

David's desire to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem was an admirable goal driven by his love for the LORD, but he made the mistake of not transporting the ark according to the method prescribed in the Mosaic Law, which honored the holiness of the LORD. It does not matter how enthusiastically we worship the LORD if we are not doing it in the manner that reverences Him above all.

**Verses 1-5:** David met with the leaders of Israel and proposed that they call on all the people of Israel, along with the priests and Levites, to come and participate in bringing the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. He pointed out that they had not used the ark to inquire of the LORD during Saul's reign as king. David's love for the LORD compelled him to want the ark close by so that the LORD could dwell among His people and they would be near Him. The people saw that David's proposal was right and agreed to it.

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### 1 Chronicles 13

6 And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjath-jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it.

**“And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjath-jearim, which belonged to Judah”** – At this time the ark was located at Kirjath-jearim. When the children of Israel had entered the land of Canaan, the ark was kept at Shiloh until the Philistines captured it during a battle with Israel (1 Sam. 4:10-11). When the Philistines were compelled by the LORD to return the ark to Israel, Kirjath-jearim was the place where Israel felt it was safe to keep it (1 Sam. 6:21). Now, David goes there with the leaders of Israel to retrieve the ark.

**“to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it”** – David wanted to bring the ark to Jerusalem because, as this verse describes, it represented the presence of the LORD. The LORD told Moses that He would meet with him by appearing between the cherubims over the mercy seat (Ex. 25:22).

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

**“And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab”** – Abinadab was the family household that had been caretakers for the ark since it was returned by the Philistines. Despite David's love for the LORD, he obviously did not consult with the priests to research the proper way to transport the ark as described in the Mosaic Law, which required that the ark be carried by the Levites using the staves (poles) that had been made for that purpose. David seems to have followed the example of the Philistines, who used a new cart to return the ark to Israel (1 Sam. 6:7). The LORD apparently had allowed the Philistines to use a cart because of their ignorance of Mosaic Law, but David and the people of Israel had no excuse and should have known better.

**“and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart”** – When the Philistines returned the ark on a new cart, the LORD guided the cows pulling the cart back to the territory of Israel (1 Sam. 6:12-14). In David's case, however, two men were in charge of steering the oxen in the proper direction. The Hebrew word translated “drive” can mean “to lead or guide” so likely Uzza and Ahio walked on either side of the oxen and guided them along the road toward Jerusalem.

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8 And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

David and the people of Israel enthusiastically celebrated the fact that the ark of the LORD was coming to Jerusalem. However, as we shall see, their enthusiasm did not mean that what they were doing was blessed by the LORD. The goal of bringing the ark to Jerusalem was good one but the method they chose to accomplish the goal was not approved by the LORD. A lesson we can learn from this is that while we can be enthusiastic about our service to the LORD at church or at home, we can be enthusiastically wrong.

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9 And when they came unto the threshingfloor 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.

**“And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled [to let drop or fall]”** – Perhaps the ground was uneven at this spot, but the consequences of using the wrong method to carry the ark came to fruition. The oxen apparently allowed the cart to tilt to the point that Uzza believed the ark was in danger of falling off the cart. When he reached out to stabilize the ark with his hand, he violated the holy nature of the ark because the LORD had decreed that no one could touch holy objects such as the ark without dying (Num. 4:15).

**“And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark”** – Despite the fact that Uzza had good intentions, he violated the holy nature of the ark by touching it and suffered the consequences.

**“and there he died before God”** – Apparently Uzza died instantly and fell where he stood by the ark.

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### 1 Chronicles 15

11 And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, 12 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.

The death of Uzza caused David to realize that the things of the LORD were not something that can be handled according to human reasoning or preferences (1 Chr. 13:12). Too afraid to continue the ark's journey to Jerusalem, David sent the ark to the nearby home of Obed-edom for safekeeping until he could decide what to do (1 Chr. 13:13-14). Three months later, David had apparently researched the proper way to transport the ark (v. 2) and called on the priests and Levites to prepare themselves for the task of bringing the ark into Jerusalem to the place that David had prepared for it (v. 1).

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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.

**“For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us”** – David has learned that only the Levites were allowed to transport the ark by carrying it using the golden staves made for the purpose. He now understands that the mistake of not using the Levites to transport the ark had cost Uzza his life.

**“for that we sought him not after the due order”** – David acknowledges that they did not use the proper method that the LORD had ordained during their first attempt to transport the ark. The phrase “due order” refers to the method the LORD specified in the Mosaic Law.

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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.

The priests and Levites complied with David’s command that they sanctify themselves for the task of transporting the ark. This sanctification was a special ritual to cleanse these men of any spiritual or physical uncleanness in order to prepare them for the service of the LORD. They then followed the Mosaic Law by carrying the ark on their shoulders using the golden staves.

**Verses 16-25:** David had assembled a choir and orchestra to sing and play music in celebration of the arrival of the ark in Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel went down to the house of Obed-edom to retrieve the ark and escort it to Jerusalem.

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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.

God helped the Levites in the sense that He gave them the courage and assurance to carry the ark in the aftermath of Uzza’s death, as well as in the fact that they did not die. These facts demonstrated that the LORD was pleased with their actions. As a result, David and the people made an offering of thanksgiving. In scripture, the number seven carries the meaning of completeness, implying that they were expressing their complete gratitude to the LORD for accepting their efforts to bring the ark to Jerusalem.

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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.

David, the Levites, and the singers all wore a robe of fine linen, indicating that David considered himself to be a participant in the worship of the LORD and not merely a royal observer. He also was wearing a linen ephod, which was a priestly garment. Even though he was the king, David may have felt that he was ministering to the people of Israel by bringing the ark, which represented the presence of the LORD, to Jerusalem where all could come to worship.

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28 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.

The people celebrated the arrival of the ark in Jerusalem with singing and music, showing their joy and reverence for the LORD.

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29 And it came to pass, as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window saw king David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart.

The excitement and noise of the celebration caught the attention of David’s wife Michal, who was the daughter of Saul. When she looked out of a window, she saw David dancing and celebrating in worship of the LORD. She apparently thought he was making a fool of himself and not acting with the dignity of a king. When David arrived home later, she criticized him for being “uncovered” before the people without his royal attire (2 Sam. 6:20).

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## 1 Chronicles 16

37 So he left there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required: 40 To offer burnt offerings unto the LORD upon the altar of the burnt offering continually morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the law of the LORD, which he commanded Israel;

The ark was brought to the tent that David had set up for it (v. 1) and once there, he and the people offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings to the LORD. After all the festivities were over, David leaves the ark with Asaph and his family, who were Levites, to help in taking care of the ark and assisting in the offering of burnt sacrifices as required by the Mosaic Law. This Asaph seems to be the same man that wrote many of the psalms.