

The CHRONICLES of the KINGS

David and the Ark

1 Chronicles 13:1-4

February 28, 2026

According to 1st Samuel 4, the Ark was captured by the Philistines during battle. After 7 months, it was returned to Israel. However, the worship center at Shiloh had been destroyed and abandoned, so the Ark was eventually taken to Abinadab's house at Kiriath Jearim where it resided until David decided it was time to bring it to Jerusalem.

2nd Samuel 6:1-2 and 1st Chronicles 13:1-4 tell us that the Ark was taken from Abinadab's house and placed on a new cart (just as the Philistines had done) with his son's, Uzzah and Ahio, guiding it – Ahio in front and Uzzah in back.

No doubt David was enthusiastic to bring the Ark to Jerusalem because the Bible tells us that he and all who were with him went before the Ark, celebrating "with all their might before Yahweh with songs and harps, lyres, tambourines, sistrums (NIV-2 Sam. 6:5) / trumpets (NIV-1 Chron. 13:8) and cymbals."

That's nice and all, but there are a couple of things that should immediately draw our concern.

The Ark Transportation Solution:

- David's zeal did not make up for the fact that he had failed to follow Yahweh's rules for the treatment of the Ark.
Numbers 4:1-20 explicitly states that the Ark – and all the furniture in the Tabernacle – were never to be touched or even seen, accept by priests directly descended from Aaron, who were to cover and prepare them to be moved.
The transporting of the Ark – and all the furniture in the Tabernacle – was the exclusive job of the Kohathite Levites – but only through the use of the poles (see Numbers 7:6-9) – failure to obey these regulations brought the death penalty.

Either David did not bother to consult the Priests or they had not bothered to correct him.

Choice of Musical Accompaniment:

What is a "sistrum"? I didn't know either – so I investigated.

According to Strong's Concordance:

- The Hebrew word, "menaaneh" [מְנַנֵּה] refers to a kind of rattle or hand-held shaking instrument – commonly known as a sistrum – and this word is found in only 1 Bible verse, 2nd Samuel 6:5.

According to the "fount of all knowledge" (the Internet), a sistrum was:

- A percussion instrument in the shape of a U or a hoop – used prominently in Ancient Egypt – played primarily by women and priestesses.
- Was shaken rhythmically to invoke deity and mark festal occasions and was closely associated with religious rituals, particularly those honoring the goddess Hathor, who represented music, dance and fertility.
- Thought to have magical and protective properties and was used to ward off chaos by frightening away the god Seth, to invoke blessings, to call upon the gods, to aid in ritual healing and averting Nile flooding.
- Israel's exposure to Egyptian culture likely familiarized them with the instrument, which was then employed selectively in royal and cultic celebrations.

The fact that the sistrum's origins can be traced to Egyptian cultic religious rituals indicates that the line between pagan worship practices and the worship of Yahweh were blurred – at the very least.

At any rate, everyone was celebrating and everything seemed to be going well.

However, when the procession reached the threshing floor of Nacon/Kidon, the oxen stumbled and the cart wobbled.

Uzzah reached out and touched the Ark to steady it.

2 Samuel 6:7-11 – *Yahweh's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God.*

David's response was one of anger and perhaps a little embarrassment that his 1st big event had ended so disastrously.

So discouraged was David, that he abandoned his plan and left the Ark at the house of Obed-edom, where it stayed for 3 months – during which time, Yahweh blessed Obed-edom and his entire family.

1st Chronicles 14:

- Hiram, king of Tyre sent cedar logs, stonemasons and carpenters to build David's palace.
- David took more wives and fathered more sons and daughters
- A repeat of David's exploits against the Philistines that we covered in 2nd Samuel 5:17-25.

1st Chronicles 15 tells us that after his palace was built in the City of David, David prepared a place for the Ark – a tent.

This time David did a little research and directed that no one but the Levites were to carry the Ark. He called together the descendants of Aaron – Zadok and Abiathar – along with the Levites and said to them, "You are the heads of the Levitical families; you and your fellow Levites are to consecrate yourselves and bring up the ark of Yahweh, the God of Israel, to the place I have prepared for it. It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that Yahweh our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way."

So, the Priests and Levites consecrated themselves and then David and all Israel headed off to Obed-edom's.

The Levites carried the Ark on poles, as Moses had commanded. Levites (listed in 1 Chronicles 15:17-24) were appointed to lead the procession with songs and musical instruments: lyres, harps and cymbals and trumpets.

"So David brought the Ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the City of David with rejoicing."

- Every 6 steps, David sacrificed a bull and a fatted calf.
- Wearing only a linen ephod, David *"danced before Yahweh with all his might."*
- The entire house of Israel brought the Ark to Jerusalem *"with shouts and with the sounding of rams' horns and trumpets, and of cymbals, and the playing of lyres and harps."*

It must have been quite a scene as the congregation made their way to Jerusalem.

Watching out of her window was Michal and she was not amused by the sight that greeted her – David dressed only in his underwear, unashamedly dancing and leaping and celebrating before Yahweh - *"and she despised him in her heart."*

The Ark was brought to its new home and more burnt offerings and fellowship offerings were presented before Yahweh.

To commemorate the day David wrote this psalm (1 Chronicles 16:8-36 LEB):

Give thanks to Yahweh; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the nations!

Sing to him; sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!

Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those seeking Yahweh rejoice!

Seek Yahweh and his strength; seek his face continually!

Remember his wonderful works that he has done, his wonders and the judgments of his mouth,

O offspring of Israel, his servant, O sons of Jacob, his chosen ones!

He is Yahweh our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

Remember his covenant forever, the word he commanded for a thousand generations, that he made with Abraham, his sworn oath to Isaac. And he confirmed it to Jacob as a statute, an everlasting covenant to Israel, saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan, the portion of your inheritance."

When you were few in number, and sojourners in it, when they wandered from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people, he did not allow anyone to oppress them, and he rebuked kings on their account, saying, "You must not touch my anointed nor do harm to my prophets!"

Sing to Yahweh, all the earth! Proclaim his salvation from day to day!

Proclaim his glory among the nations, his wondrous works among all the peoples!

For Yahweh is great and greatly praised, and he is feared among all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are idols, but Yahweh made the heavens.

Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his place.

Ascribe to Yahweh, O clans of the nations, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength!

Ascribe to Yahweh the glory of his name!

Lift up an offering and come before him!

Bow down to Yahweh in the splendor of holiness!

Tremble before him, all the earth; surely the world is established; it shall not be shaken.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, and let them tell the peoples, "Yahweh reigns!"

Let the sea roar and its fullness; let the field rejoice and all that is in it.

Then the trees of the forest shall sing for joy before Yahweh, for he comes to judge the earth.

Oh give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good; his loyal love is everlasting.

Then say, "Save us, O God of our salvation; gather us and rescue us from the nations that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.

Blessed be Yahweh the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!"

Then all the people said, "Amen!" and praised Yahweh.

David appointed some of the Levites to be in charge of worship services and minister before the Ark of the Covenant (at Jerusalem) **while leaving Zadok, the priest and his fellow priests, to minister at the Tabernacle at the high place in Gibeon – to present burnt offerings on the altar of burnt offering, "in accordance with everything written in the law."** (1st Chronicles 16:37-40 also see 2 Chronicles 1:1-6)

What is interesting here is that now there are 2 distinct worship centers:

- The Ark of the Covenant at Jerusalem
- At least part of the old Tabernacle – specifically named, the Tent of Meeting and the Altar of Burnt Offering – that had somehow survived destruction at Shiloh and was now located at Gibeon

It is unclear why David chose not to create one worship center at Jerusalem, but he didn't and there would remain two until Solomon built the Temple.

The people began to return to their homes. David, too, went home to bless his family and Michal was waiting.....

Michal: *"How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today! Disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!"*

Was she embarrassed by him? Did she think that kings should not behave that way or had her love for him changed into something else?

It's interesting that the Bible describes Michal as "the daughter of Saul" not as "the wife of David" and that perhaps gives us an insight into the state of their relationship.

For his part, David said he was not particularly concerned about people's opinions and was prepared to embarrass himself even more in his worship of God.

At this point, we are told that Michal never had children. Many jump to the conclusion that God closed her womb, but it could be a simple case that the relationship between David and Michal had deteriorated to the point that they were never intimate again.

A considerable amount of time goes by between the events of chapter's 6 and 7 of 2nd Samuel and our final section today, revolves around David's heart desire to build a permanent structure for the Ark.

He called the prophet Nathan, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of the covenant of Yahweh is under a tent."

Apparently, without consulting God, Nathan gave David an enthusiastic thumbs-up, "Whatever you have in mind, do it, for God is with you."

However!!! That night, as Nathan slept, a word came from God, "Go and tell David the following: I have never dwelt in house – from the wandering years until now, but always moved from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. More than that, I have never asked the rulers of Israel why they haven't bothered to build me a house of cedar. I took you from being a shepherd to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone and now I will make your name great and I will provide a place for my people – a home of their own. I will also give you rest from all your enemies and I will establish your dynasty. When you rest with your fathers, I will raise up a son to succeed you and I will establish his kingdom. He will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.... Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." (paraphrase is mine – see 2nd Samuel 7:4-16)

The next day, Nathan reported to David all the words Yahweh had spoken.

Even though God's answer to David's desire, was "NO," it was followed up with some pretty incredible promises.

God was going to build for David an eternal dynasty. 1st through his son (Solomon) who would eventually build the Temple, but more importantly through Jesus, who would be the "root and offspring of David" (Revelation 5:1-5 and 22:16 also see Isaiah 11:1-10; Zechariah 6:12-13 and Luke 1:31-33)

David's response was one of humility and gratitude. In contrast to his own unworthiness, he acknowledged the greatness of Yahweh and his unfailing grace and faithfulness toward Israel. He accepted Yahweh's promises and concluded by saying, "O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign LORD, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever." (see full prayer in 2nd Samuel 7:18-29)

Until Next Time.....