

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

Key Verse: “*Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.*”
—*I Chronicles 15:28*

Selected Scripture:
I Chronicles 15:1-29

The ark of the covenant, located in the most holy of the Tabernacle, was where God spoke to Moses during Israel's wilderness experience. (Exod. 25:10-22) The ark, carried by the priests, preceded the Israelites as they crossed the Jordan River into Canaan. (Josh. 3:14-17) It was also instrumental in the victories at Jericho and the war against Ai. (Josh. 6:1-27; 8:1-35) In these and other ways, the ark of the covenant gave evidence that God's favor was upon the Israelites.

However, after Israel's repeated sins against God, in particular those of the sons of Eli the priest, the ark of the covenant was permitted to be captured and taken

THE APOSTLE PAUL SPOKE

of God's testimony that Israel's King David was “a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.” (Acts 13:22) Paul was not inferring that David was like God in perfection, but only that he had a sincere heart in harmony with God's promises and instructions. Today's lesson centers on David's desire to serve God by returning the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem after an absence of many years.

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away by the Philistines. (I Sam. 2:12,27-36; 5:1) After seven months of continuous plagues, the Philistines put the ark on a cart and sent it back to Bethshemesh along with jewels of gold as a trespass offering. The rejoicing of the Bethshemites turned to despair when more than fifty-thousand men were killed for looking into the ark contrary to God's instructions.—I Sam. 6:1-21

After requesting help, the ark was moved to the house of Abinadab where his son Eleazar was appointed to keep it. The account states, "While the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord." (I Sam. 7:1,2) After this long period, during which David had become Israel's king, he declared, "Let us bring again the ark of our God to us." (I Chron. 13:3) A new cart was built to carry the ark back to Jerusalem. At one point the cart nearly upset, causing one of the drivers, Uzza, to put his hand upon the ark to keep it from falling. He was immediately struck dead by God. Not understanding why God took the life of Uzza, David left the ark at the house of Obededom for three months.—vss. 7-14

Returning to Jerusalem, David subsequently won two battles against Philistine attacks, following God's instructions explicitly. (I Chron. 14:8-17) Upon reflection, David realized that his first attempt to bring back the ark on a cart was not according to God's instructions. Now back in full harmony with the Lord, David prepared a place for the ark in Jerusalem.—I Chron. 15:1

Following God's instructions given to Moses, David said, "No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the Lord chose them to carry the ark of God and to minister to him forever." (vs. 2, *New American Standard Bible*) Observing how David transported the ark back to Jerusalem according to God's will, rather than his own, is a wonderful example for us. Let us daily seek to be like David, a man after God's heart, who will fulfill all his will. ■