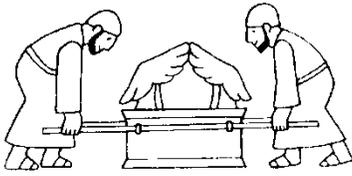


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 4



DISASTER WHILE MOVING THE ARK

Scripture Text: 1 Chronicles 13:1-4

The ark had been gone from Shiloh for twenty years. With the ark gone, the years had been long and tiresome to Israel. Today's lesson teaches us of some dangers in our trying to move the Presence of God by our own methods.

We find that new and more modern ways will not bring the approval of God. God has a means of letting us know when he is pleased or displeased with the way we handle His ark.

MEMORY VERSE: *Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.*
– *Psalm 33:8*

Man's Plan to Move the Ark

1 Chronicles 13:1-6 The ark had been gone from Shiloh, then the center of worship, for twenty years. It had been resting at Kirjath-jearim. It was a sad twenty years spiritually for Israel. Times are always long and sad and disastrous when a people forget God and let family altars and true worship decay. Nothing can make up for this loss, no material prosperity, or scientific progress. The bottom falls out when God is taken away. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.

David consulted . . . with every leader . . . If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord. . . This was good, but it was not the best way to arrive at a decision. (Compare **2 Samuel 2:1**; and **2 Samuel 5:23**.) The plan to **bring the ark of God** home was a good one. The method was unwise. The ark was important. It was the most sacred article in the tabernacle of the Lord, and was meant to rest in the most sacred place—the holy of holies. It was to be visited once a year by the high priest after he was sanctified by careful cleansings. From the mercy seat on top of the ark, God spoke to him.

In that time of the law, the ark was a vital connection between man and God. It was a symbol of the presence of God. It was a type of the closest union of God and man, which now we have in the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Israel needed the ark. God met them there.

David gathered all Israel together—representatives from all the people. **From Shihor to Hemath**—extreme south to extreme north. This large undertaking involved serious attention of all the nation.

God's Way Not Man's Way

1 Chronicles 13:7-10 The important task was carefully planned. It must be done in the best way. (God's plan for moving the ark was given in **Exodus 25:10-16**.) They provided a **new cart** never before used. Uzza and Ahio drove the oxen. Organized musicians brought music with instruments and singing in which all joined, including King David. They praised God as they went to Abinadab's house, placed the ark on the cart, and started back to Jerusalem. Joy and enthusiasm ran high as they **played before God with all their might**.

Then—the **oxen stumbled**, the cart shook, and the ark tipped dangerously. Uzza naturally reached to steady the ark. Immediately, God struck him dead in anger. Why? (Read **Numbers 4:15, 19, 20**.) To touch God's ark today, except in accordance with His instruction, brings spiritual death. God will not tolerate new, modern ways that men choose to carry His ark. He counsels us to stay in the old paths (**Jeremiah 6:16**).

Sincerity Not Enough

David and his people were reverent and sincere in moving the ark. It was a self-planned, natural, human reverence. It seemed good, but it was disobedient to God's plan. God had not asked for a new cart. The Philistines had done well in moving the ark without fear, but the Philistines did not have the Word of God.

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David did, and could have looked into it. We, too, have it. We must measure our worship by it. We read that we must worship Him in spirit and in truth in **John 4:23**. Worship is the pouring out of the heart to God. We have not worshiped by merely attending a church service. Quietness, soft lights, music, and stained glass windows are not worship. These are outside of us. Worship is not in programs, forms, knowledgeable language, trained skills, or bowed heads and bent knees. These also are on the outside. A worshiping heart is a true, obedient heart.

David's Plan Deferred

1 Chronicles 13:11-14 David was displeased. Noting David's reverence at other times, we conclude that his displeasure was not with God, but with the death of Uzza. He was troubled. **David was afraid of God**—a right fear. **How shall I bring the ark . . . ?** So he began to search for the reason of Uzza's death and for the correct way to bring the ark—a very wise consideration on his part. He left the ark at Obededom's house while he searched for God's blessing. **The Lord blessed the house of Obededom.** God had not changed His purpose to bless through the ark. It would have been much better if David had sought God's pleasure in the beginning.

David Feared God

It was right for David to feel this way. A man had died while doing what he thought had God's blessing. Why? God did this to put fear into the hearts of these men. How does this compare today to men who claim to be preaching "thus saith the Lord," but yet we see folks dying spiritually all around them? What end did this act of God serve? In the next lesson we shall see how it served David.

JUST A THOUGHT

The most important piece of furniture for the home is the family altar.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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