

Second Samuel

Lesson 7

The compiler has just told us about David's first battle with the Philistines in the valley of Rephaim. David nicknamed the location "*Baal-parazim*," which means the *lord who bursts through*.

(2) The Second Battle (5:22-25)

The writer then tells us about David's second battle with the Philistines. Verse 22. "*Now the Philistines came up once again and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim.*"²³ *When David inquired of the LORD, He said, "You shall not go directly up; circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees.*"²⁴ *It shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall act promptly, for then the LORD will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines."*²⁵ *Then David did so, just as the LORD had commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer."*

The Philistines have camped in the valley of Rephaim just down the slope from the walls of Zion on the west. In the LORD's instruction, David was to take his men to the top of the hill on the west side of the valley and wait until he heard the rustling in the leaves of the trees before attacking. David did just that, and he was victorious. The passage tells us that he destroyed the Philistines from Geba to Gezer. Geba is five miles north of Zion. Therefore, David and his men had to pursue the Philistines north for five miles. The main trade route ran north and south through the valley of Rephaim. No doubt, the Philistines ran north into Benjamin's tribal area in an attempt to escape. About four miles north, a fork in the road took a less traveled road to Geba. Undoubtedly, some of the Philistines took the right fork, and some of David's men followed to defeat them. Up the main trade route about three more miles, a fork in the road went to the left, headed toward Gezer. If you were to travel these routes by car today, Zion to Gezer is about twenty-two miles. Therefore, the battle against the Philistines was not quick. It took several days to follow the Philistines and defeat them.

Ezra's entry in First Chronicles about this battle adds one very important detail. It says, "*David did just as God had commanded him, and they struck down the army of the Philistines from Gibeon even as far as Gezer. Then the fame of David went out into all the lands; and the LORD brought the fear of him on all the nations?*" (1 Chronicles 14:16-17).

This defeat of the Philistines set David's reputation throughout the surrounding nations. The nations feared David. We will hear about David fighting the Philistines one more time in chapter 8. After that, the Philistines will not try to attack David again until chapter 21, when David is too old to fight the giant brothers and sons of Goliath, who intended to kill David in his old age but were killed by David and his men.

As we come to chapter 6, the compiler of the Chronicles of David still addresses the major triumphs of David's life, although the triumphs drag along tragedies simultaneously. Such is the case with the record found in the next chapter.

B. The Ark of the Kingdom (6:1-23)

1. Peril in Moving the Ark (6:1-11)

a) The Meeting Place of the Ark (6:1-2)

David was established in his new capital on Mount Zion. He remembered the tragedy of the capture of the Ark by the Philistines and the subsequent return of the Ark to Israel and how it was stored in the care of Abinadab in Kiriath-jerim. And so, David established for all the Israelites the meeting place of the Ark. David wanted to bring the Ark of the kingdom to his new capital. But, in David's haste, the writer records the peril of moving the Ark. Chapter 6, verse 1. "*Now David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.*"² *And David arose and went with all the people who were with*

him to Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned above the cherubim.”

In his decision to move the Ark from Abinadab’s home in Kiriath-jearim, he mustered the troops. The number was thirty thousand. We know that thirty thousand men were but a slither of David’s entire army because while he was king of the tribe of Judah alone, above his Judean warriors, more than three hundred and thirty-three thousand men defected to him from the other eleven tribes. That defection occurred more than five years before this place in the storyline. As king of Israel for the last five years, those men would have still been with him as well as all the rest of the warriors in all the tribes who did not come initially under his authority until the death of Ish-bosheth.

Now, who were these thirty thousand? They were the captains of troops. Where is that found in the Bible? It is located in the corresponding passage found in the Chronicles. It says,

“Therefore, David mustered the leaders in charge of the different divisions of his armies from where they lived among their troops. Then, David called them to Zion for a meeting. The Chronicles passage fills in what David said to these men once they arrived. “David said to all the assembly of Israel, “If it seems good to you, and if it is from the LORD our God, let us send everywhere to our kinsmen who remain in all the land of Israel, also to the priests and Levites who are with them in their cities with pasture lands, that they may meet with us;”³ and let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul.”⁴ Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.” (1 Chronicles 13:2-4).

Reading on in First Chronicles, we find where David gathered all the people of Israel from the southernmost point to the northernmost point to assemble at Baalah, where the Ark was stored. Our passage in Samuel calls this place *Baale-judah*. The passage in Chronicles calls this place *Baalab*. What happened to Kiriath-jearim? Ezra, in the Chronicles, clears this up when he says, *“So David assembled all Israel together, from the Shihor of Egypt even to the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. ⁶ David and all Israel went up to Baalab, that is, to Kiriath-jearim, which belongs to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God...” (1 Chronicle 13:5-6).*

Ezra clears up the confusion. Kiriath-jearim had the nickname, *Baalab* or *Baale-judah*. The word *Baalab* or *Baale* means *lord or possessor*. David wanted the people of Israel to meet him where the LORD dwelt atop the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark had been in Kiriath-jearim for twenty years, and the Hebrews had nicknamed that village as *the place of the dwelling of the LORD*. The Ark of the Covenant sat in the tribal area of Judah. Thus, the nickname included the location as *Baale-judah*. In their understanding, at *Baale-judah*, the LORD of hosts was *“enthroned above the cherubim.”*

b) The Moving Day of the Ark (6:3-11)

(1) A Fresh Cart (6:3-4)

As the moving day of the Ark arrived, David provided a fresh cart for transportation. Verse 3. *“They placed the ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart. ⁴ So they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Ahio was walking ahead of the ark.”*

For whatever reason, the plan to bring the Ark to Zion included a *“new cart.”* By telling us that this cart was *“new,”* it had never been used for other purposes. Instead, it was built with one purpose in mind – to carry the Ark to its new home. We are not told how the Ark was loaded on this cart, only that it was loaded. Once loaded, the procession began.

As the writer tells us, Uzzah and Ahio were the sons of Abinadab, whose home was the Ark's resting place for twenty years. Ahio was in front. Uzzah must have been at the rear of the Ark. One in front, one in the rear, guiding the Ark that had been with their family for two decades.

(2) A Fun Celebration (6:5)

The whole procession caused a fun celebration. Verse 5. *“Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD with all kinds of instruments made of fir wood, and with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals.”*

“Meanwhile,” means in the time between loading the Ark on the cart and while it was moving down the road to Zion. The Israelite people, who had come to take part in this great journey, celebrated the day with all kinds of instruments.

(3) A Frightful Casualty (6:6-7)

As the parade continued with joy expressed in the people's hearts and with their musical instruments, there came a frightful casualty. Verse 6. *“But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. ⁷ And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.”*

We do not know the location of “Nacon.” Be that as it may, after the death of Uzzah, King David gave the location the nickname of “Perez-uzzah.” We will discover that next. No doubt, the oxen pulling the new cart were distracted by the grain on the threshing floor and turned quickly. The action caused the Ark to tilt, and Uzzah attempted to steady its ride. It cost him his life.

(4) A Fearful Crown (6:8-10)

The frightful casualty caused a fearful crown. Verse 8. *“David became angry because of the LORD’s outburst against Uzzah, and that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. ⁹ So David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, ‘How can the ark of the LORD come to me?’” ¹⁰ And David was unwilling to move the ark of the LORD into the city of David with him; but David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.”*

Because of the death of Uzzah, David nicknamed the location “Perez-uzzah.” “Perez” means *breach*. For the Hebrews, a *breach* meant a *great calamity*. We do not know the location of this place; however, it must have been near the home of “Obed-edom the Gittite.” David was afraid to take the Ark any farther. The cart with the Ark was placed in Obed’s house, where it would stay for three months. Obed was a Levite, but whether he was of the line of Aaron, we do not know. Although he might not have been from the line of Aaron, he was from the extended family of the Kohaths, of which Aaron’s line was part; Obed had a legal right to take care of the Ark in his home since his line of Kohaths were legally given the right to transport the Ark when it was moved. To clarify the reason for this, Aaron’s descendants were the only ones who could pack the Ark for transportation. Once the Ark was packed, the Kohaths, not of Aarons line, arrived to transport it. Once the Ark arrived at its new location, the descendants of Aaron returned to unpack the Ark (Numbers 16:1; 1 Chronicles 26:1, 4-8). A different man named Obed is found in 1 Chronicles 15:14-24. He, too, was a Levite; however, he was of the Merari family, not the Kohath. Therefore, he had no right to touch the Ark as the duties of the Merarites only included the transportation of the tents, curtains, poles, and sockets of the Tabernacle complex. In his fear, David left the Ark with Obed.

(5) A Fortunate Company (6:11)

While the Ark was at the home of Obed, it resulted in a fortunate company for this family. Verse 11. *“Thus the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household.”* We know exactly how the LORD blessed Obed and his family company, but no doubt, the LORD was pleased with Obed. The Ark was in the right place and in the right hands.

2. Success in Moving the Ark (6:12-23)

a) The Correct Preparation (6:12)

At the end of three months, David had organized a new plan for the success of moving the Ark. It was not really David’s plan; it was the LORD’s plan. It began with the correct preparation.

However, the compiler of this passage tells us the following in verse 12. *“Now it was told King David, saying, ‘The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, on account of the ark of God.’ David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.”* It is obvious from the compiler’s entry that he completely ignored the preparation David went through to bring the Ark into Zion the right way. We are fortunate that the LORD allowed Ezra to fill in the gap. Here are the highlights of Ezra’s entry in the Chronicles. *“David now built several buildings for himself in the City of David. He also prepared a place for the Ark of God and set up a special tent for it. Then he commanded, ‘No one except the Levites may carry the Ark of God. The LORD has chosen them to carry the Ark of the LORD and to serve him forever.’ ... This is the number of the descendants of Aaron (the priests) and the Levites who were called together: ... Kobath, 120, ... Merari, 220 ... Gershon, 130 ... Elizaphan, 200 ... Hebron, 80 ... Uzziel, 112 ... He said to them, ‘You are the leaders of the Levite families. You must purify yourselves and all your fellow Levites, so you can bring the Ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to the place I have prepared for it. Because you Levites did not carry the Ark the first time, the anger of the LORD our God burst out against us. We failed to ask God how to move it properly.’ ... Then the Levites carried the Ark of God on their shoulders with its carrying poles, just as the LORD had instructed Moses. ... Then David and the elders of Israel and the generals of the army went to the house of Obed-edom to bring the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant up to Jerusalem with a great celebration. 26 And because God was clearly helping the Levites as they carried the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams.”* (1 Chronicles 15:1-26)

David’s plan this time to bring the Ark to Zion was successful because he did not rely on his plan, but he relied on the LORD’s plan, which He had put in place in the days of Moses and the Exodus.

b) The Correct Procession (6:13-15)

With everything right this time, David’s plan was successful. It included the correct preparation, which resulted in the correct procession. Verse 13. *“And so it was, that when the bearers of the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. ¹⁴ And David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, and David was wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁵ So David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouting and the sound of the trumpet.”*

It took just six paces for David to know all was right. After the six paces, an offering was presented to the LORD. The correct procession was met with great joy from the king. The compiler tells us that David was dancing along the way *“with all his might.”* His clothing was not that of a king; it was the clothing of a priestly servant – a linen ephod.

Ezra tells us more about David’s clothing. *“David was dressed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who carried the Ark, and also the singers, and Kenaniah the choir leader. David was also wearing a priestly garment.”* (1 Chronicles 15:27). The base layer of the priestly garments was called a *linen ephod*. It was simply a straight white garment, much like the robes we think of when we contemplate our arrival in our heavenly home with the LORD. It was constructed in the same design as most men wore in that day. David surely wore something like this in his home or during less official business. For David, the priests, and all men, it was considered their underwear, for nothing was worn under this base garment as we consider underwear today. The linen ephod was also the base for the priest, but elaborate additions were made to wear over this base garment. For David, as king, would also wear such garments, but accessories were added to set him off as the king.