

1st & 2nd Chronicles
The Ark Comes to Jerusalem
Lesson Text: 1st Chronicles 15:1-3, 14-16, 25-28

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: **EXPLORE** the purpose and significance of the Ark of the Covenant; **REFLECT** on the sacredness of worship; and **RECOGNIZE** and respond to those things that invite us to worship God.

In Focus

Today's lesson reminds us to respond to God's faithfulness with expressions of praise and gratitude for who He is and what He has done for us and others.

Keep In Mind

"David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had prepared for it." 1st Chronicles 15:3 (KJV)

Lesson Text

1st Chronicles 15:1-3, 14-16, 25-28 (NKJV)

1 David built houses for himself in the City of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it.

2 Then David said, "No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites, for the Lord has chosen them to carry the ark of God and to minister before Him forever."

3 And David gathered all Israel together at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the Lord to its place, which he had prepared for it.

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 bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the Lord.

16 Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy.

25 So David, the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord from the house of Obed-Edom with joy.

26 And so it was, when God helped the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, that they offered seven bulls and seven rams.

27 David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who bore the ark, the singers, and Chenaniah the music master with the singers. David also wore a linen ephod.

28 Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn, with trumpets and with cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps.

The Lesson

The People, Places and Times

The Ark of the Covenant: God instructed the Children of Israel to build a Tabernacle and several pieces of furniture for it after their exodus from captivity in Egypt (Exodus 25:10– 22). One piece of furniture, the ark, measured two and a half cubits in length, and a cubit and a half in both width and height. A cubit is an ancient unit of measurement believed to equal about 18 inches. This wooden box was then covered in gold and was carried by two staffs made also of acacia wood, covered with gold. Mounted upon the ark was the mercy seat, a slightly raised platform, covered with pure gold. The mercy seat was surrounded by two cherubim made of gold, one mounted at each side of the seat.

The Ark of the Covenant resided within the Holy of Holies, the innermost room of the Tabernacle. Access was only permitted once per year, on the Day of Atonement. Access was restricted to one person, the high priest, who would enter the Holy of Holies with the blood of a goat, on behalf of his own and the people of Israel's sins. The goat's blood was sprinkled onto the mercy seat to make atonement for the sins of the people of Israel.

Background

The Ark of the Covenant had been a mainstay in the spiritual lives of the Children of Israel following their flight from Egypt. However, during the reign of King Saul, God's people had become disconnected from the ark, which represented God's presence. David, upon capturing Jerusalem and making it the capital city of Israel, sought to cure this disconnection by reuniting the people with the ark.

King David's first attempt at transporting the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem was a failure. Not only was the attempt unsuccessful, but it resulted in the death of one of the men, Uzza, assisting with its transporting. God had stricken Uzza to convey His anger toward David and Israel for not following His prescribed orders for transporting the ark (Exodus 25:14–15:

Numbers 4:4–15: 7:9). Although David and Israel made what they may have considered adequate preparations for handling the ark, they were, in essence, inadequate, because they were not according to God’s specific instructions. As a consequence of David and Israel’s disobedience and carelessness, they were forced to temporarily store the ark with the family of Obededom for three months (1 Chronicles 13:14).

This point is not to be taken lightly by believers today. Often we choose to make seemingly “good” plans concerning various areas of our lives, only to have the plans fail miserably because they were not God’s plans! However, God is so merciful that He often grants us, as He did David and Israel, a second chance by allowing us another opportunity to follow His plan in the manner He originally dictated.

In Depth

1. Preparing for the Ark of the Covenant (1 Chronicles 15:1–3, 14–16) David took extra care to prepare the place for the Ark of the Covenant. It is noteworthy David pitched the tent that the ark was to inhabit at the same time he erected a home for himself and his family. After preparing the place where the ark would dwell, David gave specific instructions concerning those who should carry the ark (v. 2). David was obviously applying the lessons learned from his previous failed attempt to transport the ark that resulted in the death of Uzza (13:6–10). The wisdom of David in this instance is often overlooked by modern believers. Instead of following the example of David and learning from past failures, we prefer to repeatedly learn lessons by enrolling and re-enrolling in the school of hard knocks.

David displayed leadership qualities by ensuring the ark was carried by the proper personnel. As leaders, in any capacity but especially in ministry, we can never expect to yield optimal results if the proper pieces are in improper places! On a basketball team, only an unskilled coach would allow a center to play the position of point guard, as this would hinder the flow of the offense. Similarly, in ministry, leaders should not have unfriendly persons serving as ushers, tone-deaf individuals serving as song leaders, or those lacking in knowledge of God’s Word serving in teaching capacities.

Equally as important as making certain that one is called for the task is being careful not to defile God’s Word while operating in that capacity. The Levites and the priests, who had been called by God, sanctified and cleansed themselves prior to touching the ark. Romans 3:23 tells us that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” This declaration is inclusive of the parishioner, the preacher, and everyone in between. Therefore, we have an obligation to seek forgiveness and to undergo a spiritual cleansing process prior to engaging in ministry, so as not to pollute God’s work with our own imperfections. Just as we were taught as children to

thoroughly wash our hands prior to eating, we should exercise the same care when it comes to cleansing ourselves spiritually before partaking in ministry.

2. Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem (vv. 25–28): Only after a failed attempt, the death of a servant, and much prayer and preparation did David and Israel successfully transport the ark to Jerusalem. Therefore, it should be no surprise that the demeanor of David and Israel was one of reverence, praise, and worship to God. It is common courtesy to express gratitude when someone does a kind gesture toward you. Depending on the nature of the act, the gratitude might range anywhere from a simple word of thanks to an expensive gift of thanks. Similarly, when God proves Himself faithful to us as believers, it is only appropriate to display some form of gratitude. This might be a monetary offering, a shout of praise, a song, or a dance. However, it is most important that the gratitude be genuine, so that God will receive it accordingly.

Liberating Lesson

All of us lead lives that are full of responsibilities, chores, and tasks that must be carried out. Often these obligations make for extremely action-packed days in which we rush from one thing to another, not giving each item the care it deserves. As Christians, we must always remember to give God's dealings the utmost care and concern because God does not bless us haphazardly. He gives us only His best.

Application for Activation

Identify a time when you took part in ministry but afterward were seemingly unchanged. Now ask yourself if there was something you could have done, or not done, to assist in ushering in God's presence. Jot down three things you can do, or not do, in order to enhance your worship experience. Implement these things the next time you have an opportunity.

Take Aways

Closing Prayer

Week of 05 Nov 2023
Daily Bible Readings



Monday - Deuteronomy 17-20

Tuesday - Deuteronomy 21-23

Wednesday Deuteronomy 24-27

Thursday - Deuteronomy 28-29

Friday - Deuteronomy 30-31

Saturday - Deuteronomy 32-34

Sunday - Joshua 1-4