

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 6

In this chapter we are told that David fetched the ark from Baale of Judah, with an intent to bring it to his own city, (^{<1061>}2 Samuel 6:1-5); but Uzzah being smitten for his error concerning it, David was displeased, and left it at the house of Obededom, where it remained three months, and proved a blessing to his house, (^{<1066>}2 Samuel 6:6-11); which David hearing of, went and brought it from thence with great expressions of joy before it as it came along, and offered offerings to the Lord at the setting it in its place, and gave gifts to the people, (^{<1062>}2 Samuel 6:12-19); but Michal his wife was displeased with some of his gestures on that occasion, which made some difference between them, and which, on Michal's part, was resented by the Lord himself; for she became barren for it to the time of her death, (^{<1065>}2 Samuel 6:20-23).

Ver. 1. *Again, David gathered together all [the] chosen [men] of Israel, thirty thousand.*] Which was done by the advice of his officers, (^{<1331>}1 Chronicles 13:1); the word “again” refers either to the gathering of them when they made him king in Hebron, as the Jewish writers generally observe; but then they gathered themselves, and not David: or rather to his gathering them to fight the Philistines a little while ago; and as they were the choice and young men that were gathered for war, as being the fittest, so now to fetch up the ark with dancing and singing, and to protect it; the Septuagint version says they were about seventy thousand; but the Targum, Syriac, and Arabic versions, have thirty thousand, agreeably to the Hebrew text.

Ver. 2. *And David arose, and went with all the people that [were] with him, etc.*] The thirty thousand chosen men gathered together, and as many else as chose to go:

from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God; that is, they first went to this place, as in (^{<1336>}1 Chronicles 13:6); in order to fetch the ark from thence, as here expressed, and then they came from thence with it; this place is the same that is called Baalah and Kirjathbaal, a city in the

tribe of Judah; hence Judah is added to it, and the same with Kirjathjearim, (^{<0650>}Joshua 15:9,60); the place where it was brought to when fetched from Bethshemesh, (^{<0900>}1 Samuel 7:1); and had been here now near fifty years; nor was it any where else during this time, only once at Gibeah of Saul with him, (^{<0448>}1 Samuel 14:18);

whose name he called by the name of the Lord of hosts, that dwelleth [between] the cherubim; not the ark, but the Lord, whose is the ark; his name is called by the name of Jehovah, the infinite, incomprehensible, eternal, and immutable Being, the Lord of armies above and below; whose habitation was between the cherubim that overshadowed the mercy seat, which was above the ark; all this is said, not only to express the greatness and majesty of God, but for the honour of the ark, which belonged to him.

Ver. 3. *And they set the ark of God upon a new cart*, etc.] Which was a great mistake, since it ought not to have been put upon a cart, old or new; it was to be borne upon men's shoulders, and carried by Levites only, and those of the family of Kohath, to whom no wagons were given, when others had them, for the above reason, (^{<0409>}Numbers 7:9); it is strange that so many priests and Levites, and of the people of Israel gathered together on that account, and David also, so well versed in the law of God, should not refer to it; perhaps they were led by the example of the Philistines, who put it in a new cart, and set it forward towards Bethshemesh, and were not punished for it; but it should have been considered they were an ignorant Heathen people, and who had no proper persons among them to bear it, and so might be dispensed with. This mistake was afterwards seen by David, and rectified, (^{<1350>}1 Chronicles 15:2); wherefore there is no reason to charge the text with an error or escape, and that the word "Kirjathjearim" is wanting, and to be supplied, as Spinos^{f105} suggests:

and brought it out, or "after they had brought it out"^{f106},

of the house of Abinadab that [was] in Gibeah; or which was on the hill in Kirjathjearim, (^{<0900>}1 Samuel 7:1);

and Uzzah and Ahio the sons of Abinadab drew the new cart; perhaps not only Abinadab himself was dead, but Eleazar also, his eldest son, who was sanctified to keep the ark, as in (^{<0900>}1 Samuel 7:1); and these might be his younger sons who at this time had the care of it, and it may be especially Uzzah.

Ver. 4. *And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which [was] at Gibeah,* etc.] That is, the new cart, which is the last thing spoken of, (^{<408B>}2 Samuel 6:3); and the bringing of the ark out of his house is mentioned before; though some take this to be the coffer in which were the presents of the Philistines, which was now brought out along with the ark, (see ^{<408B>}1 Samuel 6:8);

accompanying the ark of God; or “with the ark of God”^{f107}; that is, they brought the new cart “from” the house of Abinadab on the hill, with the ark of God upon it:

and Ahio went before the ark; guiding the oxen that drew it, and Uzzah might go behind, or on one side, to take care that the ark fell not out of it.

Ver. 5. *And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord,* etc.] That is, before the ark, which was a symbol of the presence of the Lord:

on all manner of [instruments made of] fir wood: which is a general expression, the particulars follow; though instruments of different sorts are mentioned, and even some of metal, as cymbals, which were vessels of brass, they struck one against another, and gave a very acute sound, being hollow^{f108};

even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals; harps, psalteries, and timbrels, are frequently met with; cornets, according to Kimchi, are such sort of instruments, that in playing upon them it required an agitation of the whole body. Now it was that David penned the sixty eighth psalm, which begins, “let God arise”, etc. (^{<490L>}Psalm 68:1-35), words used by Moses when the ark set forward, (^{<400B>}Numbers 10:35).

Ver. 6. *And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor,* etc.] Who is called Chidon, (^{<433D>}1 Chronicles 13:9); he seems to have had two names; or it was a place that had two names, as say the Jews^{f109}; according to a tradition of theirs^{f110}, Chidon is the name of the place where it was said to Joshua, stretch out the spear or shield in thine hand towards Ai, (^{<408B>}Joshua 8:18); so indeed the word signifies, nor was it unusual to stretch out the shield as a signal on occasion. Thus Aeneas lifted up his shield in his left hand, as a token to his Trojans that he was come to relieve them^{f111}: where this threshingfloor was is not said; some say^{f112} it was the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite; it could not be far from Jerusalem, since Baalejudah

or Kirjathjearim was but about a mile from it, according to Bunting^{f113}, from whence they fetched the ark:

Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; to keep it from falling: the reason was,

for the oxen shook [it]; the same word is used in (~~1~~1 Chronicles 13:9); and there it is rendered, “for the oxen stumbled”; and by their stumbling the cart was shaken, and the ark in it, and in danger of falling, as Uzzah thought: or “the oxen shook”, for the word “it” is a supplement; they shook as if their members were plucking asunder and parting, as Kimchi expresses it, because of the holiness of the ark; as if they were sensible it was wrong for them to draw it, when it ought to have been carried on the shoulders of Levites; and by this way, as well as by the death of Uzzah the error committed was pointed out: but others render it, “for the oxen stuck in the clay”^{f114}, and could not go on; which Uzzah observing, and fearing that in their struggle to get out the cart should be overturned, or that the procession would be retarded too much, took hold of the ark to take it out, and carry it the remainder of the way, it not being far from Jerusalem.

Ver. 7. *And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah,* etc.] And which was manifest by smiting him:

and God smote him there for [his] error; committed at this time, which was complicated; as that the ark was put upon a cart, to which he might be the chief adviser, as Procopius Gazaeus notes, when it should have been carried on the shoulders of the Levites; and that he touched it with his hand, which none but priests might do, supposing him to be a Levite, which it is not clear he was, however not a Kohathite; and he took hold of it in order to carry it in his arms, which even Levites, and those Kohathites, might not do, but with staves put into it, which only they were to hold; and besides, as Abarbinel observes, he showed little faith in the power and providence of God, as if he could not take care of the ark without him:

and there he died by the ark of God; directly, upon the spot, by the side of it; whether he was struck by lightning, or in what way, cannot be said; however, he died by the immediate hand of God, in token of his displeasure: and this shows that it is dangerous in matters of worship to act contrary to the command of God, even in things that may seem small and trivial; and though what may be done may be done with a good intention, as this was, yet that will not excuse the sin; nor are those who are the most

forward and zealous in religious matters exempted from marks of God's displeasure when they go wrong.

Ver. 8. *And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah,* etc.] He could not easily submit, and be reconciled to the providence; his heart was ready to rise up against God, and murmur at him for striking him dead in such an awful manner, for so small a matter as this might seem to be; and the rather, as this put a stop to the procession, and cast a damp upon their joy and mirth on this occasion, and might seem to be an ill omen to David, and be improved by his enemies against him:

and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah unto this day; the name he gave the place, which signifies "the breach of Uzzah", continued to the time of writing this book.

Ver. 9. *And David was afraid of the Lord that day,* etc.] Lest he should be smitten for his error also, and especially as he had discovered some resentment at the Lord's dealing with Uzzah; when he ought to have been still and quiet, and submitted to the will of God, and owned his justice in it, confessed his own error, and been thankful for his sparing mercy vouchsafed to him:

and said, how shall the ark of the Lord come to me? the meaning of which is not, how it should be brought to the place provided by him in Jerusalem, now Uzzah was dead, for there were Levites enough to carry it, as they afterwards did; but as signifying that it would be either boldness and presumption in him to do it, since God had shown such a mark of his displeasure at their proceeding, that he might be in doubt whether it was the will of God it should come to him; or as fearing it would be dangerous to him to have it with him, since he might be guilty of such an error, of the same, or like it, that had been committed.

Ver. 10. *So David would not remove the ark of the Lord unto him into the city of David,* etc.] As yet, but wait a little longer, until he had more thoroughly considered of it, and made himself acquainted with everything relative to the ark, that he might know how to behave for the future, without giving offence:

but David carried it aside into the house of Obedom the Gittite; which was close by, on one side of the place where they were; this man was a Levite, as appears from his being afterwards appointed to be doorkeeper for the ark, and to sing praise before it, and so a proper person to commit

the care of it to, (~~1318~~1 Chronicles 15:18,21,24 16:5,6); he is called a Gittite, either because he had sojourned in Gath some time, or rather because he was of Gathrimmon, a city of the Levites, (~~1624~~Joshua 21:24).

Ver. 11. *And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obededom the Gittite three months*, etc.] David, and those with him, returned to their habitations, where they continued during this time:

and the Lord blessed Obededom, and all his household; him, and all his family, with spiritual blessings, and with an affluence of temporal good things; for godliness has the promise of this life, and of that which is to come; men are not losers but gainers, even in things temporal, for their attachment to the cause of religion, and the service of God, and their regard to that in their own houses, as well as in the house of God. Josephus^{f115} says, that Obededom was very poor before, and in a low condition, out of which he soon emerged, and came into affluent circumstances, so as to be taken notice of by his neighbours, and reported abroad; by which means David came to the hearing of it, as follows.

Ver. 12. *And it was told King David*, etc.] By some of his courtiers who had heard of it:

saying, the Lord hath blessed the house of Obededom, and all that [pertaineth] unto him, because of the ark of the Lord; it was so suddenly, in so short a time, and so largely, that it could not escape the notice and observation of men that knew him; and this increase was not in any natural way by which it could be accounted for; so that it could be ascribed to no other cause but the blessing of God, and that on account of the ark of God that was with him; nothing else could be thought of:

so David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obededom into the city of David with gladness: being animated and encouraged by the blessing of God on the house of Obededom, because of it, and thereby freed from those slavish fears he was before possessed of, and filled with hopes of being blessed also on account of it; if not with temporal blessings, he needed not, yet with spiritual ones.

Ver. 13. *And it was [so], that when they that bare the ark of the Lord*, etc.] The Levites; for now David had seen the former mistake, and rectified it, and ordered the Levites to “carry” it, as they did upon their shoulders, with the staves therein, (see ~~1351D~~1 Chronicles 15:2,12-15); when these

had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings; upon an altar, which was at once erected for that purpose; the number and kind of sacrifices offered were seven bullocks and seven rams, (^{<1315>}1 Chronicles 15:26); and these David offered, not by himself, but by the priests that were with him, and that as soon as they had gone six paces from the house of Obededom; whereby they perceived the Levites, were able to carry the ark, with what was in it, the Lord helping them, as in (^{<1315>}1 Chronicles 15:2,15), and without stumbling and falling, or any evil attending them; and Kimchi thinks these six paces were just the measure of the ground Uzzah went before what befell him; but it is highly probable that he had gone further; however, no doubt by the order of David, the Levites set down the ark, and sacrifices were offered by way of thanksgiving to God, and for the continuance of his goodness, and for atonement for former errors. Some think these seven oxen and rams were offered, at seven different times and places, at every six paces an ox and a ram; but this is not very likely.

Ver. 14. *And David danced before the Lord with all [his] might*, etc.]

That is, before the ark of the Lord; not a set dance, or along with others; but he leaped and skipped as “car”, a lamb, does, and that for joy that the ark was like to be brought home to his house, without any token of the divine displeasure, as before; the Targum is,

“he praised before the Lord with all his might;”

exerted himself to the uttermost in singing the praises of God vocally, or by playing on an instrument; to which sense are the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, which is approved of by Castel^{f116}; who observes, it nowhere appears to have been a custom to dance before the ark; but it might be now done, though not usual, and therefore was observed by Michal with contempt, (^{<1016>}2 Samuel 6:16); a later writer^{f117} shows that dancing is the proper sense of the word:

and David [was] girded with a linen ephod; which others, besides priests, sometimes wore, as Samuel did, and which David might choose to appear in, rather than in his royal robes, as being more agreeable to the service of God, and lighter for him both to walk and dance in on this occasion.

Ver. 15. *So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord*, etc.] The elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, (^{<1315>}1 Chronicles 15:25); besides the common people; there might be as large a number with him now as before:

with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet; with the shouts of the people in common, and with blowing of trumpets by those who were appointed for that purpose, and with other instruments of music, (see ^{<13157>}1 Chronicles 15:27,28); Josephus says ^{f118}, that seven choirs went before the priests bearing the ark, as the king commanded, he himself playing on the harp; so the Septuagint version.

Ver. 16. *And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David*, etc.] Being brought thither on the shoulders of the Levites:

Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window; in the king's palace, to see the procession, which was very grand, and in great pomp, attended by a vast number of people, and with music of all sorts. She is said to be Saul's daughter, though David's wife, as having a good deal of her father's haughty temper and disposition, as appears by what follows:

and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; the ark of the Lord, by these outward gestures expressing the inward joy of his heart on this occasion;

and she despised him in her heart; as acting a mean part, quite beneath himself, and unbecoming his royal dignity.

Ver. 17. *And they brought in the ark of the Lord*, etc.] Into the city of David, the strong hold of Zion:

and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: or "stretched out"; for this was not the tabernacle of Moses, David pitched any where; that was at this time at Gibeon, where it continued to the time of Solomon, (^{<13229>}1 Chronicles 21:29 ^{<14008>}2 Chronicles 1:3,4); but this was a curtain, or curtains, which he had stretched out or drawn around for the ark to be pitched in the midst of; and this was not in his own house, for he is afterwards said to go to that, but somewhere in Jerusalem or the city of David:

and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord; that is, before the ark, and that by way of thanksgiving for its being brought safe thither, without any error or mistake on the side of him, the Levites, and the people, and without offence to God, and any mark of his displeasure as before. This must be supposed to be done by priests, and not by David himself, who was no priest.

Ver. 18. *And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, etc.]* Or these were performed according to his order:

he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts; not as a priest, but as a prince, as the common father of them, wishing them all happiness and prosperity outward and inward, praying to God to bless them with all blessings temporal and spiritual, who is the God of armies above and below, and can do what he pleases, and more than his people can ask or think.

Ver. 19. *And he dealt among all the people, etc.]* Gave a dole unto them, divided among them:

[even] among the whole multitude of Israel: and if there were so many as at first, there were thirty thousand of them, (~~2~~¹⁰⁰ 2 Samuel 6:1); and perhaps more, since it follows:

as well to the women as men; to both the one and the other; and the women, it is very probable, were not among those that went to fetch the ark, but assembled to attend the entrance of it into the city, and were present at the solemnities of its settlement:

to everyone a cake of bread; or a loaf of bread, of what quantity is not said, no doubt sufficient for anyone person, or more:

and a good piece [of flesh]: not only that was good in quality, but large in quantity, a very large piece of it; the Jews say ^{f119} the sixth part of a bullock, they dividing it into six parts as we into four quarters; but it is not likely that such a quantity of flesh should be given to each person;

and a flagon [of wine]; but what such a vessel held cannot be said, though at least we may suppose it equal to a bottle of ours, or more; (see ~~2~~¹⁰⁰ Song of Solomon 2:5 ~~3~~¹⁰⁰ Hosea 3:1);

so all the people departed everyone to his house; to refresh themselves with the provisions David had given them.

Ver. 20. *Then David returned to bless his household, etc.]* His wife, children, and servants, to wish all happiness to them on this occasion, and pray to God for blessings on them temporal and spiritual. This was done when he came from the place where the ark was set, and was come to his own palace:

and Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David; before he had gotten quite to his own house:

and said, how glorious was the king of Israel today; which she spoke in an ironical jeering way, meaning the reverse, how inglorious, mean, and despicable he had made himself to be, by his airs and gestures:

who uncovered himself today in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! because he had put off his royal robes, and put on a linen ephod; for that he had stripped himself naked cannot be supposed, nor do her words import so much though a passionate exaggeration of the case.

Ver. 21. *And David said unto Michal, [it was] before the Lord,* etc.]

Before the ark of the Lord, what was done was done there; she upbraided him with his dancing and singing, which was designed for the honour and glory of God, and in thankfulness to him for the bringing the ark to his city, and therefore she ought not to have reproached him with it, and he adds,

which chose me before thy father, and before all his house; (see ¹Samuel 13:14); which he observed to humble her pride, and mortify her, as well as to remark the distinguishing goodness of God to him, which laid him under obligation to express his thankfulness to him in every shape:

to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel; which was a high honour conferred upon him, and required the utmost gratitude:

therefore will I play before the Lord; upon the harp, or praise before him, as the Targum, sing his praise before the ark, unto any instrument of music, without once imagining I disgrace myself, on the contrary think it to be the highest honour to me to be employed in such service.

Ver. 22. *And I will yet be more vile than thus,* etc.] If this is to be vile, I will endeavour to be viler still; if to dance before the ark, and sing the praises of God, be reckoned a lessening of me, I will more and more be found in doing such things, or what is similar to them:

and will be base in mine own sight: humble himself, and lie low in his own eyes, admiring the grace and goodness of God to him, thinking he could never condescend too low to exalt the Lord, and magnify the riches of his goodness:

and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour; who the more humble I am, and the more I condescend, by laying aside all state in acts of devotion and religion, the more shall I be honoured and spoken well of by them.

Ver. 23. *Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child until the day of her death.*] The children she brought up for Adriel were not her own, but adopted ones, or Adriel's by another woman, (~~1218~~2 Samuel 21:8); however, she had none after this time, whatever she had before, and it does not appear that she had any, though the Jews say she was Eglah, and Ithream her son, (see Gill on "~~1018~~2 Samuel 3:5"). And thus she that vilified David brought a reproach upon herself, as barrenness was always reckoned, and no one descending from her arrived to royal dignity, and sat on the throne of David; and so it was ordered in Providence, as Abarbinel observes, that the seed of David and of Saul might not be mixed.