blind. We don’t see color!

But that’s getting off my main point, which is the Tabernacle of David.

What on earth is this “Tabernacle of David”? We need to review the concept of God’s building, of the various Tabernacles and Temples mentioned in the Bible – so we grasp the significance of this mysterious Tabernacle of David.

From the very beginning, there are hints of God’s building – even from Genesis 2. God the Father is building a *house*, which has *always* been a picture of *Christ* and the church. Where do you think it starts? This starts in Genesis 2, I believe, with Eve. We know Adam represents the 2nd Adam Christ, and since Eve was Adam’s wife, it stands to reason that she was a type of the church, which will be the bride of Christ, the 2nd Adam. Check out my series of sermons in 2004 titled “The Mystery of Christ and the Church” to get the full background on this.

Gen 2:21-22 “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He **made** [**Hebrew: built**] into a woman, and He brought her to the man.”

All the translations either say “made” or “formed” a woman. The Hebrew implies something stronger. The same Hebrew word *banah* is used throughout the Old Testament to refer to someone *building* a city, building an *altar*, or building a *house*. It’s the word used to describe the building process.

So when it says God “built” a woman, the Hebrew hints at **Eve** being built as a type of the house of God, His dwelling place, a type of His church, the Tabernacle of God, if you will. But just a hint.

It gets much clearer later, when God tells Moses to literally build a portable house of God: the **Tabernacle of Moses** – all of it representing Christ and the *church*. It was beautiful, a very fancy portable building with beautiful colors, skins and cloths and various articles of furniture and altars used to worship God.

Most people think the next step was the **Temple of SOLOMON** – Now covers 1 acre, bigger, grander. Instead of just one lamp stand, there are now 10! Pure gold covers just about everything in this splendid temple.

Ezekiel 40-46 Millennial temple -- this is bigger and grander yet, covering 4 acres.

Then in the New Testament – the Tabernacle, or temple of God becomes even more grand. *GOD Himself in the form of the Son of God, comes to “tabernacle” with man and becomes EMMANUEL with us, GOD with us.* And don’t – please don’t – give 2 seconds to the heretics who preach that Jesus did not exist before His human birth, or that He wasn’t fully God somehow!

Christ – gives birth to the “building” which is His church, called “the Body of Christ”; we are considered *living stones* in this temple (**1 Peter 2:4-5**), or – if you’re using the *body* metaphor, we are *parts* of His body (**Eph. 5:30; 1 Cor. 12:12-13**).

We are members of His body. The church was made possible when – like Adam – He gave up part of His body to form the Bride, when a spear was thrust into His side on the cross, and out came blood and water. The blood symbolized His forgiveness and sacrifice for His bride, and the water pictured the outflowing of His Spirit on Pentecost to begin the new covenant church of God.

So as we stick *our* hands into His side as He invited Thomas to do after Christ’s resurrection, we recognize where *we* came from as His church. We are part of *His* flesh, part of His blood, part of His very bones – for we are members of His body. All this is what our marriages picture, and this is why we also *must* get our marriages to reflect the love of Christ for His bride. Let’s read it:

Ephesians 5:29-33 “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. **30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.** [*That’s what ADAM said about Eve in Gen. 2:23*] **31** “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” **32** This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. **33** Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

We are now the house of God (**1 Tim. 3:15**) and the temple, the habitation, of His Spirit (**Ephesians 2:20-22**). And as in any close relationship, Christ is IN us by His Spirit, and we are in Christ when we become members of His body.

Then grandest of all, Rev. 21:3 says “Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them...” What’s happening? **Verse 2 says THE NEW JERUSALEM** from heaven is coming down adorned as a bride for her husband – radiant, beautiful, where the Bride of Christ will dwell, at the Headquarters city of the new universe.

So Revelation 21-22 – tells us of the new habitation of God, the Holy City itself – now 1500 miles CUBED! For those of you outside the US, that’s 2,400 kilometers high, 2400 kms wide, and 2400 kilometers long! Brethren, this is a huge city. This coming Tabernacle of God, or city of God, is so big it would cover one *half* of the entire United States.

But in all the excitement, we’ve MISSED a crucial Tabernacle! What Tabernacle am I talking about?

*Between the Tabernacle of Moses and Solomon's temple is another building that few have ever talked about and most of us read right past it. It's the most exciting, most thrilling of the Tabernacles, at least to me. We've already identified it as **THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID**.*

This tabernacle of DAVID is little known, little discussed – but is loaded with meaning.

*First, so we understand David's Tabernacle, let's review the **TABERNACLE THAT GOD HAD MOSES BUILD**. It was called “the Tabernacle of the LORD”—but just so there is no confusion, I will refer to it as the Tabernacle of Moses, or the Tabernacle that Moses built.*

QUICK REVIEW of the original Tabernacle

A Tabernacle is simply a fancy word for a special tent. After God led Israel out of Egypt, God gave Moses very specific design plans to build a portable tent – what we've come to know as the TABERNACLE. God explains He wants to come camp *with* Israel – to tent with them – “to Tabernacle” means to “tent with”. God camping out with the nation, right in the middle.

God had a white colored enclosure of linen around His tent, and on one end *inside* this enclosure was the portable tabernacle made of exquisite fabrics, colors and skins. It was covered in 3 layers of skins – goatskins, then rams skins dyed red, then a dark badger skin covering over that, so from above, God's tent was also probably a dark color on the surface. Someday I'll share with you the details of how all this pictures Christ and the Church, but right now I can only touch on the hi-lites.

There was only *one* entrance through the 4-walled white linen enclosure. *Just one*. It was not made too convenient. There is only *one* door into God's presence. There is only one name by which we may all be saved. Jesus is THE Way, and the door. *The only Way, the only Door*. Just like the Tabernacle enclosure has only one entrance, with a red color. We enter by the Red – the blood of Christ. When you entered the narrow doorway, you came into the outside Court.

The first thing we must do in a relationship with God is accept His call to come into His presence – through the one door, Jesus Christ (**Acts 4:12**).

The very first thing you'd see inside the enclosure is the large **BRAZEN ALTAR (Ex. 27, 38)** where the animal sacrifices were done – picturing the very first thing we must *do* when we come into God's presence: *repent* and accept the blood of the Innocent Lamb shed for us. It was 5 x 5 cubits – and 5 is the number of grace.

The next thing you'd see as you approach the Tabernacle was the large **basin of water** or **LAVAR** for **washing the priests**. **It was made of the women's bronze mirrors. The priests only could wash their hands and feet in it. Today we are all priests of God (1 Pet. 2:9)**, and today after we repent, we're told to wash away our sins (**Acts 22:16**) in baptism. That was the Laver. The Water speaks of our cleansing (**Titus 3:5; Hebrews 10:22; Ephesians 5:25-26**).

Now we come to the **Tabernacle building itself – made up of 2 parts**. The first section was the Holy Place, where the priests could enter into. Remember to be a priest, you not only had to be of the tribe of Levi, but a son or descendant of Aaron. All priests were Levites, but only a few Levites were priests.

The Holy Place: inside this part you would have been surrounded by gold-covered items of intense beauty. From the outside, you see nothing – just as from the outside there is no beauty in Christ that anyone would desire Him. But when you know Christ inside, the glory and beauty of His character

of gold become evident. Also, outside was noisy. You'd hear the bleating of animals, the noise of life – but inside the Holy Place it was serene and quiet and peaceful.

We would have seen the **golden table** on which was placed the showbread, to the left would be the **Lampstand** with 7 golden arms (like the *menorah*) and ahead of you would be a small **altar of incense**, placed just in front of the curtain or veil that led you to the next room – called the Holy of Holies.

The Table – made of acacia wood covered with gold (**Ex. 25:23-30**) on which were placed **the 12 loaves** renewed each sabbath, represented the Bread of Life, the Word of God, being fed God's truth. The table was small – just 3' long by 18" wide.

The solid-gold Lampstand is Jesus, the Light of the world (**John 1:4, 9**), the light of God's word, made possible by the oil of the Holy Spirit, and the arms of the lampstand (3 on each side plus the center lamp) could possibly represent the 7 churches, though in Revelation there were 7 lampstands. The priests topped up the oil morning and evening and the light of God was never supposed to go out. Christ – and His body – are the light today to the world and we are to always let our light shine. The lampstand was made of 1 solid gold block beaten into the shape desired.

The **Altar of incense represents the prayers** of the saints that come before God – as certainly the aroma of that altar of incense would waft in through the curtain to the other side in the Holy of holies. It made the presence of God wonderful – compared to the odors and smells outside where frightened animals were being killed, with body parts, insides, offal, and all that. Being with God in His presence is much more of a delight than being outside.

THE VEIL INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES (Hebrews 9:3-4)

Then we come to a veil of blue, purple and scarlet thread and fine woven linen (**Ex. 36:35**) that blocked the way to the Most Holy place, come to be known as the Holy of Holies. Inside the holy of holies was one article of furniture – the *Ark of the Covenant*. It was also made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold and it had a cover.

The Cover of the Ark was made of solid gold. Do you remember what it was called? “**The Mercy Seat**” (**Exodus 37:1-9**). The Mercy Seat covered the Ark. The Ark was a wooden box about 2-1/2 feet by 3-1/2 feet covered with gold – and what was put *inside* the ark? Three items in the Ark:

Inside the Ark was placed the **2 stone tablets of the 10 commandments** – the LAW, justice, righteousness and holiness (**Exodus 25**)

The 2nd thing placed inside was **Aaron's rod that budded** (**Numbers 17:5**)– authority, anointing, fruitfulness

The 3rd thing placed inside was a pot of **manna** (**Ex. 16:33-34; Luke 4:4**) – Christ the Word and Bread from heaven.

Covering the ark was the golden lid called *the Mercy Seat* (**Heb. 9:5; Lev. 16:2**). We know that “mercy triumphs over judgment” (**James 2:13**). *Grace* is what allows us to be forgiven and have a new life in Christ when we – like Moses did – break the 10 commandments!

The Mercy Seat was the lid, picturing **the throne of God**, where God's presence was. There was a glowing cloud hovering above, the cloud of God's glory, over the Mercy Seat, and this came to be called “***the SHEKINAH glory***” representing God himself, though the words “*shekinah*” is found

nowhere in the Hebrew Bible (**Lev. 16:2**). Sometimes the glorious cloud didn't just hover over the Mercy Seat, but sometimes it filled the whole tabernacle or temple (**Ex. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-12**).

It was this *mercy* seat that Paul was thinking of when he says in **Hebrews 4:16** that we can “come boldly before the throne of grace”.

Remember also that on the top of the Mercy Seat was a golden crown that went around it. On top also were 2 solid gold cherubim -- mighty, winged arch-angels who stand in God's presence – and they are facing toward each other, looking into the mercy seat. God is pictured as dwelling or ruling between the cherubim. This Ark also was to have 4 rings on its corners through which rods or staves were placed and by which it was to be carried on the shoulders of sanctified Levites or priests – who had to be descendants of Kohath, the grandfather of Aaron (**Numbers 4:15**).

So God was depicted as sitting on His throne, the Mercy Seat. When once a year the High Priest alone would enter the Holy of Holies, he went in with a lot of blood in his hands to sprinkle on the golden Mercy Seat. It was a terrifying experience to come alone into God's presence and see this shimmering cloud of God hovering above the Ark. **The High Priest had bells on the hem of his blue robe**, and a rope around his ankles. Remember the regular priests wore white linen ephods or garments but the High Priest had a beautiful *blue robe* over the white ephod. If the other priests in the other room didn't hear bells ringing, they figured he had either died of fright or had been killed by God for not doing everything right – and the rope was there so they could pull him out without breaking the laws of entering the forbidden place.

Isn't it wonderful that we can now come boldly before the very heavenly throne of our Father, without having to have bells and a rope around our ankles? Without having to fear, but to come boldly. In any case, the Israelites thought of God as literally sitting on that golden Mercy Seat.

So that's the background! When Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land, eventually the Tabernacle was settled in a city called **SHILOH** (**Josh 18:1**). That's important!

Turn now with me to Jeremiah 7:1.

By day of Jeremiah, roughly 400 years after David's death – and the northern tribes have by now been taken into captivity – once again the Jews thought their relationship with God was the formal religion established around the temple. ***But I'm not really talking about them – but about US!***

God warns them, and US, this is all very important for today's message, so listen – God warns us, that worshiping Him has got to be more than the formal, staid, ritualistic - and boring - same 'ol, same old. That going to church was not enough. Going to the temple, doing the sacrificing and bowing your head and praying – was not enough! There had to be a way of life that reflects a change that comes about as we come to know our Father and God better!

And what's more, God is indicating here and elsewhere, ***He wants our hearts when we worship!*** He wants us interested in what's going on. He wants some *spirit* in our prayers. He doesn't want us *just* doing the right things – but without our *hearts* in it! Remember what He says to the Ephesian church in **Revelation 2:1-5**? Here's my version of what God says: “As my bride, you do a lot of good things, I know your works and all that... but your *heart's* not in it! You've lost your first love. Sure, you do your duty! But where's the passion you used to have when we were just dating?”

Got it? I get criticized sometimes *for* my passion. I tell you: I thank *God* He made you like you are, and made me the way I am, so I can feel for Him, can have a heart for Him. I thank God I can preach

in a way that shows I find this exciting! I hear *awesome* topics too often being preached in a way that makes you go to sleep! How can that be? Yeah, sometimes I get emotional, but then so did David. So did Elijah. So did Peter. I praise God I can feel for the things of God. I read something about being zealous or – being spit out. I read about the zeal of the Lord performs this. In fact we're soon going to read about David's passion. So hang on to your seats and let's read Jeremiah 7 now.

Jeremiah 7:1-15 "The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 "Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD!'" 3 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. 4 **Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these.'**

Then in verses 5-7 God urges Judah to repent and do the right things. He continues verse 8: 8 "Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. 9 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, 10 and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'? 11 ***Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes?*** Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the LORD. [now a *warning* coming up!] 12 ***"But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it*** because of the wickedness of My people Israel. 13 And now, because you have done all these works," says the LORD, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, 14 therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, ***as I have done to Shiloh.*** 15 And I will cast you out of My sight, ***as I have cast out all your brethren -- the whole posterity of Ephraim*** [Remember: Shiloh was in Ephraim]."

Notice some initial observations:

- the Tabernacle of Moses is **not** ever going to be rebuilt or restored – but the tabernacle of David will be – as we read in Amos 9:11-12. Hmmm.
- We're told through Jeremiah to understand what God did at Shiloh to understand what He could do again. **What on earth happened at Shiloh?**

After Moses built the first tabernacle, and after Joshua conquered Canaan, **the tabernacle is placed in a town called Shiloh (Judges 18:1)** – which was ***in the tribe of EPHRAIM***, part of the tribe of Joseph. It stays there for a long time.

Turn with me to 1 Samuel. In chapters 1 and 3 – we have insight into the birth of Samuel. In 1 Samuel 2:12-17, we read about Eli the High Priest and how he did not restrain his 2 evil sons – Hophni and Phinehas – from so much evil – and God foretells their punishment to die.

Remember, the Tabernacle, and the ark – are at Shiloh in Ephraim. No doubt the sacrifices and rituals were being observed, but by now it was all just a ritual. Just like it has become just a ritual to many Christians to "go to church", to sing the hymns, to listen to a sermon that is read – and none of this changed the Israelites back then. Religion had become stale.

Then in 1 Samuel 4, the Israelites battle the Philistines, it goes badly and 4,000 Israelites are killed. Feel free to read along on your own in 1 Samuel 4, as I comment on it. The Israelite leaders decide they need something more – and they decide to go get God. The leaders unanimously order

that the Ark of the covenant be brought out into the battle field and – now with God with them – how could they lose? But they looked more to the box (the Ark) than to God in heaven!

So the priests penetrate the veil, tramp around the Holy of Holies as they take the ark, they break 28 Levitical commands as they do so – for *only* the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and do so only once a year on the day of Atonement. The Israelites are ecstatic when they see the ark arrive in camp (**1 Samuel 4:5-11**), they let out a loud shout and their morale shoots sky high.

“We’ve got God now, we’re with the program, we have the box. God, they thought, was in a box. Do we do the same? Do we – in effect – put God into a box and *limit* the Holy One of Israel?”

God has never lost a battle. But there are some battles God didn’t show up for. What happens? 30,000 Israelites are slain (**v.10-14**). The sons of Eli the High Priest, Hophni and Phinehas, die. The Philistines capture the Ark and take it home as their trophy. Israel is horrified. **“They got GOD!”**

We pick up the story in **1 Samuel 4:12-18**. A Benjamite runs in and tells 98-year old Eli the bad news. Eli by this time is very obese, and he’s blind (**v.15**). He survives hearing about them losing the battle. He survives the news that his 2 sons have died. But when he hears the Ark has been captured – he falls over backward and breaks his neck and dies. (**v. 17-18**).

ELI’s condition reflected *Israel’s* condition: they were spiritually blind, they are *at ease* (**Isaiah 32:9-11**) they are spiritually *fat* and bloated, spiritually blind, poor and naked. Sound familiar?

Now Eli’s daughter in law is expecting and dies while delivering the baby, whom she names Ichabod – **I Samuel 4:19-22** – for she says the “glory has departed from Israel”, for the ark has been captured, and with it – the *shekinah* glory cloud, the presence of God!

Keep your finger in 1 Samuel 5 next, but first let’s turn to **Psalms 78**. In one of the Psalms composed by the Sons of Asaph, describing God’s mindset during this battle we’ve just read about.

Psalm 78:56-64

“Yet they tested and provoked the Most High God, And did not keep His testimonies, 57 But turned back and acted unfaithfully like their fathers; They were turned aside like a deceitful bow. 58 For they provoked Him to anger with their high places, And moved Him to jealousy with their carved images. 59 When **God heard this, He was furious, And greatly abhorred Israel, 60 So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, The tent He had placed among men, 61 And delivered His strength into captivity, And His glory into the enemy's hand.** 62 He also gave His people over to the sword, And was furious with His inheritance. 63 The fire consumed their young men, And their maidens were not given in marriage. 64 Their priests fell by the sword, And their widows made no lamentation.”

We pick up the story flow now in **1 Samuel 5:1-10**.

The first thing the Philistines do is bring the Ark as the trophy before their half-man and half-fish god Dagon, in Ashdod.

1 Samuel 5:1-4 “Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon. 3 And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set it in its place again. 4 And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the

ark of the LORD. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off on the threshold; only Dagon's torso was left of it.”

You know what its saying? When the Philistines went in to check on Dagon, they found him face down on the ground worshipping the God of Israel, before the ark of God! Does God have some humor or what? What do they do? They prop their program up! They prop up their idol, their god. But then the next time they come in, not only is poor Dagon toppled again, but God’s beheaded him and chopped off his hands too! Just his torso is left standing! This is almost funny. But it gets better!

1 Sam. 5:6-7 – God starts to smite the Philistines with tumors. The KJV says God “smote them with emerods”. You know what “emerods” are? The Hebrew can either be translated as “tumor” or *hemorrhoids*! And I’m sure they didn’t have Preparation-H back then. These things can be painful – and very itchy! You’ve gotta picture this. God has some humor. The Philistines are running around, all of them with bad, itchy hemorrhoids, scratching their butts! Or, it could be tumors in other places.

So what do these generous Philistines at Ashdod decide? They decide they’ve been rather selfish, hogging the Ark, the war trophy – and they get inspired to share this trophy with their neighbors over in *Gath*. Well, same thing happens over there (**v.8-9**) – tumors, hemorrhoids, death, suffering.

Well these Philistines in *Gath* decide they want to *share* this wonderful trophy with their Philistine brothers over in Ekron. What a loving, giving people these Philistines were. We’re now in **1 Samuel 5:10-12**. But the men of Ekron *too* are stricken with hemorrhoids (v. 11-12), many died, there’s a plague of rats everywhere, and so they decide to send the ark back to Israel, after they’d had it in Philistia a total of 7 months.

If you’re following along in the Word, we’re now in 1 Samuel 6:1-12.

Anyway, they make golden tumors or golden hemorrhoids and they also make some golden rats – as an offering – and send the ark back to Israel to a town called Beth Shemesh **on a wooden cart**, pulled along by 2 cows which had just calved.

1 Samuel 6:13-19 “Now the people of Beth Shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley; and they lifted their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. 14 Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there; **a large stone was there**. So they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. 15 The Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the chest that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the LORD. 16 So when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day. (then verses 17-18 tells us the 5 gold offerings represented the 5 major cities of the Philistines)

Let’s pick up verse 19:

19 Then **He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people, and the people lamented because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter”**

What happened? This was “Raiders of the Lost Ark” all over. The men of Beth-Shemesh decided they wanted to look inside the Ark and see how God was doing! Now, no one but the Levitical sons of Kohath could move the ark. And nobody certainly was to look into it. Anyway, **to be able to look inside the Ark, they remove the Golden Lid, the Mercy seat that was sprinkled with blood. Now when you take off the Mercy Seat, and look into the ark, what do you see? The law! The**

tablets of the 10 commandments that God wrote with His own finger! The Law requires justice. The broken law requires the death penalty. So when they remove the Mercy Seat, all they get is justice – and instant death.

Brethren, we need to learn this: we cannot stand before God in our own righteousness and expect to live. We cannot come before God in His justice alone, and expect anything but death. We have all sinned, and come short of the ...of the what? of the *glory* of God (**Romans 3:23**). *What* was above the Mercy Seat? The Glory of God All the men of Beth-Shemesh see now is the law – without the Mercy Seat, and they're in trouble! Why? Because the law by itself kills, since we've all sinned and incurred the death penalty. Promise me you'll read **Romans 3:23-28**. Without the blood stained mercy seat covering us, it's going to have to be *our* blood instead, its our filthy-rags righteousness, it's our goodness – and all of that fails! And this is such a great topic to think about as we come closer to PASSOVER this year: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (**Exodus 12:13, 23**), but if the blood is not there, they've removed the lid and look inside – there is no blood over them, and they are killed! **All 50,070** of them!!!

When they removed the mercy seat, they took the mercy off, and God looks down straight into the law – the JUSTICE of God and ZAP – they're dead. Let's pick up the story now in **1 Sam. 6:20**.

1 Samuel 6:20-21 "And the men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? And to whom shall it go up from us?" 21 So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD; come down and take it up with you."

1 Samuel 7:1-2 "Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD. 2 So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD."

They take the Ark of God and move it to Kirjath Jearim – to the house of Abinadab. **The ARK – get this – is never again returned to the established Tabernacle of Moses. Never.** God has abandoned *that* Tabernacle, represented by Shiloh (Psalm 78:60). That has serious meaning.

The Tabernacle now has all the *accoutrements* of worship—except the most important part – God, represented by the ark.

Now get the picture! The **Tabernacle** of Moses was in Shiloh, abandoned by God – according to God Himself - so now it is disgraced, abandoned by God, but the priests are still all there doing the sacrifices and all that – *but there's no Ark in the Holy of Holies*. Nothing behind the veil! It's an empty religion, empty church service – with all the trappings, but God *Himself* was not there any longer.

What about where you go to church services? Does it have all the trappings – but no God? It's worth thinking about.

Where's the ark? It's in a town called Kirjath-Jearim for 20 years, in the house of Abinadab. I want you to let that sink in. Abinadab's son Eleazar is consecrated to look after it.

This is so important to grasp. The Tabernacle is at Shiloh – but it's Holy of Holies was now an empty shell. The Ark is at Kirjath Jearim, no longer behind the veil in the Holy of Holies. God is no

longer represented as being where the outward show of His worship was going on, no longer at Shiloh, God is no longer in the Tabernacle proper – but in someone's *home*! *That's* where God's presence was now!

1 SAMUEL 8, 9, 10, is about Israel demanding a King and how God gave them *Saul*.

The rest of the book of 1 Samuel is about Saul, David and Goliath, David fleeing from Saul and all that. There is a time when the Tabernacle – which was at Shiloh – appears to have been moved for a time to a town called Nob (**1 Sam. 21, 22**), where many priests lived. It was also in Nob, where King Saul slaughters the priests for having helped David.

You may wish to look at a Bible map to get the locations of Shiloh, Nob and Jerusalem.

Key: remember like it says in *1 Samuel 7:1-2*, **the Ark stays at Kirjath-Jearim near Beth Shemesh for 20 years, virtually forgotten, and the Tabernacle at Shiloh's Holy of Holies is empty. God has abandoned Shiloh and its Tabernacle according to Ps. 78:60 and Jer. 7.** The nation of Israel meantime, is preoccupied with the conflicts between Saul and David – and the Ark is all but forgotten.

What about the Day of Atonement and the 2 goats and all that all those years? Forgotten. For 20 years, or at least if the priests at Shiloh still did the ceremony of the 2 goats, and the High Priest entered the holy of holies, he entered an empty room, devoid of any Ark.

Now we fast forward to 2nd Samuel, David is now king. Very important: David is inspired by God to bring up the Ark from the house of Abinadab to ... JERUSALEM. He didn't try to bring up the entire Tabernacle, which is now at Mt. Gibeon – just the ark. This is very important.

2 Samuel 6:1-4

“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 [at Kirjath-Jearim], which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new **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.”

Some comments are deserving here first before continuing:

They sought to bring the ark up by their own reasoning, by a wooden cart. *Where* did they get the idea for a *wooden* cart? It came straight out of the pagan Philistines. What were they *supposed* to do? The Word says the ark was to be carried by the staves inserted in the rings on the side, and the ark carried – lifted up – on the shoulders of the priests or Kohathite Levites (**Numbers 4:4-6**)

We are the priests of God today. Are we lifting God high on our shoulders – or are we attempting to worship God from customs we have borrowed from paganism? There is a very interesting book titled “**Pagan Christianity**” you should read that shows how many of our customs – even down to the format of modern church services – comes straight from paganism, and not from God's word!

Where are we today trying to worship God – the true God – by old wooden carts of paganism? At the risk of offending some of you, I challenge you to hear, *for example*, my sermon about the Birth

of Jesus – and to realize we cannot claim to worship the true God with pagan customs of Christmas, since Christ was not born on Dec 25 and the early Christians never kept Christmas.

God's ways are His ways, part of His very nature, part of what He wants done – and God gets very specific about the way He wants to be worshiped!

Continuing in 2 Samuel 6:5-8

“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.

6 **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. 7 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. 8 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.”

Let's note a few things: **Uzzah dies at the threshing floor**. **Why at the threshing floor?** This is not included just for literary interest. God tells us things to make us think! What *is* a threshing floor?

The threshing floor is where the wheat is separated from the chaff! Where right is separated from wrong. Where useful is separated from useless.

They were doing everything wrong as they tried to worship God. Yes, it does make a difference how you worship God. Yes there *is* a right and a wrong way – if God says “this is right” or “this is wrong.” “Threshing floors” make for an interesting Bible study. (If you wish to study it, you may wish to start **with 2 Sam 24:16-24; Luke 3:17.**)

2 Samuel 6:9-11

“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**. The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite **three months**. And **the LORD blessed Obed-Edom** and all his household.”

Hmmm... Obed-Edom **the Gittite**. What was a Gittite? That's just another way of saying someone from Gath, the city of the Philistines! Now be aware that there is also mentioned an Obed-Edom who was a Levite. But that Levite named Obed-Edom is never given the appendage “the Gittite”, so I think there were TWO Obed-Edoms – one a Gittite, and one a Levite. ANYWAY, the Ark is at the home of Obed-Edom the Gittite.

2 Sam 6:12-15 “Now it was told King David, saying, “The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.” So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom **to the City of David** with gladness. And so it was, when those **bearing the ark of the LORD** had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. **Then David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod**. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet”.

So David is bringing the Ark up to Jerusalem – but specifically to a special mountain called MT ZION. Remember the Tabernacle of *Moses* had been at Shiloh – but had recently been moved to a mountain 6 miles away called **Mt. Gibeon (1 Chronicles 16:39)**.

This time, as David wants to bring up the ark, he *does it right* – and **has the Kohathite Levites – not just the priests – get involved and they lift up God’s Ark up on their sanctified shoulders, like they should have done all along.**

Keep your thumb here in 2 Samuel 6 and let’s jump over to the parallel story in **1 Chronicles 15.**

1 Chron 15:11-15

“And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites: for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. 12 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. 13 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.*” 14 So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. 15 ***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 15:25-28

“**So David, the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands** went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-Edom **with joy.** 26 And so it was, *when God helped the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD*, that they offered seven bulls and seven rams. 27 David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who bore the ark, the singers, and Chenaniah the music master with the singers. David also wore a linen ephod. 28 **Thus all Israel** brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn, with trumpets and with cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps.”

I want you to particularly **notice how so many are involved in this act of worship.** Not just the ministers. Not just the priests. Not just the Levites – but David invited anyone and everyone to be part of this worship service (**1 Chronicles 15:28**).

Question: If you were in charge of organizing this return of the ark, would you have arranged for this kind of worship to God – with people shouting, with horns blaring, and trumpet fanfare, crashing cymbals, stringed instruments and harps and the king and others *dancing* their heart out with all their might, with shouts and singing – or would you have liked something more ... dignified? I told you in my sermon about the lives of spirit beings that God loves to be worshiped even in the dance! (**Psalms 149:3; 150:4**). ***Have you ever worshiped God with dancing?*** David did! David encouraged it! You need to think about this.

God inspires David to select one of the mountains of Jerusalem – called Mt. ZION as the site of the ark. “Zion” is applied in different ways in the Bible – to the part of Jerusalem called the City of David, to the entire city, even to the temple area. But mostly, **Zion referred to the “city of David” area**, very *near* to what would become the temple site and – of historical significance – Mt. Moriah, where Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac. Mt. Zion technically though was the area of the City of David.

So the King takes off his royal robes and is down to the garments of a priest – a linen ephod – and is dancing, twirling, cartwheeling for all he’s worth – “*before the ETERNAL*”! He’s *so* happy. As the procession gets closer to Mt. Zion, it’s getting louder and louder. The people are happy.

Back to 2 Samuel 6:16-19

“Now as the ark of the LORD came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and **saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD**; and she despised him in her heart. 17 **So they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it.** Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 18 And when David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.”

By now the old Tabernacle of the Lord had been moved from Shiloh in Ephraim to a mountain 6 miles away – called Mt. Gibeon (1 Chronicles 16:39).

But where David puts the ark is not back into Moses' Tabernacle, which was also called “The Tabernacle of the LORD” – but into a new Tabernacle that David had erected.

Let's read it again **in 2 Samuel 6:17** – “so they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it...”

For you to understand the Part 2 of this sermon, you must grasp that this is a new tabernacle, on Mt. Zion, in which God will be worshiped in a new way, much more openly, with including Gentiles, and with spirit and passion.

This is not “new truth”. Others have seen it for ages. It's been in the Bible commentaries and Dictionaries for years and years – and in God's word since it was written!

What on earth is this? TWO tabernacles? YES! One that had been in Shiloh and now recently moved to Mt. Gibeon – with the formal priestly worship and the ark-less Holy of Holies – and now the Tabernacle of David on Mt. Zion WITH the Ark of God and the glory of His presence!

The former Tabernacle no doubt was the prettier one. The “official”one. It's where most of the priests served -- the official ministers. It's where sacrifices were offered and rituals preserved. But God was no longer there. He had forsaken Shiloh and now the Tabernacle on Mt. Gibeon.

David's Tabernacle – you will see was much more open. God was not hidden behind a veil. Gentiles were gladly welcomed. And they are worshiping with joy and with all their hearts. But mostly it's the regular people there, being served by ordinary Levites and their king.

But THIS second tabernacle is the one God says He wants to restore! This was God's idea. You can read that in Psalm 78:60, 67-70.

Be ready to learn more about this amazing Tabernacle and what happened there in part 2 of our sermon. We'll learn the significance of Michal and her reactions, we'll see the psalms in new light as we read of coming to Mt. Zion to worship the King who sits enthroned between the cherubim, and we'll learn MUCH more about the SIGNIFICANCE of the Tabernacle of David to us and to our worship today.

We'll leave it with that for now, since we have set the backdrop of the Tabernacle of David.

You're about to hear some exciting things in Part 2. If you wish, you could read ahead at 2 Samuel 6; Ps. 78:67-70; 1 Chronicles chapters 6, 15, 16. If you do, you'll follow along more easily as I expound on those and many more verses.

Now go and worship the King.

If you find these messages helpful, don't hog it to yourself – but let others know about our website and these messages. And please share wonderful websites and materials with me. I am learning constantly too. **Until next time, this is Philip Shields saying good-bye** my brothers and sisters.