

## **2 Samuel 6: David brings the Ark to Jerusalem**

2 Samuel is a most perplexing chapter. It recounts the story of the transport of the Ark to David's City, Jerusalem. David is settled in his city and now the Ark must come there. This is a good thing, right! It turns out to be more complicated than expected and quickly descends into tragedy and regret.

### Uzzah and the ark

2 Samuel 6: 1-7 recounts the story of Uzzah, who tried to steady the Ark when the oxen stumbled. Is this a case of "no good deed goes unpunished."

But

If you look at Exodus 25:12-14; Numbers 7:9, the way the ark was being transported was already being done in the wrong way. First, the Levites should have been tasked to bring the Ark to David's City. The ark was meant to be carried on the shoulder using gold plated poles and rings (Exodus 25:12-14). It was not meant to be put on a cart. And it was the family of Kohath who were meant to carry the ark (Number 7:9), not Abinadab's sons, Uzzah and Ahio. Yet even the Kohathites were not meant to touch the holy things or they too would die (Numbers 4:15).

The Ark was a dangerous thing and should not be treated without thought. God gave specific instructions on how the Ark was to transported and they were not followed.

- Why did David make this mistake of having the Ark incorrectly transported?
- Should Uzzah have died for this mistake? Was he to blame or an innocent victim?
- Have our good intentions gotten us into trouble before?

### David abandons the Ark

2 Samuel 6:8-11 recounts David's anger about what happened to Uzzah but also that he is afraid of God now.

- David decides to stop transporting the ark. Was this justified?
- How did God show David that he should continue to transport the Ark to David's City?

### The Ark continues it's journey

Verses 12-17. Now that David has seen how the household of Obed-edom the Gittite was blessed by the presence of the Ark, David decides to bring it the rest of the way

- What is different about how David transports the Ark this time?

I have always had a problem with the exacting way that God seems to require obedience. In this case, not transporting the Ark correctly results in death. The story of Uzzah and the Ark seems to imply that God gets angry when we don't do things exactly as he said, which for many Christians points them toward legalism.

- Does God require a slavish adherence to exacting rules in all things or is there a difference in what God expects in some things compared to others?
- Why do you think this is?

### David dances before the Lord

2 Samuel 6: 12-19 recounts the celebratory way that the Ark was brought to Jerusalem. Sacrifices were made to the Lord. David blesses the people and gave gifts of food. And there was dancing.

In the celebration of bringing the ark to Jerusalem, David dances before the Lord (vs 14 & 16). In verse 14 it says that David danced with all his might. I've always loved things such as ballet and figure skating and other forms of dancing. I think I would have enjoyed watching David dance, whether he was king or not. Our SDA culture frowns on dancing, yet this is different.

- Feel free to discuss your thoughts, beliefs and experiences of dancing and being SDA.
- What place does dance have in worship, the church and Christian life?

### Michal criticizes David

2 Samuel 6: 16-23 recounts the final story of David and Michal, and it's not a happy one. Okay, we've all at least seen pictures of the statue of David, if not in person. Here the bible records David dancing with very few clothes on before the Lord. And apparently the servants/maids got an eyeful (vs. 20).

And Michal is not impressed. David has more drama to contend with it seems.

Let's just back up a little. Here is a woman who loved David but never seemed to be his number one. She is married off to another man, who seems very upset to have lost her, but then is forcibly returned to David. Her status is uncertain, given all the other wives and concubines David has. Or maybe not, given she is the daughter of Saul.

Perhaps you have your own ideas on who Michal is.

- Why do you think Michal criticised David?
- Was she justified in her criticism?
- How does David respond?
- How should we deal with criticism? Can we learn something from David.

The final sentence always saddened me (vs 23). To the point that I am not sure it should have been there. It implies that Michal being childless was punishment for criticizing David.

- Do you think this is true?