

The Ideal United Kingdom (1 Chronicles 9:35 – 2 Chronicles 9:31)

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<p>David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem: Overview; and David's Failed Transfer of the Ark (1 Chronicles 13:1-14)</p>

Overview of 1 Chr 13:1-16:43

Having established how David rose to kingship with divine authorization and widespread support from the tribes of Israel, the Chronicler turned to David's transfer of the ark to Jerusalem. Although David performed many other acts according to this history, attending to the ark was the first important thing David did as Israel's king. It would be difficult to overemphasize the significance of this connection. The ark of the covenant was the centerpiece of Israel's temple and symbolized the footstool of her divine king (see 13:6; 28:2; Ps 99:5; 132:7). Jerusalem had already become the seat of the Davidic dynasty (see 11:4-9). At this stage in David's life it also became the city of divine enthronement (see *Introduction: 8) Divine Kingship*). By bringing the ark to his capital city, David moved his kingdom another step toward the Chronicler's ideal for his post-exilic readers, a kingdom in which Jerusalem's king and temple stood at the center of God's people (see *Introduction: 4-9) King and Temple*).

Comparison of 13:1-16:43 with 2 Samuel 5-6

The strategy of this section becomes clear from a broad comparison with 2 Samuel 5-6. More detailed comparisons will appear in the discussion of each section. Yet, significant rearrangements, additions, and omissions are evident from a largescale comparison (see figure 13).

1 Chr		2 Sam
13:1-14	Failed Transfer of Ark (parallel/displaced)	6:1-11
14:1-17	David's Distinguishing Blessings (parallel/displaced)	5:11-25
15:1-16:43	Successful Transfer of Ark (expanded)	6:12-20a
15:1-3	David and Israel Assemble (added)	-----
15:4-24	David instructs Levites and Priests (added)	-----
15:25-16:3	David Moves Ark (parallel)	6:12-19a
16:4-42	David Instructs Levites and Priests (added)	-----
16:43	David and Israel Dismiss (parallel)	6:19b-20a

Comparison of 1 Chr 13:1-16:43 with 2 Sam 5:11-6:20 (figure 13)

This large scale comparison reveals two major features. First, the material reverses the actual historical sequence of the first two segments. It depends on 2 Sam 6:1-11 (// 1 Chr 13:1-14) and then moves to the events recorded in 2 Sam 5:11-25 (// 1 Chr 14:1-17). As we will suggest, the effect of this temporal regression was to demonstrate why David's initial failure to transfer the ark (13:1-14) did not place him on par with Saul's failed dynasty (14:1-17).

Second, much of the record of David bringing the ark to Jerusalem was the Chronicler's composition (15:1-16:43). His lengthy expansion indicates a number of important elements in his unique outlook on the life of David.

Structure of 13:1-16:43

This record of the ark coming to Jerusalem divides into three parts (see figure 14).

- David's Failed Transfer of the Ark (13:1-14)
 - Preparations to Move the Ark to Jerusalem (13:1-4)
 - Moving in Celebration (13:5-8)
 - Divine Wrath against Uzzah (13:9-11)
 - Moving in Fear (13:12-13)
 - Ark Remains Outside of Jerusalem (13:14)

- David's Distinguishing Blessings (14:1-17)
 - David Acknowledged by Hiram (14:1-2)
 - Hiram Honors David (14:1)
 - David's Realization (14:2)
 - David Blessed with Many Sons (14:3-7)
 - David's Family Expands (14:3)
 - List of David's Sons (14:4-7)
 - David's Victories over the Philistines (14:8-17)
 - David Meets Pursuing Philistines (14:8)
 - First Victory over Philistines (14:9-12)
 - Philistines Raid Valley (14:9)
 - David Inquires and God Answers (14:10)
 - David Defeats Philistines (14:11a)
 - David Praises God (14:11b)
 - David Finalizes Victory over Philistines (14:12)
 - Second Victory over Philistines (14:13-16)
 - Philistines Raid Valley Again (14:13)
 - David Inquires (14:14a)
 - David Receives God's Response (14:14b-15)
 - David Obeys God (14:16a)
 - David Defeats Philistines (14:16b)
 - David Secure Against Enemies (14:17)

■ David's Successful Transfer of the Ark (15:1-16:43)

David Forms a New Plan (15:1-2)

David Instructs Levites and Priests (15:3-24)

David Assembles the Levites and Priests (15:3-10)

David Consecrates Levites and Priests (15:11-15)

David Appoints Levites and Priests (15:16-24)

David Moves the Ark (15:25-16:3)

Procession of the Ark (15:25-28)

Entry of the Ark (15:29)

Placement of the Ark (16:1-3)

David Instructs Levites and Priests (16:4-42)

David Appoints Levites in Jerusalem (16:4-6)

David's Psalm (16:7-36)

Introduction (16:7)

Thanksgiving within Israel (16:8-22)

Praise throughout the World (16:23-33)

Petition for Greater Praise (16:34-36a)

Response (16:36b)

David Appoints Levites and Priests in Jerusalem and Gibeon (16:37-42)

■ David's Plan Completed (16:43)

Outline of 1 Chr 13:1-16:43 (figure 14)

As this outline suggests, the first and third portions of this material focus specifically on the ark's entry into Jerusalem. David's initial failure (13:1-14) balances with his success (15:1-16:43). A series of blessings from God on the house of David stand in the center (14:1-17). This central material demonstrates that God favored David despite his initial failure.

David's Failed Transfer of the Ark (13:1-14)

The Chronicler postponed attention to God's blessings toward David as they appear in 2 Samuel 5:11-25 (// 1 Chr 14:1-17) in order to focus on David's first attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem (1 Chr 13:1-14 // 2 Sam 6:1-11). As the record indicates, David tried to transfer the ark, but failed because he did not honor the ark's sanctity.

Comparison of 13:1-14 with 2 Samuel 6:1-19

For the most part, this passage closely follows its parallel in 2 Sam 6:1-11. A few minor variations appear, but they are of little significance. Several differences, however, should be mentioned.

First, the Chronicler added 13:1-4 as a new beginning for the narrative. His central concerns in this chapter become evident in these verses.

Second, 13:5 depends on 2 Sam 6:1, but the Chronicler altered "brought together" to **assembled** (13:5) to heighten the religious nature of the event.

Third, **all the Israelites from the Shihor River in Egypt to Lebo Hamath** (13:5) substitutes for "thirty thousand in all" (2 Sam 6:1). This change is in keeping with the Chronicler's concern for Israel's unified support of David.

Structure of 13:1-14

This chapter divides into a five step symmetrical narrative (see figure 14). The story of David's failed attempt to move the ark begins with David speaking and the assembly joining the project (13:1-4). The final step balances with David speaking for a second time and abandoning the project (13:12-14). Initially, the procession moves forward with David full of joy (13:5-8), but it halts with David frustrated and angry (13:12-13). The turning point of the narrative is Uzzah's violation and the divine judgment against him (13:9-11).

Preparations to Move the Ark to Jerusalem (13:1-4)

The first step of this passage includes material added by the Chronicler (13:1-4). Consequently, these verses provide a number of insights into the Chronicler's unique viewpoint.

From the outset, the Chronicler made it plain that David's actions were not imposed on the nation. He **conferred** with his nobles before proceeding with his plan (13:1). Moreover, he appealed to the people, "**If it seems good to you ...**" (13:2). The Chronicler also noted that in fact the plan **seemed right to all the people** (13:4). These factors indicated that bringing the ark to Jerusalem was not a royal edict devoid of popular consent. Before making the decision, David won the enthusiastic support of his chiefs and the assembly.

On several occasions, the Chronicler noted that kings sought the support of their nobles and citizens before implementing programs. Here David found agreement and brought the ark to Jerusalem. Jehoshaphat also asked for support (2 Chr 20:17). Hezekiah appealed

for popular consent (2 Chr 30:2,4,12,23). It is likely that this theme was repeated to instruct the leadership of the post-exilic community in the nature of wise administration.

Moreover, the Chronicler's addition emphasized his "all Israel" theme. He wrote that David appealed to the **whole assembly** (13:2,4) and invited others **throughout the territories** (13:2) to join in the transfer of the ark. As a result, **all the Israelites** were represented at the event (13:5; see also *Introduction: 1) All Israel*).

The Chronicler also stressed the special religious significance of this event. In the book of Samuel, moving the ark is portrayed as an event primarily involving David's military supporters ("chosen men" [2 Sam 6:1]). The introduction begins in the political realm (13:1), but quickly moves to **the whole assembly** (13:2,4). Similarly, David **assembled** the people (13:5 ["brought together" (2 Sam 6:1)]) to bring the ark to Jerusalem.

The Hebrew root translated here as **assembly** and **assembled** is often used in Chronicles to designate a gathering for worship. The Chronicler was deeply concerned with the restoration of the temple and its services. For this reason, he often spoke of religious assemblies to provide his post-exilic readers with examples of benefits which such gatherings brought to the nation (see *Introduction: 6) Religious Assemblies*). Designating this event as an assembly not only heightened its religious nature, it also set this time in David's life alongside a number of other very important religious assemblies in Israel's history. Along these lines, the Chronicler added that David invited **the priests and Levites** to participate (13:2).

The Chronicler also noted that David purposefully submitted himself to God in this matter. David insisted that he would take up the project only "**if it is the will of the Lord our God**" (13:2). The king brought the ark to Jerusalem only because it was the desire of God for it to be there.

David's reason for following this course of action also reveals the Chronicler's interests. David reasoned, "**we did not inquire of it** [the ark] **during the reign of Saul**" (13:3). In contrast with Saul's failure to **inquire** (10:14), David desired to bring the ark to his capital city so that Israel would inquire of God (see *Introduction: 19) Seeking*).

Moving in Celebration (13:5-8)

This step of the narrative is an ironic mixture of good and evil. In the first place, this event is portrayed in a positive light. The Chronicler's substitution of **all the Israelites from the Shihor River in Egypt to Lebo Hamath** (13:5) for the reference to "thirty thousand men" (2 Sam 6:1) is remarkable. The **Shihor River** should probably be identified with one of the eastern tributaries of the Nile; **Lebo Hamath** is in the land of Lebanon. This is the largest designation of Israelite geography in the Scriptures. (For the Chronicler's geographical hopes

see comments on 2:42-55.) The Chronicler did not claim that David's kingdom officially extended this far. He simply noted that Jewish settlers from these distances joined the company that brought the ark into Jerusalem. As in the days of Solomon (see 2 Chr 7:8) and Hezekiah (see 2 Chr 30:1-5), David gathered Israelites from far and wide for this grand event. The Chronicler varied from Samuel in this way to promote Jerusalem as the center of hope even for Israelites still in exile (see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*).

Moreover, David and **all Israel** ("all the house of Israel" [2 Sam 6:5]; see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*) celebrated **with all their might before God** (13:8). Their joy abounded in singing with numerous instruments. Although this description originated in Samuel, it fit well with the Chronicler's emphasis on music in celebrative worship (see *Introduction: 8) Music*). It would appear that the emphasis on music in Chronicles reflected controversies regarding proper musical practices in the post-exilic community. Festivity was certainly appropriate for this occasion in David's life. The footstool of Israel's God was about to enter the capital of the nation. The powerful invocable presence of God was soon to reside in the king's city. So the people celebrated with song.

Following the text of 2 Sam 6:2, the ark of the covenant is described as the place where the Lord **is enthroned between the cherubim** (13:6). The ark symbolized the presence of God with his people in many ways. Here it is depicted as the place of divine enthronement. The ark represented the throne of God, or more precisely his footstool (see 1 Chr 28:2; Ps 99:5; 132:7). Bringing the ark to the city was David's way of joining his throne to the throne of God (see *Introduction: 8) Divine Kingship*).

The reason for Israel's joy is also noted in the remark that the ark was also **called by the Name** (13:6). The **Name** of God refers to the nearness of God, divine power accessible through prayer and sacrifice (see *Introduction: 11) Name of God*). The ark was central in the worship of the Lord because it was associated with the Name. It was the place of access to God's throne. The people of Israel were to turn in its direction as they called on the Name of their divine King in hope of his blessing.

Although many aspects of this event were positive, something was dreadfully wrong. The **ark of God** was placed **on a new cart** (13:7). The Mosaic Law specified the divinely ordained manner of transporting the ark. Levites were to carry the ark with poles inserted through rings on either side (see Exod 25:12-15). Instead of following this procedure, Israel mishandled the ark much like the Philistines had before them (see 1 Sam 6:7-12). The neglect of this regulation demonstrated a casual attitude toward the sanctity of the divine footstool and for God enthroned above it.

Divine Wrath against Uzzah (13:9-11)

As David's procession moved toward Jerusalem, the oxen stumbled and the ark began to fall to the ground. In reaction, **Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark** (13:9). The text offers no indication that Uzzah acted with evil intent. Nevertheless, God became angry and **struck him down** (13:10). The book of Samuel describes Uzzah's actions as "his irreverent act" (2 Sam 6:7). The Chronicler specified that God's wrath came upon Uzzah **because he had put his hand on the ark** (13:10). Israel had already demonstrated neglect of the holiness of the divine King of Israel by putting the ark on a cart (see 13:7). Although Moses' Law warned that no human hand was to touch the ark (see Num 4:15), Uzzah did not restrain himself. As a result, his act so violated the holiness of the divine footstool that God killed him.

This scene dramatically warned the Chronicler's readers against inappropriate worship in their day. The hesitation of the early returnees to re-establish proper worship led to sharp rebukes from Haggai (see Hag 2:10-14). In the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, impurity in worship rose to new heights (see Ezra 9-10; Neh 9; 13:15-31). From the example of Uzzah, the Chronicler's readers should have learned that God's patience in these matters was limited. They could not continue to defile his worship with impunity.

David's response to Uzzah's death was the opposite of his earlier celebration (see 13:8). He **was angry**, or as it may be translated, "frustrated" (13:11). David had intended this event to be a great blessing for his kingdom (see 13:3), but his plan had failed.

David was angry because God had **broken out against Uzzah** (13:11). He even named the place **Perez Uzzah** which meant "outbreak against Uzzah" because God's wrath had flooded onto Uzzah. Various forms of the word "outbreak" occur several times in this and nearby chapters. The first occurrence is very positive. When David first announced his intention to bring the ark to Jerusalem (13:2), he literally said, "let us send *break out* word ..." (13:2). At this point, however, God "broke out" in judgment. Later in the next chapter, the Chronicler used the term positively again when David exclaimed, "**God has broken out against my enemies**" (14:11).

For the sake of his audience, the Chronicler followed Samuel and noted that the location of this scene was called Perez Uzzah **to this day** (13:11). For the Chronicler's use of this terminology see comments on 4:41.

Moving in Fear (13:12-13)

At this point, the narrative shifts attention to the movement of the ark once again. This time, however, the ark is no longer moving toward Jerusalem in celebration. David was **afraid** (13:12) and **did not take to ark to be with him** (13:13).

David abandoned hope of immediately moving the ark into his city because he was **afraid of God** (13:12). His fear was not the sort which the Chronicler often admired (see 1 Chr 16:25; 2 Chr 17:10; 19:7,9; 20:29; 26:5). It was not proper worshipful reverence. In this passage, David's fear contrasted with his confidence and celebration. David was afraid in the sense that he feared what God might do at any moment, if the ark was in Jerusalem. As a result, David exclaimed, "**How can I ever bring the ark of God to me?**" (13:12)

To protect himself against the God whom he feared, David sent the ark to the **family of Obed-Edom** (13:13). Obed-Edom is probably to be identified with the man mentioned in two other chapters (see 15:18,21,24; 26:4).

Ark Remains Outside of Jerusalem (13:14)

Following the text of Samuel, our passage notes that the ark remained **with the family of Obed-Edom** (13:14). As a result of his proper attention to the ark, **the Lord blessed his household and everything he had** (13:14). Despite this positive result for Obed-Edom, David's plan had come to failure. The Chronicler ended this portion of his narrative with the ark outside Jerusalem **for three months** (13:14).

The negative ending to this story spoke plainly to the post-exilic readers. Even David was judged when the worship of God was not pursued according to divine regulations. If the plans of David himself were spoiled by neglecting God's holiness, how much more must restored Israel be sure to attend carefully and faithfully to the worship of God.