

# CHAPTER 13

In the foregoing chapter we have David made king, by which the civil government was happily settled. In this chapter care is taken about religion.

**I.** David consults with the representatives of the people about bringing up the ark out of its obscurity into a public place; and it is resolved on (v. 1-4).

**II.** With a great deal of solemnity and joy, it is carried from Kirjathjearim (v. 5-8).

**III.** Uzza is struck dead for touching it, which, for the present, spoils the solemnity and stops the proceedings (v. 9-14).

## 1 CHRONICLES 13:1-8

### THE REMOVAL OF THE ARK

Here is,

**I.** David's pious proposal to bring up the ark of God to Jerusalem, that the royal city might be the holy city, v. 1-3. This part of the story we had not in Samuel. We may observe in this proposal,

**1.** That as soon as David was well seated on his throne he had thoughts concerning the ark of God: *Let us bring the ark to us*, v. 3. Two things he aimed at herein: —

**(1.)** To do honour to God, by showing respect to his ark, the token of his presence. As soon as he had power in his hand he would use it for the advancement and encouragement of religion. Note, It ought to be the first and great care of those that are enriched and preferred to honour God with their honours, and to serve him, and the interests of his kingdom among men, with their wealth and power. David said not, “What pompous thing shall I do now?” or, “What pleasant thing?” but, “What pious thing?”

**(2.)** To have the comfort and benefit of that sacred oracle. “Let us bring it to us, not only that we may be a credit to it, but that it may be a blessing to

us.” Those that honour God profit themselves. Note, It is the wisdom of those who are setting out in the world to take God's ark with them, to make his oracles their counsellors and his laws their rule. Those are likely to proceed in the favour of God who thus begin in the fear of God.

**2.** That he consulted with the leaders of the people about it, v. 1. Though it was without doubt a very good work, and being king, he had the authority to command the doing of it, yet he chose rather to do it by consultation,

**(1.)** That he might show respect to the great men of the kingdom and put honour upon them. Though they made him king, yet he would not rule with a high hand. He did not say, “We will and command, and it is our royal pleasure, that you do so and so; and we will be obeyed,” but, “*If it seem good to you, and you think that the motion comes from the Lord our God, let us send out orders for this purpose.*” No prince that is wise will covet to be absolute. The people's allegiance is best secured by taking their concurrence in their representatives. Happy then art thou, O Britain!

**(2.)** That he might be advised by them in the manner of doing it, whether just now, whether publicly. David was a very intelligent man himself, and yet consulted with his captains; *for in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.* It is wisdom to make use of the wisdom of others.

**(3.)** That, they joining in it, it might pass the better for a national act and so might procure a national blessing.

**3.** That he would have all the people summoned to attend on this occasion, both for the honour of the ark and for the people's satisfaction and edification, v. 2. Observe,

**(1.)** He calls the common people *brethren*, which bespeaks his humility and condescension (notwithstanding his advancement), and the tender concern he had for them. Thus our Lord Jesus is not ashamed to call his people brethren, <sup><321></sup>Hebrews 2:11.

**(2.)** He speaks of the people as a remnant that had escaped: *Our brethren that are left in all the land of Israel.* They had been under scattering providences. Their wars with the Philistines, and with the house of Saul, had wasted the country and cut off many. We now hope to see an end of these troubles. Let those that are left be quickened by late judgments, and present mercies, to seek unto God.

**(3.)** He takes care that the priests and Levites especially should be summoned to attend the ark; for it was their province in a particular manner. Thus Christian magistrates should stir up ministers to do their duty when they see them remiss.

**4.** That all this is upon supposition that it is *of the Lord their God*. “Though it should *seem good to you* and me, yet if it be not *of the Lord our God*, we will not do it.” What ever we undertake, this must be our enquiry, “Is it of the Lord? Is it agreeable to his mind? Can we approve ourselves to him in it? May we expect that he will own us?”

**5.** That thus it was requisite they should amend what has been amiss in the last reign, and, as it were, atone for their neglect: “For *we enquired not at it in the days of Saul*, and this was the reason why things went so ill with us: let that original error be amended, and then we may hope to see our affairs in a better posture.” Observe, David makes no peevish reflections upon Saul. He does not say, “Saul never cared for the ark, at least in the latter end of this reign;” but, in general, *We enquired not at it*, making himself with others guilty of this neglect. It better becomes us to judge ourselves than others. Humble good men lament their own share in national guilt, and take shame to themselves, <sup><005></sup>Daniel 9:5, etc.

**II.** The people's ready agreement to this proposal (v. 4): *The thing was right in the eyes of all the people*. Nobody could say to the contrary, but that it was a very good work and very seasonable; so that it was resolved, *nemine contradicente* — *unanimously*, that they would do so. Those that prudently proposed a good work, and lead in it, will perhaps find a more ready concurrence in it than they expected. Great men know not what a great deal of good they are capable of doing by their influence on others.

**III.** The solemnity of bringing up the ark, v. 5, etc., which we read before, <sup><002></sup>2 Samuel 6:1, etc. Here therefore we shall only observe,

**1.** That it is worth while to travel far to attend the ark of God. They came out of all parts of the country, from the *river of Egypt*, the utmost part south, to the entering of Hemath, which lay furthest north, (v. 5), to grace this solemnity.

**2.** That we have reason greatly to rejoice in the revival of neglected ordinances and the return of the tokens of God's presence. When the light of religion shines out of obscurity, when it is openly and freely professed, is

brought into reputation, and countenanced by princes and great ones, it is such a happy omen to a people as is worthy to be welcomed with all possible expressions of joy.

**3.** When, after long disuse, ordinances come to be revived, it is too common for even wise and good men to make some mistakes. Who would have thought that David would commit such an error as this, to carry the ark upon a cart? v. 7. because the Philistines so carried it, and a special providence drove the cart (<sup><BIB></sup>1 Samuel 6:12), he thought they might do so too. But we must walk by rule, not by example when it varies from the rule, no, not even by those examples which Providence has owned.

## <BIB>1 CHRONICLES 13:9-14

### THE DEATH OF UZZA

This breach upon Uzza, which caused all the joy to cease, we had an account of, <sup><BIB></sup>2 Samuel 6:6, etc.

- 1.** Let the sin of Uzza warn us all to take heed of presumption, rashness, and irreverence, in dealing about holy things (v. 9), and not to think that a good intention will justify a bad action. In our communion with God we must carefully watch over our own hearts, lest familiarity breed contempt, and we think God is in any way beholden to us.
- 2.** Let the punishment of Uzza convince us that the God with whom we have to do is a jealous God. His death, like that of Nadab and Abihu, proclaims aloud that God will be *sanctified in those that come nigh unto him* (<sup><BIB></sup>Leviticus 10:3), and that the nearer any are to him the more displeased he is with their presumptions. Let us not dare to trifle with God in our approaches to him; and yet let us, through Christ, *come boldly to the throne of grace*; for we are under the dispensation of liberty and grace, not of bondage and terror.
- 3.** Let the damp this gave to the joy of Israel be a memorandum to us always to rejoice with trembling, and to *serve the Lord with fear*, even when we *serve him with gladness*.
- 4.** Let David's displeasure upon this occasion caution us to take heed to our spirits when we are under divine rebukes, lest, instead of submitting to

God, we quarrel with him. If God be angry with us, shall we dare to be angry with him?

**5.** Let the stop thus put to the solemnity caution us not to be driven off from our duty by those providences which are only intended to drive us from our sins. David should have gone on with the work notwithstanding the breach made upon Uzza; so might the breach have been made up.

**6.** Let the blessing which the ark brought with it to the house of Obededom encourage us to welcome God's ordinances into our houses, as those that believe the ark is a guest that nobody shall lose by; not let it be less precious to us for its being to some a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. If the gospel be to some a savour of death unto death, as the ark was to Uzza, yet let us receive it in the love of it and it will be to us a saviour of life unto life.