



FEED MY SHEEP

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Issue #81

August 2005

Respect the Ark!

Previously, we were discussing the big parade—the solemn, yet very joyful and exuberant procession to bring the Ark of the Covenant up to Jerusalem. It was, in fact, very much a worship service. We devoted much of last issue to an examination of the musical instruments used in David’s worship service and compared that to how the church universal and its various denominations over the centuries have restricted the music in worship services.

One conclusion we arrived at was that it is likely that David was using the ancient forerunner of the modern guitar, and so I stated that I personally do not have a problem with any stringed instruments in our worship services today. After all, it is not the instrument, but the *type* of music played upon it which is either pleasing or displeasing to the Father. Or is it? In view of what happens next, one might question whether or not all these musical instruments were actually pleasing to God. We pick up the story as the procession of the Ark continues towards Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 6: 6 And when they came to Nachon’s threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*.

7 And the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his error* [margin: irreverence]; and there he died by the ark of God.

Was God angry because He did not like the musical instruments? Actually, no. Verse 7 removes any question about the propriety of the musical instruments. Uzzah’s being killed had nothing whatsoever to do with

the musical instruments used in the worship celebration. It was because of his error in touching the ark. And even though the marginal reference says it was Uzzah’s “irreverence,” we prefer “error,” and we will show why shortly. First, notice the slight difference in the account of the same event as given in Chronicles.

1 Chronicles 13: 9 And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled.

Oh, no, not another discrepancy! First, it was Nachon’s threshingfloor, now elsewhere the Scripture tells us it was the threshingfloor of Chidon. What kind of games is the Father playing here? Well, as usual, the apparent contradictions are not really contradictions at all when we “study to show ourselves approved.” I think our Father puts them in there to force us to look deeper, and when we do, we are often rewarded with some new gem of a discovery. We will search for the deeper meaning in a moment.

10 And the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.

There we have it again: It wasn’t the guitars and tambourines that were the problem, it was because Uzzah put his hand to the Ark!

2 Samuel 6: 8 And David was displeased, because Yahweh had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah to this day.

9 And David was afraid of Yahweh that day,

and said, How shall the ark of Yahweh come to me?

10 So David would not remove the ark of Yahweh unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obedom the Gittite.

Let's stop here now and examine the situation. David was upset because God had made a breach upon Uzzah. What is a breach? It is a "rupture, a break, a gap, an opening, [it is] the space between the severed parts of a solid body parted by violence..." So whatever happened to poor Uzzah, there was some kind of opening or break or severing that happened to his body.

Verse 8 states that David was upset because of the breach upon Uzzah. Upon first reading, I assumed that David was upset with God. But as I pondered it in the total context (which we do not have the space to include), I believe he was upset with himself. It is a parallel to the story of the priests of Nob, where David saw that it was *his* action that eventuated in Doeg the Edomite's slaughter of the 85 priests of Nob (Tape/CD #396 *Saul's Hatchet Man*, \$6 ppd.) David blamed himself for that tragedy.

The same thing is happening here. Uzzah is slain. So David basically stops the procession in its tracks. They are practically in the driveway of Mr. Obedom's property, so David gets permission to park the cart with the Ark there for the time being. David needs to stop and ponder *why* this tragedy occurred. It says David was fearful of Yahweh. Why? He was afraid that if they continued the procession, God might smite somebody else. Until he figured out what went wrong, he plans to leave the Ark on the cart right there at Obedom's house. So what did go wrong?

Sooner or later, David was reminded of the laws of the holy things. Back in the books of the law, when God was instructing Moses and he in turn instructed the people on how to build the Tabernacle and all its accoutrements, and how to transport these items, the following were part of the regulations.

Numbers 4:1 And YHWH spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

4 This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things:

5 And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it:

6 And shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over *it* a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof

And then it continues with the regulations concerning the other pieces of furniture, and we pick up again in verse 15...

Numbers 4:15 And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These *things are* the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.

We need to notice several things here. First, all the work for the service of the Tabernacle is being done by the tribe of Levi. But within the Levites there were two main classes: the priests and the non-priests. It was the job of the priests to actually dismantle the Holy of Holies and cover the Ark. The priests even inserted the carrying poles into the rings at the corners of the Ark. Only then were the Kohathites, the sons of Kohath, to come forward and pick up the Ark and move forward with the camp of Israel.

Notice that the sons of Kohath who carried the Ark were Levites but they were not priests! And how did they carry the Ark? They never touched the Ark itself, did they? They bore the Ark upon their shoulders by means of the carrying poles. In the antitype of course, we taught years ago in our series on the Tabernacle in the Wilderness that since our bodies correspond to the Tabernacle, then where is the Ark that we bear on our shoulders? It's this member called our head. But don't forget that the Ark really has a triple meaning. Like Noah's triple-decker Ark, there are three levels here also.

1. Upstairs, there is the mind-brain communications center.
2. Downstairs, there is the womb and procreation workshop, and
3. On the mezzanine floor, there is the heart department. The Ark is all three locations.

So now after rehearsing the law of the Lord, David realizes that Uzzah got zapped because a) he was not a Levite and b) because even the Levites were not to touch the Ark on pain of death. Does this mean that the Levite *priests* could touch the Ark? I don't think so. Once it was built, I don't think anyone touched it, with the rare exception of the High Priest, and only that on very specific instructions given at the moment by Yahweh speaking from above the Ark itself. The only occasion I can think of when the High Priest would have needed to touch the Ark was when Aaron's rod, the pot of manna and the two stone testaments were placed inside.

I have said this before, back in our studies of the Tabernacle, that I believe the Ark fits all the requirements to be a very high-powered electrical condenser or capacitor. In other words, it held a very high-voltage electrical charge, and if someone touched it who was not properly grounded, he would be electrocuted. My personal opinion is that this is what happened to Uzzah.

When I was in the Air Force, I was an AC & W radar repair technician. AC & W stood for Aircraft Control and Warning radar. These were not the relatively small radar sets whose antennas you see around airports. These were the radar sites that ringed the continental United States to protect the borders. These were huge and it took a lot of juice to power these radar sets.

In tech school, we were given regulations on how to dismantle parts of the radar and repair them, just as Moses and Aaron were given regulations concerning the Ark. We were trained to always remove all jewelry, watches, rings—anything metal from our body whenever we were going to be working where the juice was on.

In some cases, it is dangerous to work on a piece of equipment even when it is not plugged in. For example, and I haven't kept up with it, but years ago it used to be that there was a place near the back of the picture tube in a color TV set, which if you touched it, you would get zapped with 25 thousand volts. (Black and white sets carried 10k volts.) It doesn't matter if the TV is plugged in or not. The charge is stored there. And it is very dangerous. If you touch it, it will discharge through your body and could easily kill you.

We notice in Numbers 4, verse 6, that they cov-

ered the Ark with what it calls badgers' skins. Other translations may say porpoise skin or sea cow skins or something else, the point is that it was a heavy, leather-type of material. As it happens, leather is a good insulator of electricity. Therefore, the covering of the Ark with these skins also served to help prevent accidental electrocution.

In the story of Uzzah, however, there is no indication that the Ark was covered in any way. The poor chap got electrocuted. I recall reading somewhere that an electrical engineer has estimated that the Ark would pack a charge of somewhere near 100,000 volts. Yes, I know, it's the current that kills you, but we don't want to get overly technical here.

Let me assure you, my dear readers, when you get hit with a discharge of electricity that big, that wherever Uzzah made contact with the Ark, the discharge of (presumably) direct current would, number one, open a hole (in other words, a breach) in his body; and secondly, it would literally throw him off his feet for some distance. Moreover, the discharge might even look like a mini-bolt of lightning. With that information, we can now go back to this supposed discrepancy between the names of the threshing floor.

Some lexicons give the definition "prepared" for the meaning of *Nachon*, but other Bible helps books tell us that the Hebrew phrase *Goren nachon* means the "threshing floor of the stroke." Uzzah certainly got struck. He probably never knew what hit him. The other word, *Chidon* means "javelin." Does not a mini-lightning bolt resemble some kind of javelin? Another meaning offered for the phrase *goren chidon* is "threshing floor of destruction."

So while it is possible that there was a man who had two names, *Nachon* and *Chidon*, who owned the threshing floor, I tend to think these were descriptions of the place given by the people after the event. As we saw, David himself gave it the name *Perezuzzah*, which means "the breach of Uzzah."

Alright, so we know that the "tech manual" for the Ark prescribed that the sons of Kohath not touch it or else they will be killed. But there was something else that was done wrong in the transport of the Ark. What was it? Ah yes, they had it on a cart instead of upon the shoulders of the Levites. Where did they ever come up with the hair-brained idea of putting it on a cart? ...From the heathen, of course! It goes back to

the time before Saul, even before Samuel's prophetic-judge ministry. Here's the background.

It was at the time when Eli was the High Priest in Israel. Eli was a descendant of Aaron through Ithamar, and he combined the offices of judge and high priest. He presided over the services for the Tabernacle, which was then located in Shiloh. The Israelites went to war with the Philistines. Israel lost 4,000 men and so they decided they ought to have the Ark of the Covenant go out with them to the battle.

Eli let his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, go with the Ark into the next battle. Now, the Israelites had this prayer that they prayed whenever they carried the ark into battle. They had used it ever since the wilderness when Moses first prayed it. It is in

Numbers 10:35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, YHWH, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

Well, in 1 Samuel 4:10 we learn that the Philistines slew 30,000 Israelites and the rest were scattered to their own tents. You see, the wording is very precise in the prayer. It was a prayer that God would scatter His enemies; it didn't say: let our enemies be scattered. And since Israel under Eli and his sons had greatly fallen away from God's laws, well, God's enemies at that time were His own Israel people.

Let's put Israel's loss in context of today, shall we? How many people were killed on 9-11? About 3,000, right? Ancient Israel lost ten times that many in this one battle. Now only did they lose all those men, but verse 11 tells us that Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed, and...the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant.

The first question that might come to mind is why didn't the Philistines get zapped when they touched the Ark. Well, since we are talking about the Almighty Creator of the universe here, I can't be sure about this (chuckle), so I'm just guessing that Yahweh knew where the "off" switch was and how to discharge the voltage. You see, he had another plan for the Philistines.

God apparently has different ways of dealing with different peoples. We'll come back to that in a moment, but to continue chronologically with the

story...when the messenger came back to Shiloh and told old Eli that his sons were dead and the Ark was captured, Eli fell over backwards, broke his neck and died. Eli was a type of the Pentecost church (not the denomination but the church in the Pentecost age—the non-overcomer church). Eli was 98 years old. $98 = 2 \times 49$. He had completed the second stage (Pentecost) of three Jubilee periods. Furthermore, Eli was blind and he was very fat and heavy—a perfect picture of what the church has become. When we began this series, we noted that Saul was a type of the Pentecost church because we always found him associated with wheat and asses, which are symbols of Pentecost. (See Steve Jones' book, *The Wheat and Asses of Pentecost*. \$5 ppd.)

When Eli fell backwards and broke his neck and died, it was in keeping with the law in Exodus 13:13 which states that unless an ass is redeemed by a sacrificial lamb, that the ass must have its neck broken. The Ark had been captured by the Philistines. The Ark symbolizes Jesus Christ, the Lamb. Since the Ark-Lamb was not present to redeem him, Eli, the ass-type of Pentecost, had his neck broken.

Did you know that there are only two places in the Bible where the words "fell" and "backward" are in the same sentence? Eli's death was one. The other is in John 18:5 & 6 where Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane and the bad guys—Judas *et al.* are coming for him. Jesus says: who are you looking for?

John 18:5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

When Jesus declared Himself as the great "I AM," the men were flattened. But none of them broke their necks! Why? Because Jesus, the Ark, the Lamb, was present. Thus they were redeemed from having their necks broken. Isn't that marvelous?!

(To be continued.)

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