

# The Ark Brought to Zion

## 2 Samuel 6

### Lesson Outline

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### Tragic Accident

#### 2 Samuel 6:1-11

#### **Mission Concerning the Ark: 2 Samuel 6:1-5**

##### David Regarded the Ark

The ark symbolized the presence of the LORD with His people (Exodus 25:16-22). It was the most sacred instrument of the Jewish religion. Like anything from the LORD it was to be treated correctly and with respect. After taking the ark in battle the Philistines found it to be problematic (1 Samuel 6). It was promptly returned to Israel where it remained in Kirjathjearim, which was about eight miles west of Jerusalem (1 Samuel 7:1-2). During Saul's reign the ark remained in obscurity. He mentioned it once but hastily went into battle without seeking the LORD'S direction (1 Samuel 14:18-19). It is clear Saul's lack of desire for the LORD affected his ability to lead the nation. One cannot live for God if one does not love Him (Psalm 119:159). Today there is much talk about God's love while rejecting His Word and ways. Many argue the LORD loves them but they have no desire to return that love, instead they lead selfish lives gratifying the flesh. This is hypocrisy at its finest.

David had a strong desire to bring the ark to Zion. He greatly admired the things of the LORD, which is made evident in many of his Psalms. Like David, let us relish the LORD and His Word (Psalm 119:162). David planned for this occasion, meeting with his captains and leaders. (1 Chronicles 13:1-5) Choosing to be different than many that come to power, David did not govern like an absolute monarch. He understood the LORD placed him upon the throne, so his power as king was used to bless the nation. David challenged the people to retrieve the ark so it could reside at Zion. Instead of dictating their actions he wanted them to make a commitment. He wisely encouraged the people to seek out the LORD (Psalm 40:16, 105:3).

**David Removed the Ark**

David and the others set out to bring the ark to Zion. It was a time of great excitement as they looked to establish a place of worship in the city. The ark was placed upon a new cart pulled by oxen and driven by the sons of Abinadab, Uzzah and Ahio. Though all seemed fine, David made a grave mistake when he allowed the ark to be placed upon that cart.

1. *It was convenient* – nobody had to carry the ark with staves.
2. *It was effective* – it would produce the same result quicker.
3. *It was tested* – the Philistines had carried the ark around in this manner.

The problem, this new method was in violation of God's law, His written word. The LORD had given direction concerning the ark and it was to be followed. It was a matter of obedience, the cart, whether new or old did not matter. Yes, the Philistines placed the ark upon a cart, however they were not God's people and knew no better. David possessed the scriptures and was expected to follow them (James 4:17).

1. *Proper people* – only the Levites were allowed near the ark and the Kohathites, of the family of Levi, were responsible for moving it (Numbers 7:9, 10:21).
2. *Proper procedure* – the ark was to be covered then carried on the shoulders of the Kohathites using staves placed into rings on the ark (Exodus 25:12-14; Numbers 7:9).

David had good intentions but in his zealotry he neglected the scriptures. Contrary to popular opinion, good intentions do not always please God. Obedience is important (1 Samuel 15:22). Many churches are guilty of committing a similar mistake, turning to man-made methods to enlarge their congregation.

1. *The entertainment method* – worldly music and concerts.
2. *The circus method* – large contests or programs that appeal to the flesh.
3. *The business method* – marketing the church to reach certain people.

Some churches have increased in size but they have also produced carnality leading to spiritual decline. This type of Christianity neglects God's Word for other sources. It relies upon man and not the LORD. Let's not set aside the Bible for human invention but strive to follow God's Word in all we do (Psalm 119:105).

**Mistake Concerning the Ark: 2 Samuel 6:6-11****David's Neglect**

The ark was moved to Nachon's threshingfloor where they encountered a new problem. Threshingfloors were large areas set aside for beating grain. Due to the nature of the work performed there, these places were often filled with embedded stones and ruts from wagon wheels. The bumpy ground proved to be a challenge for the oxen and the ark shook upon the cart. Apparently the ark appeared to be in danger, so Uzzah placed his hand upon it to prevent an accident. No doubt, it was a reaction due to the moving of the ark upon the cart.

1. *It was a good intention* – he attempted to stabilize the ark so it would not fall. A good intention does not justify a wrong action.
2. *It was a mistake* – touching the ark was prohibited and worthy of death (Numbers 4:15).

The LORD smote Uzzah and he died instantly. Though it was accidental, Uzzah had acted directly against the LORD'S command (Numbers 4:15; 1 John 3:4). Uzzah was without excuse, the ark was in his father's house for many years and the scriptures were available. The punishment was severe but it was justice for disobedience (Romans 6:23). The lesson, the method is just as important as the motive. The LORD should be approached and worshiped according to His guidelines found in His word. Anything contrary to the LORD'S direction is defective.

**David's Reaction**

Uzzah's death caused David to be displeased. Understanding something had gone terribly wrong the king angrily refused to continue. Perhaps his pride was wounded. His anger appears to be directed at the LORD due to His quick judgment of Uzzah, but David had no right to be upset at the LORD. David's anger should have been at Uzzah's mistake, his failure to search the scriptures or his hasty decision. He should have been repentant, but like many who do not get their way, he was angered (Proverbs 3:11, 28:13).

Due to the tragic event, David was afraid to continue (Psalm 111:10). The fear probably sunk in as he cooled off. Knowing the LORD was angered, his faith wavered and he halted the plan. It is important to notice that the LORD never stopped David, but he quit due to anger and fear. David allowed his emotions to dictate his actions (Proverbs 25:28). As a result, the ark was removed to the house of Obbedom a Gittite where it remained for three months. The same ark that brought about Uzzah's death became a benefit for Obbedom. For those that love the LORD and adhere to His ways, He is a blessing (Psalm 3:8).

## Triumphant Arrival

2 Samuel 6:12-23

### David's Return to Zion: 2 Samuel 6:12-19

#### David Retrieved the Ark

After hearing news of Obedom's blessings, David was encouraged to continue his plan concerning the ark. This time, things were done differently. Recognizing his error, David and others must have searched the scriptures to find the proper procedures regarding the ark (1 Chronicles 15:13). In times of trouble, or when discouraged, search the scriptures (Psalm 119:50). David returned with many, including singers and musicians (1 Chronicles 15:16, 16:7-36). There was no cart to be found, the Levites bare or carried the ark (1 Chronicles 15:2, 15). David chose the correct men and made sure they were cleansed or righteous (1 Chronicles 15:12). After six paces, they sacrificed oxen and fatlings (1 Chronicles 15:26; Psalm 50:5). Instead of persisting in stubbornness, David learned from the previous mistake and hoped to be blessed.

Overcome with joy, David set aside his kingly attire and danced before the LORD with all his might (1 Corinthians 10:31). The Hebrew word here for 'dance' means to whirl around. David did not perform a sensual dance that gratified the flesh. He was excited, so he jumped and twirled around, today we would say, he jumped with joy. When they entered the city they shouted loudly, as a trumpet blast. At this moment, only praise to the LORD was sufficient (Psalm 7:17).

#### David Rejoiced

As he entered the city with the ark David continued to express his joy in the LORD by leaping and dancing. David had done all according to the LORD'S direction and was blessed. There is joy in serving the LORD correctly (Psalm 5:11). His wife Michal noticed his behavior as she peered out her window during the celebration. Evidently, she did not join the others when the ark returned. After seeing him dance with joy she despised him in her heart. Michal was a bitterly selfish woman. Like many filled with bitterness, she wanted nobody to be joyful, including her husband.

The ark was placed in the tabernacle prepared for it (1 Chronicles 16). David was ready for the ark having done all possible before retrieving it. Many spiritual endeavors are doomed to failure because of inadequate preparation (Proverbs 24:27). Offerings of thanksgiving were made unto the LORD. The nation was greatly blessed by the LORD, with the ark arriving safely without any more incidents. Before sending the people home, David blessed them and offered provisions. He generously gave each a piece of bread, piece of meat, and something to drink. He was a king that cared for his people.

At this time, David organized worship in Israel. It was unique because worship would take place at two different locations.

1. *Gibeon* – offerings continued at the tabernacle, where Zadok, the son of Ahitub of the family of Eleazar, continued to officiate (1 Chronicles 16:39-40; 1 Kings 3:4).

2. *Zion* – sacred service was instituted in Zion where the ark resided. Abiathar of the family of Ithamar, who escaped death at Nob, remained with David and lived near the tabernacle (1 Samuel 22:20; 1 Kings 2:2).

The nation had two high priests (2 Samuel 20:25; 1 Chronicles 18:16). It was unique and David wisely allowed both to serve without attempting to remove either from office. Worship would continue in this manner until Solomon built the Temple (2 Chronicles 1:3).

### **David's Return Home: 2 Samuel 6:20-23**

#### **David Accused**

David returned home to bless his household. He understood his responsibility at home amongst his family. David was king of the nation but remained the leader of his house. He did not leave the leading of his family to someone else. Sadly, many dads neglect their responsibility as head of the home (Ephesians 5:23). They are content with the world instructing their children. Not David, thrilled and eager to share his blessing with his family, David made his way home.

Michal went out to meet David, foolishly choosing to confront him in public. Disapproving of his conduct, which she had seen through her window, she spoke harshly to David. Michal mocked her husband, implying he failed to act as a king. Michal believed his behavior was foolish and unbecoming of his position. She thought it beneath him to display his emotions before the people. Next, she scolded David, insinuating his actions were incorrect. Uncovering himself does not imply nakedness but refers to his kingly attire. David, in his joy, removed his royal garments and appeared like the others. In doing so, Michal thought he acted as a vain person, one without consideration. This was the accusation of a proud woman who enjoyed positions and titles. Michal believed David and his family to be above the rest of Israel. She possessed a haughty arrogant spirit. Evidently, she had little interest in the ark of the LORD. It is possible Saul influenced Michal, in his neglect of the ark and public worship.

#### **David Answered**

His answer to Michal's accusations came immediately. He countered her pride with humility (Proverbs 16:19). David recalled how the LORD chose him to be king then placed him upon the throne. David was taken from the fields to lead the nation. His humble beginnings were no different than anyone he celebrated with that day. He insisted he would continue to act in a similar manner before the LORD. If he appeared lowly and humble instead of kingly, that was fine with him (Proverbs 29:23). David cared more about his attitude before God than with his appearance before the people. He did not care what others thought of his conduct, as long as the LORD approved. If we are correct before God, it matters not what others think of us.

Michal cared more about the honors of people than honoring the LORD. Because of this, she was barren the rest of her life. Michal would not have a son to claim the throne. She had unjustly accused David from a bitter and proud heart. Clearly Michal did not have the love for the LORD as David did.