

Lesson 2 16 August, 2020

The Ark Is Brought to Jerusalem

Lesson Scope: 1 Chronicles Chapters 13, 15 & 16

References in brackets relate to Lesson Scope unless noted otherwise

Lesson Focus

The Ark of the Covenant—the most sacred piece of temple furniture had never been restored to its proper place since it was removed from the most holy place by Eli’s wicked sons. King David’s desire to return the ark to the tabernacle at the beginning of his reign showed his godly priorities. This action also fixed Jerusalem as the political and religious capital of Israel.

David had planned a great celebration, but it ended abruptly when Uzza died before the Lord for touching the ark. Although the goal was noble and right, God’s prescribed method for transporting the ark was not followed. God’s wrath will fall upon those who fail to reverence sacred things. Even though man may be sincere in his practice, God will not overlook any violation of His commands.

The importance of the ark in Israel’s worship can hardly be overemphasized. It was where Shekinah presence dwelt and where atonement was made through “the blood of sprinkling.” This also was the place where David could go for direction and inquire of the Lord. Possibly David’s only recorded criticism of his predecessor was his comment, “We enquired not at it in the days of Saul.” David understood that proper worship was the key to Israel’s success.

This lesson is very practical in our day when most modern churches are permitting a completely casual approach to worship. These trends can affect us in everything from dress to how often we allow our children to go out of the church service for drinks. We find God best in a quiet, reverent atmosphere, not in noise and entertainment. This lesson should largely be applied to our own churches and challenges rather than spending time harshly criticizing others.

God’s judgment on Uzza was a lesson for all present, including King David himself. We can deplore his error without speculation on his eternal destiny.

Lesson Aim: To see the importance of a proper reverence for God and for sacred things.

Theme Verse: [Hebrews 12:28](#). Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

Lesson Text

“Let Us Bring . . . the Ark . . . to Us”

[1 Chronicles 13:2-4](#)

² (KJV) And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If *it seem* good unto you, and *that it be* of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, *that are* left in all the land of Israel, and with them *also* to the priests and Levites *which are* in their cities *and* suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us: ³ And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul. ⁴ And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

[1 Chronicles 13:7](#)

⁷ (KJV) And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart.

[1 Chronicles 13:9-13](#)

⁹ (KJV) And when they came unto the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. ¹⁰ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God. ¹¹ And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called Perezuzza to this day. ¹² And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God *home* to me? ¹³ So David brought not the ark *home* to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obedom the Gittite.

“A Place for the Ark of God”

[1 Chronicles 15:1-4](#)

¹ (KJV) And *David* made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. ² 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. ³ And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had prepared for it. ⁴ And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites:

1 Chronicles 15:12-15

¹² (KJV) And said unto them, Ye *are* the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, *both* ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto *the place that* I have prepared for it. ¹³ 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. 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 bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD.

1 Chronicles 15:25-27

²⁵ (KJV) So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obededom with joy. ²⁶ And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams. ²⁷ And David *was* clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers: David also *had* upon him an ephod of linen.

“The Ark . . . in the Midst of the Tent”

1 Chronicles 16:1-2

¹ (KJV) So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God. ² And when David had made an end of offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD.

Questions for Study

“Let Us Bring . . . the Ark . . . to Us”

1. What did David’s desire to bring the ark to Jerusalem say about him?
2. What was God teaching the children of Israel by Uzza’s sudden death?
3. How might we desecrate sacred things today?

4. How can we teach our children reverence for God?

“A Place for the Ark of God”

5. What were some keys to the successful second attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem?

6. How important are external worship patterns in the New Testament era?

“The Ark . . . in the Midst of the Tent”

7. Why was it important that the ark be in its appointed place?

Analysing the Passage

The ark had been largely ignored during Saul’s reign (13:3). “Let us bring again the ark” indicates that all Israel was involved in this project. They seem to have been filled with enthusiasm and zeal as they embarked on their mission and David proclaimed a national day of rejoicing.

The Philistines had transported the ark on a cart (1 Samuel 6:11), but God had commanded the Israelites to bear the ark on their shoulders (Numbers 7:9). The Levites were not to touch any holy thing lest they die (Numbers 4:15). While the judgment on Uzza may seem harsh, he was not a benighted heathen. The Levites had been charged with teaching the Law (Leviticus 10:11). If anyone should have known about God’s requirements, it was the Levites.

The second attempt to move the ark was accompanied by the same ecstatic rejoicing as the first attempt, but this attempt had God’s blessing because of obedience to His commands.

Principles and Applications

“Let Us Bring . . . the Ark . . . to Us”

1. We reverence God when we subject our plans to His will (13:2).

“Lord willing” should be a part of our everyday thoughts and expression. Understanding the limits of human foresight should cause us to seek God’s will for our plans.

2. Employing Philistine methods regarding sacred things is irreverence to God (13: 7).

The tendency toward casualness in worship practices and attire detracts from the reverence due to Almighty God. Replacing preaching with drama and entertainment or attempting to attract people to church by

fun, food, and fellowship rather than the message of the cross is displeasing to God. Our method of greeting should be the holy kiss, not a back slap or social embrace.

3. Lack of reverence for sacred things kindles God's wrath (13:9-10).

The only rightful home for the ark was in the most holy place where only the high priest was allowed to enter once a year, and not without blood. Most Israelites never saw this sacred object when it was properly handled. We must never make light of things that God has said are holy. Casual references to Almighty God or failure to view the Holy Scriptures with utmost respect is displeasing to God. The most serious offense is to count "the blood of the covenant . . . an unholy thing" (Hebrews 10:29).

4. A wholesome fear of God accompanies reverence for Him (13:12).

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). The Lord apparently saw the need to teach the children of Israel a lesson about Himself. God's judgment on Uzza was "true and righteous altogether" (Psalm 19:9).

"A Place for the Ark of God"

5. Following God-established forms of worship honours Him (1 5:1~2).

The New Testament directs that the preaching of the cross is to be a central part of our worship services. Singing, praying, and exhortation from a sincere heart are pleasing to God. The church must firmly resist using the world's methods of entertainment, drama and play-acting, and worldly types of music to attract and keep members. God's blessing rests on those who seek to please Him rather than seek to gratify the senses.

6. Sanctification and holiness accompany reverence for God (15:12,

14). The priests were careful to sanctify themselves before bearing the ark the second time. We cannot expect our worship to be acceptable before God if we lead hypocritical, unholy lives. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18).

7. Acknowledgment of past failure is evidence of reverence for God (15:13).

When we sense that God is displeased with our worship, we must diligently search the Scriptures to discover our error. It is our duty to please

God; it is not God's duty to please us. We should ever approach God with a sense of unworthiness and humility, recognizing our imperfections as men.

8. Obeying the Word of the Lord is the essence of reverence (15:15). We should be wary of those who claim to be spiritual while living in disobedience to God. One component of reverence for God is a fear to disobey Him.

9. Showing reverence for God brings rejoicing (15:25).

The joy of the Lord is a product of reverence and obedience. Those who attempt to stir up happy feelings apart from obedience will find "worship" to be an empty experience. Those who like Michal "refuse to sing" will also miss the blessings of hearts touched by God producing spiritual joy.

"The Ark . . . in the Midst of the Tent"

10. Reverence for God and sacred things issues into sincere worship (16:1).

The reinstatement of the ark of God in its appointed place was not a single event that was soon forgotten. Now the tabernacle was in place for all of the sacrifices and ceremonies that the Law required. All Israel could now come and worship in a God-approved manner.

11. God's blessing rests on those who reverence Him (16:2).

God in His mercy shows what we must do to approach Him. When we follow His guidelines, we can know the blessings of God poured out beyond our capacity to receive them. This shows the nature of God. He loves blessing His people.

Important Teachings

1. We reverence God when we subject our plans to His will (13:2).

2. Employing Philistine methods regarding sacred things is irreverence to God (13:7).

3. Lack of reverence for sacred things kindles God's wrath (13:9-10).

4. A wholesome fear of God accompanies reverence for Him (13:12).

5. Following God-established forms of worship honours Him (15:1-2).

6. Sanctification and holiness accompany reverence for God (15:12, 14).

7. Acknowledgment of past failure is evidence of reverence for God (15:13).

8. Obeying the Word of the Lord is the essence of reverence (15:15).
9. Showing reverence for God brings rejoicing (15:25).
10. Reverence for God and sacred things issues into sincere worship (16:1).
11. God's blessing rests on those who reverence Him (16:22).

Answers to Questions

1. What did David's desire to bring the ark to Jerusalem say about him? He gave priority to proper worship and desired that Israel would do the same. His proclamation inviting the whole nation to come to this event sent the signal that this was very important. He understood that Saul's downfall had been caused by not heeding the Lord and did not want to make the same mistake. The underlying motive was his love and devotion to God.

2. What was God teaching the children of Israel by Uzza's sudden death?

They needed to understand the holiness of God and that obedience to divine commands was essential as they re-established tabernacle worship. Man may approach God, but only if he follows God's directives.

David's fearful question, "How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?" (13:12) had an answer: "By obeying God's commands about how the ark was to be transported."

3. How might we desecrate sacred things today?

We could make light of God's Word by a lack of obedience. For example, the Bible clearly forbids women taking a lead role in worship services. Most of the ordinances are commanded observances that we should not substitute with other practices. Dressing casually for worship services shows a lack of respect for God. We must read God's Holy Word with reverence and respect. Arriving at church on time shows respect for God and our fellow churchgoers.

4. How can we teach our children reverence for God?

We must teach them to sit quietly and reverently during church services. (This starts in family worship at home.) We must respectfully handle our Bibles. The priority we place on church activities says what we consider to be important in life.

Note: We have no earthly thing today comparable to the ark, yet our children will understand abstract concepts of God by how we relate to

earthly things connected to our worship, for example our Bibles and our church meetinghouses.

5. What were some keys to the successful second attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem?

By searching the Law, the people had properly analysed why the first attempt had failed. They did not allow the first fiasco to dissuade them from trying again. They still approached this event with great joy, singing, and shouting.

6. How important are external worship patterns in the New Testament era?

We must still obey the Lord to please Him. We cannot expect God's blessing if we use innovations of men not sanctioned by the Scriptures. We cannot claim right motives while knowingly disobeying the Bible. Some external things have changed since Christ has come (John 4:20-24). While God has allowed some external variations compared to Old Testament practices, yet God's standards are in many ways higher today (Hebrews 12:25).

7. Why was it important that the ark be in its appointed place?

God's Shekinah presence was now among His people, dwelling between the cherubim. The Levitical sacrifices could be made. This helped prevent the Israelites from turning to other gods. David had the ark close at hand so he could inquire of the Lord.

Summarizing the Lesson

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation” (Psalm 24:3—5).

Research Guide

1. Trace the movements of the ark from the time of Eli until David's day.
2. Study the New Testament commands and precedents about public worship to understand what God is expecting from us today.