

e-concepts

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What We Learn from David Moving the Ark (2 Samuel 6)

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The First Move: 400 years after the ark had come into the land with Joshua, David decided to move it to Jerusalem. David put it on a new cart, as the Philistines had done (1 Samuel 6:8). But God had designated that the ark was to only be carried by Levite priests, specifically the sons of Kohath (Exodus 25:14-15; Numbers 3:30-31; 4:15; 7:9). *They* [apparently some Kohath priests since they were not killed] *placed the ark of God on a new cart* instead of carrying it. David and 30,000 men accompanied the cart. But when the oxen who pulled the cart almost upset the ark, a man named Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it. Immediately *the anger* [literally, *anger of face*] *of the Lord burned against Uzzah and God struck him down there for his irreverence* [better, *error*, KJV] *and he died*.

Questions: The account leaves us with several questions.

- Was it right for David to move the ark?
- Why move the ark to Jerusalem instead of returning it to Moses' Tabernacle in Gibeon?
- Why did David not move the ark with Kohath Levite priests as God prescribed?
- Was Uzzah wrong to reach out and take hold of the ark? Would it be better to let it fall?
- Since we know God is good, why was it good to kill Uzzah?

Answer #1: We cannot know what the text does not tell us. What we do know is, God wanted the ark in Jerusalem to eventually put it in Solomon's temple. So, yes, it was right for David to move it to Jerusalem.

Application #1: It is right to do what God is doing – the ultimate answer to all ethical questions. Morality is never accomplished by setting up standards, however good they may be, separated from God.

Answer #2: David seemed to have used a cart to move the ark because it was an expedient method. The fact that the Philistines also did it shows it was a common way of moving things. But David was wrong, even though he did not know it, evidenced by the fact God's anger surprised him and angered him.

Application #2: The commands of God are to be understood literally and kept precisely, not allegorized and paraphrased.

Answer #3: Uzzah's motives seem genuine and sincere in that he was only trying to steady the ark. But he was wrong to touch the ark, because (apparently) he was not a Kohathite Levite.

Application #3: Genuine, sincere motives do not define what is good. Only the commands of God, as they reflect the character of God and plan of God, are good. God, not man, decides what is good.

The Second Move: David had placed the ark in the home of *Obed-edom the Gittite* where it sat for *three months*. Apparently, Obed-edom was a Levite of the family of Kohath, those designated to carry the ark. We get that from the fact that he was from Gittim, which is Gath-rimmon, one of the Kohath Levite cities (Joshua 21:24-25). When David learned that *the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household*, David prepared a second movement of the ark. This time the ark was carried (apparently by Kohath Levite priests) to Jerusalem among great pomp. David was dancing *wearing a linen ephod*.

Question: What are lessons we can learn from David's second movement of the ark to Jerusalem?

Application: Do God's will God's way. If at first you fail to do it God's way, don't make excuses, make corrections, and do it God's way.