

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – September 11, 2022

Theme: Lessons from the life of David Topic: God's work; God's way

Main Texts: Exodus 25:10-15; 2 Samuel 6:1-23

Key verse: 2 Samuel 6:13 – *'And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fattened sheep.'* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: In one of the lowest periods in the history of the Israelites, the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant (1 Samuel 4:10-11). But God punished the Philistines harshly for desecrating the Ark. This forced the Philistines to return the Ark to Israel. And that is how the Ark ended up in the house of Abinadab, a priest, in Kiriath Jearim (1 Samuel 7:1). This happened over 20 years before Saul became king! (1 Samuel 7:1-2). What this means is that all through the 40 years of King Saul, the Ark was in Kiriath Jearim. And it must have weighed heavily on David's heart, considering his devotion and zeal for the name of the Lord. It is no wonder that upon his crowning as king over all Israel and Judah, bringing the Ark back to Jerusalem was top on David's priority. And that is what he proceeded to do with all seriousness. So, he mustered 30,000 of Israel's finest soldiers, to accompany him on this important mission. But something went wrong: Along the way, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah reached out his hand to keep the Ark of God from falling to the ground. Everyone must have been surprised when, God, in anger, struck Uzzah dead on the spot for touching the Ark (2 Samuel 6:7).

1. **Read Exodus 25:12-14; 2 Samuel 6:1-4 (a) Was bringing the Ark to Jerusalem a God-honoring thing, which God would have wanted done? (b) Based on your answer from (a) above, was God justified in striking Uzzah dead? Explain your answer. (c) What does this teach us about God, and about His work?**

Curiously, King David was not alone in the decision to bring back the Ark. In 1 Chronicles 13:2-3 (NLT), David approached all his officials, including the army generals and captains with the proposal: *"If you approve and if it is the will of the Lord our God, let us send messages to all the Israelites throughout the land, including the priests and Levites in their towns and pasturelands. Let us invite them to come and join us. It is time to bring back the Ark of our God, for we neglected it during the reign of Saul."* In addition to this wide consultation, Abinadab, in whose house the Ark had sat for over forty years was a priest. And by extension, his sons, Uzzah and Ahio. Yet, they all got it deathly wrong! It would seem like God's people had forgotten how to serve their God! Could more than 40 years of neglect have been responsible for this grave mistake?

2. **Read Deuteronomy 17:18-20; 1 Chronicles 13:1-2. (a) If blame were to be apportioned, whose fault was it that none remembered God's commandment regarding the handling of the Ark? (b) David consulted widely yet got it all wrong. What do you think happened? Considering David's antecedents during his days as a fugitive, what should he have done differently? (c) What similarities do you see in our times, in VFC and in our individual lives in how we go about the work of God?**

God gave the Philistines many troubles, until they came to their senses to return the Ark to Israel. They consulted their magicians who advised that the Ark should be put on a new cart hitched to two cows which had recently calved (1 Samuel 6:1-8). And that was how the Ark returned to Israel, first to Beth-Shemesh, and eventually to Abinadab in Kiriath-Jearim. Decades later, when the Ark needed to be transported to Jerusalem, David and all his men remembered how the Philistines did it! Notwithstanding all the animals David sacrificed before the Ark, God refused to condone their mimicry of the Philistine model. If transporting the Ark of God on a mule worked for the Philistines, it did not work for the Israelites! Sometimes, God's work can be reduced to what works or what has popular appeal.

3. **Read Leviticus 10:1-3; 2 Samuel 6:13; Romans 12:2. (a) All the oxen and fattened sheep King David sacrificed before God did not stop God from punishing Uzzah. What lessons might there be for us in how we go about doing God's work? (b) The Philistines did it and got away with it. But not Uzzah, not King David. What instruction can we take from this? (c) In which areas of Christian life and service do we copy the world around us, and what does God call us to do through this lesson?**

Prayer: *Lord, You have decreed that those who come near to You must honor You. May we be careful to honor You in our worship and service to You. In Christ's Name. Amen.*