

Bible Study June 19, 2024

2 SAMUEL 6 (ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION)

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

1 David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. 2 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, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim. 3 And they carried the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart,

The Ark of God was a national treasure in Israel and was symbolic of God's presence among the people. It was ordinarily kept in the Tabernacle. When the Ark was returned to Israel after a brief Philistine captivity, it was kept in Abinadab's home for 20 years (1 Samuel 4:1–7:2). By bringing the Ark to Jerusalem, David demonstrated that both the people of Israel and he as their king were submitted completely to God's rule—unlike during Saul's reign. David also demonstrated his desire for God's close presence and blessing.

4 with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark.

Uzzah and the Ark

5 And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. 6 And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. 7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God.

Exodus 25:14-15 (ESV)

14 And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry the ark by them. 15 The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it.

Numbers 4:15 & 4:17-20 (ESV)

15 And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry these, but they must not touch the holy things, lest they die. These are the things of the tent of meeting that the sons of Kohath are to carry.

17 The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 18 "Let not the tribe of the clans of the Kohathites be destroyed from among the Levites, 19 but deal thus with them, that they may live and not die when they come near to the most holy things: Aaron and his sons

shall go in and appoint them each to his task and to his burden,²⁰ but they shall not go in to look on the holy things even for a moment, lest they die.”

Uzzah was only trying to protect the Ark, so was God’s anger against Uzzah just? According to Numbers 4:5-15, the Ark was to be moved only by the Levites, who were to carry it using the carrying poles—they were never to touch the Ark itself. To touch it was a capital offense under Hebrew law (Numbers 4:15). God’s action was directed against both David and Uzzah. David placed the Ark on a cart, following the Philistines’ example (1 Samuel 6:7-8) rather than God’s commands. Uzzah, though sincere in his desire to protect the Ark, had to face the consequences of the sin of touching it. Also, Uzzah may not have been a Levite. As David sought to bring Israel back into a relationship with God, God had to dramatically remind him and the people that enthusiasm must be accompanied by obedience to his laws. The next time David tried to bring the Ark to Jerusalem, he was careful to handle it correctly (1 Chronicles 15:1-15).

⁸ And David was angry because the LORD had broken out against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. ⁹ And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and he said, “How can the ark of the LORD come to me?” ¹⁰ So David was not willing to take the ark of the LORD into the city of David. But David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. ¹¹ And 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.

1 Chronicles 15:12-15 (ESV)

¹² and said to them, “You are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites. Consecrate yourselves, you and your brothers, so that you may bring up the ark of the Lord, the God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it. ¹³ Because you did not carry it the first time, the Lord our God broke out against us, because we did not seek him according to the rule.” ¹⁴ So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord, the God of Israel. ¹⁵ And the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the Lord.

¹² And it was told King David, “The LORD has blessed the household 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 rejoicing.

David was angry that a well-meaning man had been killed and that his plans for a joyous return of the Ark had been spoiled. He undoubtedly knew that the fault was his own for transporting the Ark carelessly. After cooling down, he had the Ark put into temporary storage while he waited to see if the Lord would allow him to bring it to Jerusalem. This also gave David time to consider the right way to transport the Ark. The fact that God blessed the home of Obed-edom was a sign to David that he could try once again to move the Ark to Jerusalem.

¹³ And when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal. ¹⁴ And David danced before the LORD with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁵ So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn.

David wore a priestly garment because the celebration was national and religious. Perhaps he had removed his royal clothing as an act of sincerity and humility.

David and Michal

16 As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, and she despised him in her heart. 17 And they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

18 And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts 19 and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed, each to his house.

20 And David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" 21 And David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the LORD—and I will celebrate before the LORD. 22 I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes. But by the female servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor."

Michal was disgusted with David as he led the Ark's procession into Jerusalem. Like her father, Saul, she was concerned only about outward appearances. But David focused on the inward condition of his heart before God. He was willing to look foolish in the eyes of some in order to worship God more fully and honestly. People may worship God in ways that look foolish to us because we have a different culture or tradition from theirs. We should accept their heartfelt expressions of worship. We should also not be afraid to express our feelings of love and devotion toward God even when others are present.

23 And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

Michal was David's first wife, but here she is called the "daughter of Saul," possibly to show how similar her attitude was to her father's. Her contempt for David probably did not start with David's grand entrance into the city. Perhaps she thought it was undignified to be so expressive in public worship at a time when it was so neglected in the kingdom. Or maybe she thought it was not fitting for a king to display such emotion. Feelings of bitterness and resentment that go unchecked will destroy a person's relationship with God and with others. If you have these feelings, go to someone you trust, and deal with them before they escalate into open warfare.