

1 **HANDS OFF!**

2 Samuel 6

2 **WARRIORS & POETS**

- An expositional study through the lives of the three kings of Israel's united kingdom period: Saul, David, and Solomon.
- After 40 years' rule, Saul is killed by the Philistines. David is crowned king of Judah.
- After another 7 years of civil war and disunity, the entire kingdom of Israel is finally united under David in 1002 BC.

3 **BAAL-PERAZIM**

- After David is finally crowned king of all twelve tribes of Israel, the Philistines realize the threat presented by an Israel united under David. They invade Israel at the Valley of Rephaim – twice.
- In each invasion, David seeks the Lord's blessing and will concerning the battle. In each invasion, David successfully routes the Philistine armies.
- In the first of these – the Battle of Baal-Perazim – David's destruction of the Philistine army is so complete that the Philistines do not even have time to gather up their idols.

4 **BAAL-PERAZIM**

- As it happens, this isn't the first time a battle between the Philistines and Israel has led to an object(s) of religious importance being capture.
- Last time, however, it was the Israelites who were defeated, at the battle of Aphek-Ebenezer, and the Ark of the Covenant which was taken.

5 **APHEK-EBENEZER**

- *And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. They encamped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines encamped at Aphek. The Philistines drew up in line against Israel, and when the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the field of battle. And when the people came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD here from Shiloh, that it may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies." (1 Samuel 4:1-3)*

6 **APHEK-EBENEZER**

- *As soon as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the earth resounded. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, "What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" And when they learned that the ark of the LORD had come to the camp, the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "A god has come into the camp." And they said, "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness.*

7 **APHEK-EBENEZER**

- *Take courage, and be men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you; be men and fight." So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot*

soldiers of Israel fell. And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died. (1 Samuel 4:5-11)

8 **KIRIATH-JEARIM**

- The Ark of God eventually makes its way back to Israel, via a number of events that in and of themselves make for a very interesting story.
- The Ark sojourned at Kiriath-jearim after the Philistines returned it, but it stayed there throughout all of the reign of Saul.
- But David is king now, and he finds himself in a very interesting position:

9 **KIRIATH-JEARIM**

- Kiriath-jearim was a city which lay between the territories of Benjamin and Judah – and, as it happens, right on the edge of Philistine territory.
- So the Philistines have already captured the Ark once. On top of that, it's now sitting directly adjacent to Philistine territory and the Israelites have very recently taken possession of a whole slew of Philistine gods.
- It is with this in mind that David musters the full fighting force of Israel to move the Ark to a safe place.

10 **BRINGING BACK THE ARK**

- *David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah [Kiriath-jearim] to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim. And they carried the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart, with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark. (2 Samuel 6:1-4)*

11 **CARRYING THE ARK**

- While the Ark is at Kiriath-jearim, it stays in the house of Abinadab, a Levite of the house of Kohath (the group of Levites that were responsible for carrying the Ark)
- David's method of returning the Ark is significant – as are the people who have been put in charge of the returning.
- According to the Mosaic Law, the Ark was to be transported in a very specific fashion: Carried on poles, by the Sons of Kohath.

12 **THE SONS OF KOHATH**

- *And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry these, but they must not touch the holy things, lest they die. These are the things of the tent of meeting that the sons of Kohath are to carry. (Numbers 4:15)*
- The Sons of Kohath, one of the families of Levites, were specifically entrusted with the carrying of the furnishing of the sanctuary – including the Ark – once they had been covered, on poles.

13 **NO WAGONS!**

- *On the day when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle and had anointed and consecrated it with all its furnishings and had anointed and consecrated the altar with all its*

utensils, the chiefs of Israel, heads of their fathers' houses, who were the chiefs of the tribes, who were over those who were listed, approached and brought their offerings before the LORD, six wagons and twelve oxen, a wagon for every two of the chiefs, and for each one an ox. They brought them before the tabernacle. Then the LORD said to Moses, (Numbers 7:1-4)

14 **NO WAGONS!**

- "Accept these from them, that they may be used in the service of the tent of meeting, and give them to the Levites, to each man according to his service." So Moses took the wagons and the oxen and gave them to the Levites. Two wagons and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service. And four wagons and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because they were charged with the service of the holy things that had to be carried on the shoulder. (Numbers 7:5-9)

15 **I WOULD NOT CARRY IT ON A CART**

- So the Ark was not only intended to be carried, but when carts were donated for the use of the priests and Levites, the priests and Levites who were charged with carrying the Ark were not allowed the use of the carts.
- Bottom line: The Ark is not to be put on a cart!
- So where did David get this idea? Probably the Philistines.

16 **WHOSE IDEA WAS THIS ANYWAY?**

- Things had not exactly gone well for the Philistines once they took possession of the Ark, back during the time of Samuel. So to get rid of it...
- *And they put the ark of the LORD on the cart and the box with the golden mice and the images of their tumors. And the cows went straight in the direction of Beth-shemesh along one highway, lowing as they went. They turned neither to the right nor to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh. (1 Samuel 6:11-12)*

17 **FAMILIARITY BREEDS...**

- All of this is to say that transporting the Ark via cart was expressly against the commands of God regarding how the Ark ought to have been carried, and in fact was an idea David probably picked up from the pagan Philistines.
- The fact that the Ark was being transported by the "sons of Abinadab" (of the Sons of Kohath) was no excuse. If anything, Ahio and Uzzah ought to have known better.
- As sons of Abinadab, the Ark (which had resided in the House of Abinadab for over 50 years now) would have been in the home as Uzzah and Ahio were growing up.

18 **UZZAH'S FATAL MOVE**

- *And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. (2 Samuel 6:5-7)*

19 **UZZAH'S ERROR**

- As the cart is going along, the oxen stumble, and Uzzah (one of the two priests in charge of

escorting the Ark) reaches out his hand to steady the Ark.

- Uzzah's act of sacrilege is so egregious that God strikes him dead there on the spot.
- And lest we think for a moment that Uzzah was guilty of a mere reflex or accident and that God is overreacting, we are told specifically why God punished Uzzah: for his *error*.

20 **UZZAH'S ERROR**

- "Error" – Means impudence, blasphemy, or irreverence.
- Just as God had already punished the Philistines and 70 of the men of Bethshemesh (2 Samuel 6:19), so too now He was punishing Uzzah for an act of great irreverence.

21 **UZZAH'S ERROR**

- Uzzah erred in thinking it didn't matter who carried the ark.
- Uzzah erred in thinking it didn't matter how the ark was carried.
- Uzzah erred in thinking he knew all about the ark because it was in his father's house for so long.
- Uzzah erred in thinking that the ground of Nachon's threshing floor was less holy than his own hand.

22 **UZZAH'S ERROR**

- Uzzah's sin was ultimately that of presumption: He was so familiar with the Ark as to have an incorrect view of the Ark, of God, and of his own importance in relation to them.
- This contempt eventually informed his actions, and God judged him for it.

23 **WHAT'S YOUR ERROR?**

- Where are you too comfortable, too familiar with God?
- In what area have you told yourself the rules just don't apply to you?
- Where is it you feel that God could use a steadying hand or a helpful shove in the right direction?