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Israel and Judah: 4. The Ark Arrives in Jerusalem

by David Sielaff, November 2014

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Israel and Judah: 4

The Ark
Arrives in
Jerusalem

In this portion of the history of Israel and Judah, King David continues his attempt to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. He is successful, but the details are important. Psalms are interwoven into the narratives of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles. The administrators and officials operating the sacrificial system of the Ark are identified. The nations received God's notice in expressing the importance of the Ark coming to Jerusalem. David's first wife Michal also comes back into the narrative as problems arise with her reaction to David's personal mode of celebration.

David in Psalms 103 to 106 gives an account of world history and the history of God's interaction with Israel up to the time Israel was united under King David. As Dr. Ernest Martin notes in his article "[Creation of Life in Contemporary Times](#)":

"In these four Psalms (that are linked together as a single piece of historical literature), David brought into review all the main historical events associated with Israel up to the time that Israel became a united nation just before the time of David. These four Psalms give us a different viewpoint on the matter of pre-Davidic history."

David likely wrote or composed these four psalms near the time he brought the Ark to Jerusalem so the people could know their king's understanding of biblical creation and history and how they fit in God's plan for His people. This was a highly productive time for David's literary works, which we have received in the form of Psalms and the narrative collections of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles. These were highly stressful times for the young king at the height of his powers, yet he was able to put his thoughts on paper for us to read today. Imagine ... we can read the thoughts of a man who wrote 3,000 years ago.

In the narratives, after the tragedy when Uzzah was killed when he touched the Ark of the Covenant, David had the Ark carried to the house of Obed-edom where it stayed for three months (2 Samuel 6:10–11; 1 Chronicles 13:13–14). When the reason for Uzzah's death was thought to be understood, it was deemed safe to continue the journey of the Ark to Jerusalem. This time the Ark was handled properly by appropriate

people, the Levites, who were the only ones allowed to transport the Ark. We pick up the narrative at this point.^a Here is the text of the Concordant Literal Version:

TEXT: King David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem

1 Chronicles 15:1–24

¹ When he had houses built for himself in the city of David^b and had a place prepared for the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim, he pitched a tent for it. ² Then David decreed that none save the Levites were to carry the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim, for Yahweh had chosen them to carry the coffer [Ark] of Yahweh and to minister to it for the eon. ³ David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem to bring up the coffer [Ark] of Yahweh to its place that he had prepared for it.

⁴ David also gathered together the sons of Aaron and the Levites:

⁵ of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief and his kinsmen — 120;

⁶ of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief and his kinsmen — 220;

⁷ of the sons of Gershon, Joel the chief and his kinsmen — 130;

⁸ of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief and his kinsmen — 200;

⁹ of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief and his kinsmen — 80;

¹⁰ of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief and his kinsmen — 112.

¹¹ Then David called Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and the Levites, Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel and Amminadab. ¹² He said to them,

“You are the heads of the fathers’ house of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your kinsmen, and bring up the coffer [Ark] of Yahweh Elohim of Israel to the place that I have prepared for it. ¹³ Because you were not there for what was the first time, Yahweh our Elohim breached forth against us, for we had not inquired of Him according to the custom.”

¹⁴ So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the coffer [Ark] of Yahweh Elohim of Israel. ¹⁵ Then the sons of the Levites carried the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim, on their shoulders with the slider bars on them, just as Moses had instructed by the word of Yahweh.

¹⁶ David also ordered the chiefs of the Levites to install their kinsmen, the singers, with the instruments of song, zithers, harps and cymbals, making them heard so as to raise high the voice of rejoicing.

¹⁷ So the Levites installed Heman son of Joel and, from his kinsmen, Asaph son of Berechiah; and, from the sons of Merari their kinsmen, Ethan son of Kushaiah; ¹⁸ together with them their kinsmen who were second in rank: Zechariah, Ben, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom and Jeiel and Azaziah the gatekeepers.

¹⁹ They also installed the singers Heman, Asaph and Ethan to make music with the copper cymbals; ²⁰ and Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah and Benaiah with zithers tuned to alamothe.

²¹ And they installed Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel and Azaziah with harps tuned to the sheminith, as overseers.

²² Kenaniah, the chief of the Levites in the carrying service, was to admonish those carrying loads, for he was proficient. ²³ Berechiah and Elkanah were to be gatekeepers for the coffer [Ark], ²⁴ while the priests Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah and Eliezer should blow the bugles before the coffer [Ark] of Elohim. Obed-edom and Jehiah also were to be gatekeepers for the coffer [Ark]. **[end text]**

^a The scriptural narrative is told in “[Israel and Judah: 3. David, Philistines, and Uzzah](#)”

^b The City of David is Zion according to 2 Samuel 5:7: “**Yet David seized the fastness of Zion, which is now the city of David.**” First Kings 8:1 makes the same point.

David **“had houses built for himself in the city of David”** (verse 1). This may indicate he built one house for each wife, although the text does not mention David’s wives.^c None of these houses would be the **“House of David”** which refers most often to the descendants or dynasty of King David, and in a minority of instances to the “house” or Tomb of David. King David is portrayed as being in charge of and delegating everything. He had houses built, he prepared a place for the Ark for which he had a tent pitched (verse 1), **“David decreed”** (verse 2), **“David gathered”** (verse 3), **“David assembled”** (verse 4), **“David called”** (verse 11), and spoke (verse 12), and **“David ... ordered”** (verse 16). From verses 17–22, the men David selects do as he orders and further delegate other men to serve.

The individuals listed in this passage all served at the tent established by David for the Ark of the Covenant where God’s presence was considered to be. At that location, sacrifices were made, food prepared, prayers made, teaching presented, and songs sung and performed on instruments.^d

This all was an expense initially provided for by David’s royal administration because each individual mentioned, and many others, needed to be trained, housed, fed, and clothed with proper garments for their service to YHWH at the place He would choose to place His name.

As we shall see as we proceed through Samuel-Kings and Chronicles, this entire process was to prepare for a future Temple to be constructed by David’s son and heir to the throne, Solomon.^e The Ark resided in the tent David constructed, and later it was moved and resided permanently in the Temple Solomon built above the mountain, west of the Gihon Spring.

Note the three designations for the Ark: **“the Ark of the One, Elohim”** (verses 1–2, 15), **“the Ark of YHWH”** (verses 2–3), and **“the Ark of Yahweh Elohim of Israel”** (verses 12, 14). These identifications reinforce the idea that YHWH is **“the Elohim.”** There are other Elohim than YHWH, but He is **“the One”** as Moses says:

“For Yahweh your Elohim, He is the Elohim of elohim and the Lord of lords [Adonai of adonim], the El, the great, the masterful and the fear inspiring [One], Who neither shows partiality nor takes a bribe.”

• **Deuteronomy 10:17**^f

There were gatekeepers or guards (1 Chronicles 15:17, 23) at this tent. Gates requiring gatekeepers indicate walls or enclosures. The tabernacle in the wilderness had a wall, which was a set of curtains or hangings. The situation was likely similar for the tent David constructed for the temporary location of the Ark. There were separations: an outer enclosure, and a second enclosure containing the Ark itself. The gatekeepers in verse 17 were to the outer area, the gatekeepers of verse 23 were for the Ark itself.

The tent that David constructed to house the Ark was different from the “Tent of Meeting” within the outer enclosure of the tabernacle of Moses (the Holy Place and Holy of Holies). That tent was still at Gibeon. Solomon later brought both to the constructed Temple at the time of its dedication:

“Then Solomon and the entire assembly with him went to the high-place at Gibeon, for there was the tent of appointment [Tent of Meeting] of the One, Elohim, that Moses the servant of Yahweh had made in the wilderness. But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjath-jearim to the place which David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.”

• **2 Chronicles 1:3–4**

^c Solomon built religious sites for his wives so they could worship their gods (1 Kings 11:1–10, particularly verse 7). He was caught up in their worship. It is okay to acknowledge other gods than YHWH, but worship of them was forbidden and punishable even if the offender is the King of Israel (1 Kings 11:9–11).

^d See my Commentary [“An Analysis of Psalms,”](#) my [“April 2008 Newsletter,”](#) Dr. Martin’s article [“Psalms, Music, and Prophecy,”](#) and of course [“Appendix One: Preliminary Suggestions for the Structure of the Psalms.”](#)

^e Of course, David’s involvement with Bathsheba was yet in the future.

^f Compare this translation with the King James Version, which is less precise, with less impact. This is because the terms of “Lord” and “God” get lost in meaning. Also, in this one verse in the KJV, the word “Lord” in English is used for two different Hebrew words, YHWH and Adonai.

Later, after the Temple's completion we are told what Solomon, David's heir, did at the dedication ...

“When all the elders of Israel had come, the priests carried the coffer [Ark], and they brought up the coffer [Ark] of Yahweh and the tent of appointment [Tent of Meeting, brought both to the Temple] ... the priests and the Levites brought them up, while king Solomon and the whole congregation of Israel, ... before the coffer [Ark], making sacrifices of the flock and of the herd ... the priests brought the coffer [Ark] of the covenant of Yahweh to its place, to the innermost sanctuary of the House, the holy of holies, underneath the wings of the cherubim.”

• 1 Kings 8:3–6

TEXT: *David Again Celebrates and Offends His Wife Michal*

2 Samuel 6:12–16

¹² When it was told to king David, saying,
“Yahweh has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that he has for the sake of the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim,”

then David *went and brought*

up the coffer [Ark] of the *One, Elohim*, from the house of Obed-edom *to the city of David*,
amid rejoicing.

¹³ *It came to be when the bearers of the coffer [Ark] of Yahweh had marched six steps, that he [David]*

sacrificed *a bull and a fatling*.

¹⁴ *David was frisking with all his strength before Yahweh; and David was girded with a linen ephod.*

¹⁵ *Thus David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the coffer [Ark] of the covenant of Yahweh with shouting and with the sound of trumpets.*

¹⁶ As the coffer [Ark] of Yahweh was *entering* the city of David, Saul's daughter Michal gazed out through the window *shutters* and saw king David *prancing and frisking before Yahweh*;
 and she despised him in her heart.

1 Chronicles 15:25–29

²⁵ Then David *came with the elders of Israel and the chiefs over the thousands, going along to bring up the coffer [Ark] of the covenant of Yahweh* from the house of Obed-edom with rejoicing.

²⁶ *Since it was due to the help of the One, Elohim, that the Levites were carrying the coffer [Ark] of the covenant of Yahweh, they sacrificed seven young bulls and seven rams.*

²⁷ *As for David, he was garbed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who were carrying the coffer [Ark], the singers, and Kenaniah, the chief in charge of the carrying service by the singers. And David had on a vestment of linen.*

²⁸ *So all Israel were bringing up the coffer [Ark] of the covenant of Yahweh with shouting, with the sound of trumpets, with bugles and with cymbals, making music with zithers and harps.*

²⁹ As the coffer [Ark] *of the covenant* of Yahweh was *coming as far as* the city of David, Saul's daughter Michal gazed out through the window and saw king David *dancing and gamboling*;

and she despised him in her heart.

[end text]

This side-by-side presentation allows us to read the entire story. David was informed of Obed-edom's blessing by God because of the presence of the Ark at his house. What that blessing was, we do not know, but David took it as an indicator that God approved of his wish to bring the Ark to Jerusalem. He had the priests start out again on their journey.

David rejoiced and celebrated the entire way and especially at the safe arrival of the Ark to Jerusalem. The frequent sacrifices along the route were thank offerings to God, which fed the community and all people along the way. It is likely that this procession or parade with its accompanying sacrifices went on for several days and the entire countryside knew of it.

In 2 Samuel 6:14 it says David wore an "ephod." This is an embroidered outer garment believed to resemble an apron with shoulder straps, most often worn by priests in ancient Israel. Why would David wear a garment generally associated with priests? Perhaps he did so because King David did indeed hold a priestly office. He was a priest of the order of Melchizedek. As King of Jerusalem (King of Salem), David had the right to officiate as a priest, just as Melchizedek did in the time of Abraham. He did not officiate or operate as a priest of the Levitical priesthood, but of the Melchizedek priesthood. How did this all work? See my explanation in the article "[Christ as High Priest](#)."

At the end of this parade and celebration to Jerusalem, another unfortunate event occurs with regard to the Ark of the Covenant. David's first wife, Michal, was dismayed at the inappropriate behavior of her husband the King, and she "despised him in her heart." This meant that she regarded David with contempt, disgust, or loathing. She will act on that feeling, as we will see shortly.

Michal loved David when he was a young hero (1 Samuel 18:20, 28). King Saul, her father, gave her to another man to be his wife to anger David. After Saul's death, David demanded Michal be returned to him, and she was brought to Jerusalem. Michal is again in the story of David. Whether her disapproval of David's behavior was a calculated act or not, we do not know, but she has one more role to play in this saga.

Once brought to Jerusalem, the Ark was placed in the tent "David had pitched for it." The celebration continued with a feast of meat, bread, and cakes.

TEXT: *The Ark Is Placed in the Tent David Made*

2 Samuel 6:17–19a

¹⁷ Thus they brought in the coffer [Ark] of *Yahweh* and put it *in its place* in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it. *Then David* offered up ascent offerings before *Yahweh* and peace offerings.

¹⁸ When David had finished offering up the ascent offering and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the Name of *Yahweh* *of hosts*.

¹⁹ And he distributed portions among all the people — among the entire throng of Israel, both man and woman — to each one perforated loaf of bread, one date cake and one raisin cake.

1 Chronicles 16:1–3

¹ Thus they brought in the coffer [Ark] of *Elohim*, put it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it, *and* offered ascent offerings and peace offerings before *the One, Elohim*.

² When David had finished offering up the ascent offering and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the Name of *Yahweh*.

³ Then he distributed portions to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to each one a loaf of bread, a date cake and a raisin-cake.

[end text]

David prepared a tent for the Ark (1 Chronicles 15:1). The Ark was placed in that tent. These details are important to the author (2 Samuel 6:17 and 1 Chronicles 16:1 respectively).

Then the author of 1 Chronicles 16:4–6 tells that the lead administrators of the rituals begin operations. David had both ascent offerings and peace (or thank) offerings presented to God. The celebration of the

Ark's arrival continued with a feast supplied by David as King. The meat from the sacrifices, the bread, and the cakes were distributed to everyone attending. It specifically states both men and women received portions of every food that was made available.

David continues the celebration with himself, the King of Israel, teaching the people about God's covenant with them. He celebrates with a song praising God. Musical instruments accompany the King, who was himself renowned for the songs he composed, his talent as a player of the harp or lyre, and as a singer (1 Samuel 16:16, 23). Consider these portions of Davidic psalms:

**“Acclaim Yahweh on a harp,
On a zither of ten strings make melody to Him,
Sing to Him a new song,
Be skillful to play with joyful shouting.”**

• *Psalm 33:2–3*

Another psalm seems to describe what David sang on a day other than the Ark's arrival. The difference is that Psalm 43 is not celebratory, but solemn:

**“Then let me come to the altar of Elohim,
To the El of my exultant rejoicing,
And I shall acclaim You with the harp,
O Elohim, my Elohim.”**

• *Psalm 43:4*

Like these two psalms (and others), David composed a sophisticated song told in 1 Chronicles chapters 15 and 16 (and partially paralleled in 1 Samuel chapter 6), which the Chronicler says was performed for the first time for this occasion.⁸ David was accompanied in song by Asaph and his brother, and by instruments.

TEXT: David's Song Praising God

1 Chronicles 16:4–22

⁴ He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the coffer [Ark] of Yahweh, to commemorate, to acclaim and to praise Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel:

⁵ Asaph the head, and second to him Zechariah, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom and Jeiel with instruments like zithers and harps, while Asaph was making music with cymbals. ⁶ Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests, with bugles, were regularly before the coffer [Ark] of the covenant of Elohim.

⁷ Then, **on that day, David gave a psalm for the first time to acclaim Yahweh** by means of Asaph and his brother: *[poetry begins]*

- ⁸ Acclaim Yahweh! Call on His Name!
Make known His actions among the peoples!
- ⁹ **Sing to Him! Make melody to Him!**
Meditate on all His marvelous works!
- ¹⁰ Boast in His holy Name!
Let the heart of those seeking Yahweh rejoice!
- ¹¹ Seek after Yahweh and His strength;
Seek His face continually.

⁸ David later used some of these same verses in other Psalms, or other writings.

- ¹² Remember His marvelous works that He has done,
His miracles and the judgments of His mouth.
- ¹³ O seed of Israel, His servants,
Sons of Jacob, His chosen ones.
- ¹⁴ He is Yahweh, our Elohim;
His judgments are in all the earth.
- ¹⁵ Remember His covenant for the eon,
The word he enjoined on a thousand generations,
- ¹⁶ That He contracted with Abraham,
And by His oath to Isaac.
- ¹⁷ He ratified it to Jacob as a statute,
To Israel as a covenant eonian,
- ¹⁸ Saying, To you shall I give the land of Canaan,
The region of your allotment.
- ¹⁹ When you became few adult males in number,
Only a few, and sojourners in it,
- ²⁰ Then they walked from nation to nation,
From one kingdom to another people.
- ²¹ He would not permit any man to exploit them,
And on their behalf He reproved kings:
- ²² Saying, **You must not touch My anointed ones,**
And to My prophets you must not do evil!

[end text]

The poetic text of 1 Chronicles 16:8–22 is almost identical with Psalm 105:1–15. In English translation, they are nearly exact. This is why I did not put the passages in parallel.

The occasion of the Ark entering Jerusalem and placed in the tent was used by David to tell Israel about (1) God’s love for them, (2) how God is worthy of their praise, and then he (3) briefly reviews God’s covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. David points out that God’s covenant with the three patriarchs was done for the benefit of all the Israelites in that present day. This song in poetic form was in the category of “Hear this Message from Your King: Here Is What I Believe.”

The remainder of Psalm 105, verses 16–45, presents more historical examples of YHWH’s love and care for Israel from the time of Joseph, through the Exodus from Egypt, up to Israel’s entrance into the Promised Land. So why did the Chronicler end the psalm where it did? Did David originally speak or sing the entirety of Psalm 105? If so, why did the Chronicler cite only through verse 22? Perhaps the writer was reminding Israel that they were as special to God as the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were special to Him. The rest of Psalm 105 was perhaps added later to form a complete, independent, and very different song.

Verse 22 implies that **all** the people of Israel are God’s anointed, specially blessed as a nation of prophets (prophets in the sense of being teachers), in addition to being a nation of priests. This would not be a surprise to David’s audience because God spoke much the same to the people of Israel at Mount Sinai:

“Now, if you shall hearken, yea hearken to My voice and observe My covenant then you will become Mine, a special possession, above all of the peoples, for Mine is all the earth. As for you, you shall become Mine, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”

• Exodus 19:5–6

As the patriarchs were special, so too the people of Israel were special in the eyes of God, but only so

long as they obeyed the covenant freely agreed to by the people at that time. The people promised to obey (Exodus 19:8), and the people in David's day were committed to obey, whether they wanted to do so or not. That covenant was binding upon future generations of Israelites. There was no turning back for them, any more than they could return to Egypt. Remember, every priest was anointed to serve God. In addition, YHWH said that through Moses that they would become "**a kingdom of priests**" to Him, anointed to serve the nations of "**all the earth.**" That blessing has not happened yet. Israel has not yet obeyed.

As I mentioned, 1 Chronicles 16:8–22 quotes Psalm 105:1–15, and omits 105:16–45. However, the continuation of 1 Chronicles 16:23–33, quotes all of another Davidic song which is Psalm 96:1–13, celebrating God and the Ark's arrival. Interesting side-by-side comparisons can be made here as well.

TEXT: *David's* **Second Psalm Glorifying God**

Psalm 96:1–13

¹ Sing to Yahweh a new song;
Sing to Yahweh, all the earth!
² Sing to Yahweh; bless His Name;
Bear the tidings of His salvation day after day!
³ Recount His glory among the nations,
Among all the peoples, His marvelous works.
⁴ For great is Yahweh, and praised exceedingly;
Fear inspiring is He **over all elohim.**
⁵ For **all the elohim of the peoples** are useless idols;
As for Yahweh, He has made the heavens.
⁶ Splendor and honor are before Him;
Strength and beauty are in
His sanctuary.
⁷ Grant to Yahweh, O families of the peoples,
Grant to Yahweh glory and strength.
⁸ Grant to Yahweh the glory of His Name;
Bear an approach present, and come before
Him.
⁹ Worship Yahweh in His holy effulgence!
Travail because of His presence, all the
earth.
¹⁰ Say among the nations, Yahweh, He reigns!
Indeed, established is the habitation;
By no means shall it slip;
He shall adjudicate the peoples with equity.
¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth exult,
Let the sea thunder and its fullness,
¹² Let the field be joyous, and all that is in it;
Then all the trees of the wildwood shall be jubilant
¹³ Before Yahweh, for He comes;
For He comes to judge the earth;

[continue to Psalm 106, see below]

1 Chronicles 16:23–33

²³ Sing to Yahweh, all the earth!
Bear the tidings of His salvation, day after day!
²⁴ Recount His glory among the nations,
Among all the peoples, His marvelous works.
²⁵ For great is Yahweh and praised exceedingly;
Fear inspiring is He **over all elohim.**
²⁶ For **all the elohim of the peoples** are useless idols;
As for Yahweh, He has made the heavens.
²⁷ Splendor and honor are before Him;
Strength and exhilaration are in
His dwelling place.
²⁸ Grant to Yahweh, O families of the peoples,
Grant to Yahweh glory and strength,
²⁹ Grant to Yahweh the glory of His Name;
Bear an approach present, and come before
Him!
Worship Yahweh in His holy effulgence!
³⁰ Travail because of His presence, all the
earth.
Indeed, established is the habitation;
By no means shall it slip.
³¹ Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth exult,
Let them say among the nations: Yahweh
Himself reigns!
³² Let the sea thunder and its fullness,
Let the field be joyous and all that is in it;
³³ Then the trees of the wildwood shall be jubilant
Because of the presence of Yahweh.
For He comes to judge the earth.

[end text]

This portion of David's song praises YHWH in several ways. The nations, all the earth, and the heavens are mentioned. In Psalm 96:6 and 1 Chronicles 16:27 respectively there is reference to God's **"sanctuary"** and **"dwelling place,"** indicating that David expected God's presence to be at that location. Psalm 96 and the first 15 verses of Psalm 105 in our Bible were also likely originally composed and presented to celebrate the Ark being placed in the tent. In this section of David's song, the witnesses to God's greatness are universal.

Make no mistake, nations around a united Israel took note of this celebration and understood its significance. In fact, ambassadors from the nations were likely present at this event. They did not like this event at all, and they began to arrange to suppress and destroy Israel as a nation. As Baruch Halpern phrases it, **"This is David's consecration of Jerusalem as the capital of a territorial state, or in Near Eastern terms, an empire,"** in *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 333.

An international conspiracy began to form. The nations began to organize against Israel and gather armies. However, such discussions, alliances, and preparations do not happen quickly. War planning takes years, even in ancient times. Armor, weapons, foodstuffs must be prepared and much detailed planning must be done. Training of individual soldiers and small units need to be done, and specialized and technical elements of national armies such as chariot corps must be organized. All this takes time.

These parallel passages show again that God clearly uses spiritual and fleshly agents to communicate with all of His creation. He used (and uses!) Christ as the *logos*, the Word of God to communicate with the Body of Christ and with all mankind (see Hebrews 1:1–2). The apostles were God's human agents to further communicate the Gospel to the nations. You, as a member of Christ's *ekklesia* communicate **"to sovereignties and authorities among celestials"** (Ephesians 3:10). All creation will eventually be the beneficiary of God's messages of grace and salvation, in His own timeframe.

At this time, God through David was announcing — to the nations, to all the earth, and to the heavens — that YHWH rules in the affairs of men and He has decided to have a dwelling place with His people Israel. The nations did not like it. The powers of spiritual wickedness (Ephesians 6:12) did not like it. The nations thought (or were told by their gods) that the God of Israel was just another god like their gods.

The next portion continues with this same thought, as 1 Chronicles chapter 16 is paralleled by three verses: Psalm 106:1 and verses 47–48.

TEXT: More Praise of YHWH by David

Psalm 106:1, 47–48

¹ *Praise Yah!* Acclaim Yahweh, for He is good!
For His benignity is eonian.

⁴⁷ Save us, O Yahweh our Elohim, *And*
convene us from the nations,
To acclaim Your holy Name,
To triumph in Your praise.

⁴⁸ Blessed be Yahweh, Elohim of Israel,
From the eon and until the eon.

Then all the people will say, **"Amen.
Praise Yah!"**

SCROLL FIVE

1 Chronicles 16:34–36

³⁴ Acclaim Yahweh, for He is good!
For His benignity is eonian.

³⁵ *And say:* Save us, O Elohim *of our salvation,*
Convene us *and rescue us* from the nations,
To acclaim Your holy Name,
To triumph in Your praise.

³⁶ Blessed be Yahweh, Elohim of Israel,
From the eon and until the eon.

Then all the people were saying, **"Amen!"** and
gave praise to Yahweh.

[end text]

In this section, the words are nearly identical. Again, these words and others from Chronicles were given by David originally for this occasion, according to 1 Chronicles 16:7. Like many great literary statements, original authors or songwriters, use brilliant thoughts and well-placed words when appropriate in other

venues to create new presentations. In the case of the Chronicles passage, David’s words were reused in Psalms 96, 105 and 106.

The words “**Scroll Five**” indicate the beginning of the fifth of five scrolls of Psalms, corresponding to the five Books of Moses. Psalm 106 ended the fourth scroll of Psalms. This is made clear in “[Appendix One: Preliminary Suggestions for the Structure of the Psalms](#)” from Dr. Ernest Martin’s book, *Restoring the Original Bible: The Design and Development of the Holy Scriptures*.

TEXT: Sanctuary Administrators Begin their Routine

1 Chronicles 16:37–42

³⁷ Then he [David] left Asaph and his brothers there before the coffer [Ark] of the covenant of Yahweh, to minister before the coffer regularly, as the ritual required day by day; ³⁸ as well as **Obed-edom** and his brothers — sixty and eight; also **Obed-edom** son of Jeduthun and Hosah as gatekeepers;

³⁹ also Zadok the priest and his fellow priests **before the tabernacle of Yahweh on the high-place that was at Gibeon**, ⁴⁰ to offer up ascent approaches to Yahweh on the altar of ascent approaches regularly, morning and evening, and **to carry out all that is written in the law of Yahweh** which He had enjoined on Israel.

⁴¹ With them were Heman and Jeduthun with the rest of the ideal appointees who were specified by name to acclaim Yahweh: For His benignity is conian!

⁴² With them, Heman and Jeduthun, were bugles and cymbals for making music, and instruments for the songs of Elohim; and the sons of Jeduthun were at the gateway. **[end text]**

All those serving at the sanctuary where the Ark was located are called “**brothers**” (verses 37 and 38). The tabernacle of YHWH was still operating at Gibeon separately from the Ark. As I mentioned above, the tabernacle was not moved to the sanctuary until the Temple was completed and dedicated by Solomon (2 Chronicles 1:3–4 and 1 Kings 8:3–6). Obed-edom is again mentioned, twice.

We now leave 1 Chronicles chapter 16 and go to 2 Samuel chapter 6 for a short section about David’s first wife Michal.

TEXT: Conclusion of the Celebration

2 Samuel 6:19b–20a

^{19b} Then all the people left, everyone to his home.

^{20a} When David returned to bless his own household, [then verse ^{20b} below]

1 Chronicles 16:43

⁴³ Then all the people left, everyone to his home; and David turned around to bless his own household. **[end text]**

The celebration ended and the worshippers all returned home. So did King David. His intention was to “**bless**” his household, but the opposite happened, as he was confronted by his wife Michal. David punishes her ruthlessly. This start of this sequence is difficult, so I will repeat 2 Samuel 6:20a (from above), so the context can be clear.

TEXT: King David Punishes and Puts Away His First Wife Michal

2 Samuel 6:20–23

²⁰ When David returned **to bless his own household**, Saul’s daughter Michal came forth to meet David; she said,

“**How illustrious was the king of Israel today who exposed himself today before the eyes of the**

maidservants of his servants, as one of the dancers openly exposes himself!”

²¹ David replied to Michal,

“Before Yahweh I have danced; blessed be Yahweh **Who has chosen me rather than your father or anyone of his house, to commission me as governor over the people** of Yahweh, over Israel.

I will gambol before Yahweh;

²² I will be dishonored even more than this;

I will become low in your eyes,

yet with the maidservants of whom you speak, with them I shall be glorified.”

²³ As for Saul’s daughter Michal, to her came no child until the day of her death.

[end text]

This completes the story arc of David bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

Regarding David’s actions of dancing when Michal saw him, it is important to understand that David did expose himself. He was not merely showing some portion of undergarments. Dr. Ernest Martin explains:

“Then there was Kind David who rejoiced with leaping and dancing (2 Samuel 6:16) (**David danced before the Lord with all his might** – 2 Samuel 6:14) to the extent that he was criticized by his wife Michal. She noted that David **‘uncovered himself in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself’** (2 Samuel 6:20). **His kilt-like garment did not sufficiently provide him with a covering to hide his private parts while he danced so vigorously.** But David was dancing in a religious service to God and though he admitted his act could have been construed as being vile in front of the women spectators, he retorted to Michal that he would even be more vile and base by asking God to vindicate him (2 Samuel 6:22). God backed up David’s appraisal of himself by closing up Michal’s womb for the rest of her life. She was punished for criticizing King David (2 Samuel 6:23).”

• *Bible Secret Number 55,*
“What Men Prophesied Stark Naked?”

So Michal (which is the feminine form of “Michael,” meaning “Who is like El”) injudiciously offends David. Here is a brief history of their relationship:

- Michal was the youngest daughter of the dead and lamented King Saul (1 Samuel 14:49).
- She formerly loved David after he killed Goliath (1 Samuel 18:20, 28).
- She was his first wife (1 Samuel 18:27).
- She helped David escape from Saul, even facing down her father, the king (1 Samuel 19:11–17).
- King Saul later gave Michal to be the wife of another husband, Phalti (also spelled Phaltiel), by (1 Samuel 25:44).
- After Saul’s death, David demanded from Saul’s successor, King Ishbosheth of Israel, return Michal to him (2 Samuel 3:13–16). Ishbosheth did so and she was forcibly returned some 14 years after she helped David escape from Saul.

Perhaps David still desired her when he demanded his wife be returned to him. Or, maybe he made his demand for political reasons. It is also possible that Michal despised the Ark. She kept teraphim (1 Samuel 19:13), and perhaps like Saul she had no regard for YHWH’s Ark (1 Chronicles 13:3).

Michal verbally ridiculed David with scorn and mocking before the maidservants of the royal household. She did not speak privately. She accused him of degrading the royal dignity. She in turn demeaned David in front of servants. That meant everyone would soon know what was said between them. (A similar royal insult between the King and Queen of Persia is told about in Esther 1:10–17.) That caused David to take action against her.

What motivated Michal? Did she blame David for the death of her father, her brothers, and being ripped from the embrace of her second husband? There is no indication she loved David after she returned to him. Perhaps she was playing a political role, believing David could do nothing to her because:

- (1) Many of King Saul's supporters were still in Israel and would not want her treated badly.
- (2) She was the sister of Ishbosheth, successor King of Israel, until his death.
- (3) She considered her privileged place as David's first wife as one of power at David's court.
- (4) She thought David was an immoral religious hypocrite.

David, as king, punished her severely for several reasons. First, he denies he did anything wrong. Then David makes it clear that he knew **he** was chosen by YHWH to lead Israel, **"rather than your father or anyone of his house."** This strongly insulted not only her father Saul and her brothers and other heirs, but it made clear that she had no authority in his kingdom ... none at all.

Then David does more. He removes Michal from his royal presence. She is still queen and unharmed as far as the text indicates, but she finds herself suddenly without any power, and without access to power through her husband. Last of all, verse 23 states Michal did not have children up to that time or after until she died. Nor did David have intercourse with her after that time, even though David had children with other wives and concubines. David forced her to be barren.

By this action, David prevented any offspring that could combine the families of David and Saul. Getting her back may have been a political move to solidify his connections with those who supported Saul and thought David was a usurper. Apparently, he did not need that connection any longer and he separated himself from her. Any love by him for her or by her for him was a non-issue at this point.

Being barren was considered almost a curse in biblical times. Sarah (Genesis 11:30); Rebekah (Genesis 25:21); Rachel (Genesis 29:31); Manoah's wife (Judges 13:2-3); Hannah (1 Samuel 2:5), all were barren. In the New Testament Elisabeth was old and without children (Luke 1:7, 36).

"In Israel and among oriental peoples generally barrenness was a woman's and a family's greatest misfortune. The highest sanctions of religion and patriotism blessed the fruitful woman, because children were necessary for the perpetuation of the tribe and its religion. It is significant that the mothers of the Hebrew race, Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel, were by nature sterile, and therefore God's special intervention shows His particular favor to Israel. Fruitfulness was God's special blessing to His people (Ex 23:26; Dt 7:14; Ps 113:9). A complete family is an emblem of beauty (Song 4:2; 6:6). Metaphorically, Israel, in her days of adversity, when her children were exiled, was barren, but in her restoration she shall rejoice in many children (Isa 54:1; Gal 4:27)."

• **"Barren, Barrenness" ISBE^h**

Furthermore, the biblical text seems to imply that Michal's punishment by David was sanctioned by God who kept her barren throughout her life. After all, she had no children ...

- when she was first married to David.
- when she was married to Phalti.
- after she returned to David.
- after her confrontation with David, being removed from his presence, never to see him again.

David's punishment remained upon her for life. Politics among royalty is harsh and unforgiving.

Now consider Psalm 132, which must have been written soon after the Ark arrived in Jerusalem but before David expressed his desire to build a Temple for God ...

^h Article in James Orr and Melvin Grove Kyle, eds., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939). BibleWorks, version 9.

TEXT: A Psalm of David's Praise

Psalm 132

- ¹ Remember, O Yahweh, concerning David,
All his humiliation,
² How he swore to Yahweh
And vowed to the Sturdy One of Jacob:
³ I shall assuredly not come into my tent house,
Assuredly not go up to the cot of my berth,
⁴ Assuredly not give sleep to my eyes,
Or slumber to my eyelids,
⁵ **Until I should find a place for Yahweh,**
A grand tabernacle for the Sturdy One of Jacob.
⁶ Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah [in Ephraim];
We found it in the fields of Jaar [short for Kirjath-jearim].
⁷ Let us go to **His grand tabernacle**;
Let us worship at His footstool.
⁸ Do arise, O Yahweh, to Your resting place,
You and the **coffer** [Ark] of Your strength.
⁹ Your priests, may they be clothed with righteousness,
And Your benign ones, may they be jubilant.
¹⁰ For the sake of David, Your servant,
Do not turn back from the face of Your anointed one.
¹¹ Yahweh has sworn to David the truth;
He shall not turn back from it:

[YHWH responds to David]

- “Out of the fruit of your loin
Shall I set One on your throne.
¹² If your sons should keep My covenant
And My testimonies that I shall teach them,
Their sons also unto the future,
They shall sit on your throne.
¹³ For Yahweh has chosen Zion;
He yearns for it as His dwelling place:
¹⁴ This is My resting place unto the future;
Here shall I dwell, for I yearn for it.
¹⁵ Its provision shall I bless, yea bless;
Its needy ones shall I satisfy with bread;
¹⁶ Its priests shall I clothe with salvation,
And its benign ones, they shall be jubilant, yea jubilant;
¹⁷ There shall I make the horn of David sprout;
I will arrange a lamp for My anointed one.
¹⁸ His enemies shall I clothe with shame,
Yet his insignia shall blossom upon him.**

A Song of Ascents, Davidic

[end text]

How Important Was the Ark? How Important IS the Ark?

The Ark was important only until Jerusalem was besieged and captured by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. According to an historical note in the Book of Second Maccabees, the Ark was taken by Jeremiah the prophet and hidden in the area where Moses was buried, east of the Jordan River.

“It was also in the writing that the prophet [Jeremiah], having received an oracle, ordered that the tent and the ark should follow with him, and that he went out to the mountain where Moses had gone up and had seen the inheritance of God [Mount Nebo].¹ And Jeremiah came and found a cave, and he brought there the tent and the ark and the altar of incense, and he sealed up the entrance.”

Some of those who followed him came up to mark the way, but could not find it. When Jeremiah learned of it, he rebuked them and declared: ‘The place shall be unknown until God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy.’”

• 2 Maccabees 2:4–7, Revised Standard Version

Jeremiah, according to the apocryphal text of Second Maccabees, buried the Ark. The Book of Second Maccabees is not Scripture. It may be good history, but any prophecy it contains should not be heeded.

“And then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated.”

2 Maccabees 2:8, RSV

Some people perhaps think that if sacrifices are made in front of the Ark, God will bring down fire from heaven and legitimize the Temple. I doubt the two witnesses would have anything to do with such unscriptural thinking.

“When it comes to be that you increase and are fruitful in the land, in those days, averring is Yahweh, ‘they shall no longer say, The coffer [Ark] of the covenant of Yahweh; it shall not ascend on their heart, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they miss it, nor shall another one be made again.’”

• Jeremiah 3:16, CLV

So, how important was the Ark? It served its purpose for the time God desired a physical object to represent the location of His presence on earth. When that ended, the need for the Ark ended. No Ark was present ...

- in the Temple rebuilt by Zerubbabel,
- in the Temple reconstructed by Simon the Hasmonean, or
- in the Temple reconstructed by Herod the Great.

Jesus Himself said that Herod’s Temple was **“My Father’s House”** (John 2:16). This meant the Herodian Temple was considered to be legitimate by Jesus, and therefore by God the Father Himself. This was true even though no Ark was within that Holy of Holies. Jesus Himself as the “living” representative of God was more important than any box, even a physical copy of a very real box present at this moment in the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 11:7, Revelation 11:19).

Jeremiah says to forget about the Ark. It will be forgotten, whether now or after Christ returns. As Dr. Martin and I have written before, it is possible that some kind of Ark, perhaps the one Jeremiah buried at Mount Nebo (if such a thing is there), would **ONLY** be useful for the antichrist to find it. It may give him some sort of legitimacy in the eyes of people who are easily deceived.

David Sielaff, November 2014

¹ Mount Nebo was where Moses viewed the Promised Land and was buried (Deuteronomy 32:49–50, 34:1, 5–6, and Jude 9).