

# **The Burden of the Lord**

By Don Potter

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I believe there is a new definition coming to the idea of worship leader. Since the words, "worship" and "leader" do not appear together in the Bible in any translation or in any configuration, it is safe to say men must have invented this title. We also created a fantasy around this position in the church that is unrealistic. Statements have been made like, "the job of the worship leader is to lead God's people right into the throne room", or "the worship leader is responsible for carrying the sheep into the heavens". Without getting into that, I want to explain something I believe the Lord revealed to me. The job of the worship leader or praise leader, is to carry his portion of the burden of His presence, like the donkey carried the Savior through the streets of Jerusalem. I have found no instructions in the Bible that says a praise leader is responsible for carrying the burden of the people.

## **Foal Of A Donkey**

We all know the story of the donkey that Jesus rode through Jerusalem to one of the wildest times of praise ever recorded. With that picture still in my imagination a friend gave me a word he believed was from the Lord. "You're the ass that carries the presence of the Lord" he boldly spoke. It was a King James version of a word of knowledge. I knew this was not a slur against me but a revelation.

I felt this was an answer to something I had been sensing for a while. I never could get comfortable with the idea of leading God's people into the throne room because I didn't feel worthy of it. That is pride of course, and after I battled with that for a time, I was still faced with my feelings about leading His people into this holy place. Then the idea of the donkey that carries His presence seemed to ring true with me. It was easier for me to see myself as a burden bearer than a great leader who leads the multitudes to the King.

The donkey is a burden bearer and Jesus chose this unlikely creature Himself. Unlikely because of the obvious question, is this a regal enough means for the long awaited Messiah? To a very humble King, this was the only vessel right for the job. Even though Jesus now sits at the right hand of God, there is no reason to think He has changed His personality and become an egomaniac, demanding attention, as earthly kings do. He chose this humble vessel and still chooses humble vessels to show forth His praise.

## **Burden Of The Presence**

Since the time of Moses, the Levites have carried the burden of the presence of God in the form of the Ark of the Covenant, on their shoulders, over their heads. It was carried that way until king Josiah instructed the Levites to put it down:

And (Josiah) said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel, (2 Chr 35:3 KJV)

This scripture shows the responsibility of carrying the ark was no longer on the Levites, but the ministry to the Lord and His people was still a part of their duties. 1 Corinthians 3:16 says, "*Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and {that} the Spirit of God dwells in you?*". This is the fulfillment of 2 Chronicles 35:3. When the Levites put the ark of the presence in the temple it was symbolic of it being put in the new temple--the believing body.

In spite of the fact the Levites were no longer responsible to carry the Ark they were still accountable for carrying His presence. Sound confusing? Let me show you what I mean.

### **Chenaniah**

There was a time when one of the chief Levites instructed the young Levites how to carry the presence of the Lord in a song. "*And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song: he instructed about the song, because he was skillful.*"(1 Chronicles 15:22 KJV). This scripture took place long before Josiah was king, but the Lord caused me to become curious about the wording of this verse. So I looked up the word "song". To my surprise it was translated "burden". Why would the word "song" be translated "burden"? Not only "why?" but, this is the only time in scripture that song is translated "burden". I began to ask the Lord what all this means and He revealed some things in the word that may help some of the praise leaders today as they attempt to carry the burden again.

### **God In A Box**

I believe the intent of the Lord was not for His people to carry Him around in a box forever but to come to a time when we all carry Him in our hearts (Col.1:27) and the songs of praise we sing. Being always reminded that: "*His yoke is easy and His burden is light.*" (Matt.11:30). Again, this must be carried above our heads.

God inhabits, which means "He sits down on" the praises of His people (Psalm 21:3). The Lord is not finished being carried places but it is now in our praise.

### **The Donkey**

The choice Jesus made to be carried on the back of a donkey was not just by default but for a reason. The donkey has quite a history, not to mention they all have a cross on their

backs. The way the hair parts on the back of a donkey looks like a cross, just behind where the rider sits.

In Genesis 22:3 Abraham used a donkey when taking his promised son Isaac to be sacrificed. There is a long story in Numbers 22:21-30 about Balaam and a donkey. The donkey was the only one of the pair that could see the angel of the Lord standing in the road. God opened the mouth of the donkey so he could have a conversation with the spiritually blind Balaam, and let him know the angel of the Lord was about to kill him.

Yes, there is much history around this animal but no donkey was ever so honored as the one who carried the Savior through the streets of Jerusalem.

I believe the job of a praise leader is still to carry the Lord through the streets of Jerusalem now called the church, and later into the world itself. If they will exhibit the presence of the Lord, without a program or agenda, then the people will lift up their voices when they recognize Him, and carry their part of the burden. Remember, carrying the presence was done by more than one. All of us must share in the burden.

### **Taking A Ride On The Donkey**

One of the problems with a donkey riding through your church is everyone wants to take a ride on him or her. Sometimes it's certain members of the band, other times the whole church wants a ride. If a leader is strong then it seems perfectly feasible for others to ride on him. The donkey Jesus rode was only big enough for One, and so it is today. Trying to take a ride on the burden bearer sounds strange but let me put that in practical terms.

I used to go home after a time of leading praise and fall down on the bed and faint from exhaustion. Who was I carrying all day to be so tired? *His yoke is easy and His burden is light*, so what am I doing wrong? I was carrying the band most of the time and, on my stronger days, I would try to carry some of the church too. I always made a point to try and bless those who just stared at the stage in disbelief. I wanted so much for them to be touched by the Lord, but instead *I* tried to touch them. That's when I discovered I was the one offering everyone a ride when the Lord was the only One made for that place.

There is an opposite side of this too. Sometimes a praise leader and even the band can be carried by the energy of the church. I know this from leading praise at conferences where the people are hungry for God and will praise at the drop of a hat. This is where the statement came from, "we don't need good musicians or an anointed leader to have a great time of praise".

I don't believe this is what God intended either, or there wouldn't be so many scriptures on playing with skill, cunning and excellence. We must all come to the understanding that "*everything that has breath will praise the Lord*" (Ps.150:6).

### **Time For A Change**

This may all seem too crazy to understand but a time is coming when the donkey, (someone under the yoke), will be the only one Jesus will allow Himself to be exhibited with. The anointing and the power of His presence are not here to show forth my glory, but the Glory of the Lord. He will not share that Glory with anyone else.