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KING DAVID AND THE "UNITY MEETING" THAT ENDED IN DERISION I Chronicles 13

By David E. Armstrong

When people gather to seek unity and to attempt to unite upon the most sacred grounds, they need to consider carefully the attempt of King David and Israel in trying to bring the ark of God home to Jerusalem, because they **"Did It not according to the due order"** They failed, Uzza died "before the Lord that day.", and King David stood "afraid of God that day." Let us learn the lesson of why they failed?

I. IT BEGAN WITH A "UNITY MEETING" I Chron. 13:1-2

"And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader." (vr. 1) Here was a meeting of the leaders of Israel to advise and counsel King David as to what would be the best way to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem. "And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, if it seems good unto you, and that it be of the Lord our God." (vr. 2). It is evident that the thing seemed good unto the people, seeing how they banded together to do what they had determined to do. But that it was **"of the Lord our God"** was not that explicit. When men meet to consider religious matters, they need to keep before them that God has already set before man how we are to worship and serve him!

II. A VERY NOBLE ENDEAVOR I Chron. 13:3

"And let us bring again the ark of God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul." During the reign of Saul, some forty years, Israel had not inquired at the ark of God. Now they wanted to change that, and once again unite around the ark of their Lord. Those who seek "Unity" between the Church of Christ and the independent Christian Church might seek a "noble thing" but as with Israel, not done according to the **due order**, as God has already designated, it is bound to fail in the sight of God.

III. THEY ALL AGREED UPON THE PLAN SET FORTH I Chron. 13:4-6

"And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people." (vr. 4). It seemed good unto the people, but many times what seems good unto man is sin in the sight of God. Man should learn to obey and trust in God rather than in himself. "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding." [Prov. 3:5] "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" [Isa. 8:20]. God has set before His people for all time to beware of false prophets who prophesy unto the people falsely. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain they speak a vision of their own heart, AND NOT OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE LORD." [Jer. 23:16]

IV. WHY ISRAEL FAILED THAT DAY I Chron. 13:7-12

"And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart." (vr.7). When Israel went out to fight against the Philistines, they carried the ark of God with them, because of their lack of faith in God, they were defeated, and the Philistines took the ark of God down to Ashdod. God's wrath fell upon the Philistines, and they made a new cart on which to move the ark, and tied two kine to the cart, and sent it off in the direction of Israel. King David seems to be following the Philistines' pattern as to say, "these Philistines have gotten up a pretty good scheme, let us try it also!" For King David and Israel follow after the Philistines method of transporting the ark of God, instead of following after the **DUE ORDER** in which God had prescribed **EXACTLY HOW THE ARK WAS TO BE TRANSPORTED AT ALL TIMES!** Our

brethren who have joined with the denominations to try and unite the Church of Christ with the Christian Church should stop, and learn this lesson well. David and Israel failed because they followed after the Philistines pattern instead of abiding in God's chosen and prescribed way. Simply because they **did it not according to the due order!**

V. KING DAVID REALIZED THEIR MISTAKE, AND CORRECTED IT I Chron. 15:2, 12, 13

"Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto Him for ever." (vr.2) How many souls will be lost eternally because they follow some whom they believe to know the way of the Lord, but who in reality is carrying them farther and farther away from the old paths? Who would have thought that King David and the Levites did not know what they were doing when it came to transporting the ark of God? But they failed, and failed terribly because they ". . . sought it not after the due order." Listen to King David, "For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order." [I Chron. 15:13].

VI. SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS ON THIS LESSON

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." [I Cor. 10:11]. King David and Israel in following after the pattern set by the Philistines, departed from God's due order, made a new cart, and used two oxen to transport the ark. Because they departed from the "due order" they failed in their efforts. Today, it seems we have brethren who insist on following after the denominational world, and patterning our worship and service to God after the manner and attitude of the world, instead of insisting that the denominations return to the old paths. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein... But they said, We will not walk therein." [Jer. 6:16]. Friends, Uzza died "before the Lord that day" This writer for one, does not want to die "before the Lord", but **IN THE LORD**. How about you?

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FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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**God's Miracles
 Never Left A Man
 In "Intensive Care"**

By Eddy Gilpin

On Tuesday, October 17, a major earthquake struck northern California. As might well be imagined, damage was extensive, injuries numerous and the death toll tragic. One of the most devastating occurrences was the collapse of the "Bay Bridge" which connected San Francisco to Oakland. Photography of this devastated area was almost continual over the course of the next few days. Death tolls, damage estimates and a homeless population engulfed news coverage in the days that followed. Suddenly, four days after the quake, news bulletins were heard throughout the world -- a man had been found alive underneath the rubble of the collapsed Bay Bridge! News agencies were quick to proclaim this "miracle". Miracle? Is that what it was? There are lessons that can be gained from even the worst situations. And, while nothing should be done to minimize such a disaster, the lessons obtained therefrom need to be surmised and revealed, especially if they are of eternal significance.

The aforementioned man found alive after four days was pulled from the rubble only after hours of labor by man and machinery. He was then rushed to a nearby hospital facility where he remains (at the time of this writing) in Intensive Care, in serious but stable condition. That his circumstances were unusual and his survival a tribute to hope no one will deny. But, that his survival was a "miracle", this writer can do nothing but deny. No miracle of or from God ever left a man in

"Intensive Care". Bible miracles were immediate and complete. A few examples should suffice:

- 1) II Kings 5 - Naaman, the captain of the king's host, was told to dip seven times in the Jordan in order that his leprosy be cured (vs. 10). After doing so the leprosy was healed, immediately and completely.
- 2) Luke 7 - As Jesus and his followers entered into the city of Nain, another procession was exiting. It was a funeral procession (vs. 12). Having compassion on the widow whose son it was that had died, Jesus said unto the boy, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise" (vs. 14). He did so immediately, and completely restored (vs. 15).
- 3) John 4 - Having returned to Galilee (the scene of his first miracle), Jesus was met by a man of Capernaum whose son lay sick "at the point of death" some 25 miles away (vs. 47). Jesus healed the young boy immediately and completely without ever going to Capernaum (vss. 50-54).
- 4). Acts 3 - At the gate called Beautiful, Peter and John encountered a man "lame from his mother's womb" (vs. 2). He asked of them money, but instead Peter said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (vs. 6). The man was healed immediately and completely (vs. 7). So complete was his healing that he could walk and leap although he had never gone through the process of learning how (vss. 2, 8).

Although numerous other true, Biblical miracles could be listed, these are sufficient to show the impact and significance of a miracle of God. None of these individuals, nor any others on whom God wrought a miracle, spent one minute in "Intensive Care". As stated, they were made whole **immediately and completely.**

Although all healing today comes from the bountiful hand of God (as do all "good and perfect gifts" - Jas. 1:17), none comes in the form of miracles. Miracles were performed by Jesus to reveal his Deity (Jn. 20:30,31). His Deity has been revealed and, thus, he performs no miracles for that purpose. The apostles and others of the first century performed miracles in order to confirm the word of God (Mk. 16:20). Hence, when the word was confirmed, the purpose for those miracles ceased (I Cor. 13:10; Jas. 1:25). Thus, when the purposes of those miracles were

completed (as they were in the first century) the miracles ceased. God still rules in the affairs of mankind, but he does not do so through miraculous intervention today as he once did.



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Great Faith

By T. Pierce Brown

Each of us who claims membership in the Lord's church has surely yearned for greater faith. We may even pray, as the disciples did in Luke 17:5, "Lord, increase our faith." How he might do that is the subject for another study. But this article will deal with some characteristics of a great faith. The beginning point for consideration will be the story in Matthew 15:28, "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt."

This is the climax of the story of the Canaanitish woman whose daughter was vexed with a demon. She brought her to Christ, but even with her crying after him, he did not at first respond. Then when he did respond he said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." What would you and I have done if the Lord had responded in such an apparently calloused fashion to our needs? Notice her response in verse 27: "But she said, Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

Why did this situation call forth the commendation of Jesus concerning her great faith? Let us notice some things that are marks of a great faith.

First, faith gives one a clearer understanding of many things. We find in Hebrews 11:3, "By faith we understand that the worlds (Gr. ages) were framed by the word of God." The most learned scientist or philosopher cannot by all the wisdom of the ages understand how the worlds were framed. They may probe the universe with satellites or telescopes, or advance any number of guesses (a common name for what a scientist calls a hypothesis), but a little child can understand by faith what cannot otherwise be understood.

Thus, her great faith enabled her to see the work of the devil even in her own daughter. The eyes of many parents are blinded by parental partiality so much that they lose faith in the Lord. For example, there are many who have tried to teach the truth about adulterous relationships, need for church discipline, or various kinds of sins until their loved ones get involved. Then they find all sorts of exceptions to the rule. Of course it is

possible that many have not made any in-depth study of a subject until it is directly applicable to a loved one, at which time they see that they have been too harsh, judgmental and warped in their thinking.

Then, her great faith not only enabled her to see her daughter's condition more clearly, she was able to see wherein lay the cure. The cure was not and is not in man, neither in doctors nor disciples. There is no cure for sin except in Christ.

Great faith is humble. She did not come with a plea for the worthiness of herself or for her daughter. She came with a plea for mercy. I occasionally hear preachers say, "I do not want God to be just. I want him to be merciful." Though they mean well, they speak wrongly. Whether or not you want God to be just, he will. God will be just in saving us, as well as merciful, for he cannot cease to be either. The degree of her humility is seen as she came, crying for mercy, and allowed herself to be compared to a dog, waiting for crumbs from the Master's table.

Great faith is earnest. Here was an opportunity to receive a needed blessing, and she was not willing to let it pass by unnoticed. If she had something about which to be earnest, even more do we. I am persuaded that many of our problems may be caused by a lack of faith. We simply do not believe what the Bible teaches about the lost condition of the majority of the world.

Great faith is persistent. It enabled her, and enables us, to overcome discouragement and obstacles of all sorts. It helps to turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones. Note some of the areas of discouragement, and see if you have ever seen worse ones.

First, Jesus answered her not a word. Have you ever prayed and prayed, and found no apparent response from God?

Second, when he did answer, it was with apparent disdain and unconcern. How would you like to receive an answer like this, "It is not fitting to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs" when you asked for a small favor? Many of us would never ask for another! But she had great faith, and it was blessed.

Perhaps the biggest lesson is that great faith is active and obedient personal response. There is no exception to it in or out of the Bible. The faith that accomplishes anything is an active faith. When God asks for a specific response, great faith always gives that particular response. The lesson is too important to miss. If God specifies a "what", no other action or thing is in faith; if God specifies a

"when", no other time is correct; if God specifies a "why", no other reason is proper; if God specifies a "who", no other person is the right one; if God specifies a "how", no other manner is adequate. You may apply this to baptism, giving, singing, the Lord's Supper, or anything else about which God has spoken.

What sort of faith do you have? Or are you accustomed to substitute feelings, assumptions or guesses for faith?

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Of Dictionaries and The Bible

By Eddy Gilpin

Things are not always as they first appear on the surface. The old adage "You can't judge a book by its cover" is certainly true most of the time. In times past atheists and infidels have been heard to say, "The Bible is no more inspired than the Webster's Dictionary," (or words to that effect). This is, of course, about as far from the truth as anything could be. But, just what might a comparison of the two (the Bible and Webster's Dictionary) reveal?

First, notice that both books are authoritative. The Unabridged Webster's Dictionary is the authority on the English language in spelling, definitions and diction. It can greatly assist one in having better speech. The Bible is the authority in all matters religious. But, it goes even further than this. Since it is a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12) and gives "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Pet. 1:3), not only do its timeless truths teach about eternal affairs, but also matters of temporal significance. It can lead one toward greater speech as well; speech that is "always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Col. 4:6).

Another similarity between these two books is that both were written by men. The dictionary was written by qualified, educated men. The Bible was written by inspired men, "holy men of God . . . as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21; II Tim. 3:16, 17). Thus, the dictionary contains the words of the English language, and the Bible, the word of God. Because it was written by scholars and experts in the field, the dictionary is

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OF DICTIONARIES . . .

the source of function for the English language. Because it was written by the inspiration of God (II Tim. 3:16), the Bible is the source of faith for the Father's followers (Rom. 10:17).

Yet another similarity is that both volumes contain essentials for communication. The dictionary provides necessities for more accurate communication among men. The Bible is the only source of God's communication with mankind (Jn. 12:48; Heb. 1:1, 2). Thus, if one desires to know what "life" is, he should refer to the dictionary. On the other hand, if his desire is to know what life is about, he should appeal to the Bible (Rom. 12:1, 2). If one wants to define "duty" the dictionary is his source. However, should his wish be to know what his duty is, his source shifts to the Bible (Eccl. 12:13). Should he want the meaning of a word such as "so," he should turn to Webster. If he wants to see its magnitude, he must turn to God's word (Jn. 3:16). If he desires to know how to define "salvation," he should turn to the dictionary. But, if he wants to obtain it, he must turn to the Bible (Acts 4:12; Rom. 1:16). Should he wish to know how to spell "eternity" the dictionary is his guide. However, should he want to know where he will spend eternity, his guidebook becomes the Bible (Mt. 25:31-46; II Thes. 1:5-9).

Just a casual glance will reveal that there are similarities between Webster's Dictionary and the Bible. However, the vast and significant differences between the two reveal that they are "worlds" apart. Although the dictionary contains every word found in the Bible, it contains none of the power (Heb. 4:12). The Bible is far superior to any work of man. Its lessons should be learned, its directives desired and its precepts practiced. "For the word of God is quick and powerful.." (Heb. 4:12).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

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*'Tis just the little common things
 That make life seem worth while,
 The handclasp of the friend we love,
 A word, a look, a smile,
 The sunshine flooding all the land,
 The songbird's happy trill,
 The blossom's fragrance in the air,
 The moonlight soft and still,
 The laughter of a little child
 And all the joy it brings.
 We thank Thee, God, before all else
 For little common things.*

—Ula Dale