

The Tabernacle of David

II Sam 6

I Chr 13; 15; 16:1-7, 37-43

Acts 15:15-18 (quotation from Amos 9:11-12)

¹⁵ “And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written,

¹⁶ ‘AFTER THESE THINGS I WILL RETURN,

AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN,

AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS,

AND I WILL RESTORE IT,

¹⁷ IN ORDER THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD,

AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,’

¹⁸ SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM OF OLD.

Tabernacles and temples:

Tabernacle of Moses

Solomon's Temple

Ezra's Temple

Herod's Temple

What was (is) the tabernacle of David?

The History of the Ark of the Covenant

The plans for the **Tabernacle of Moses** were given at the mountain of God to Moses, and it was used as the place of worship during the time they were in the wilderness. After the Hebrews entered the Promised Land, during the time of the Judges, the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh. In essence the Tabernacle was a tent surrounded by a wall that formed a court, known as the outer courts. All of the animal sacrifices were performed on the altar in the outer court, and anyone who had a sacrifice to make could enter. The tent of the Tabernacle was divided into two rooms: the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Holy Place could only be entered by the priest who was on duty that day, and each day the priest would trim the lamps, change the showbread and burn incense on the altar of incense.

The most important piece of furniture in the Tabernacle was located in the Holy of Holies: the Ark of the Covenant. There was a heavy curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, and one day a year the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies to minister before the Ark of the Covenant.

Ex 25:10-22: The Ark of the Covenant was a box 2.5 x 1.5 x 1.5 cubits made of wood overlaid with gold. There were rings on the feet—two on each side. When the Ark needed to be moved, poles were placed through the rings and the Ark was carried on the shoulders of the Levites. The most noteworthy part of the Ark was the lid. Placed at either end of the lid and facing one another were two cherubim, made from hammered gold and kneeling in an attitude of worship with their wings stretched out and touching over the center. Under the wings was placed the Mercy Seat. It was there, on the Mercy Seat, that God's manifest presence dwelt.

I Sa 4:1-11: During the time of Samuel Israel was in battle with their perpetual enemy, the Philistines, and the battle was not going very well. So the elders decided to go to Shiloh and bring the Ark of the Covenant to the battleground—sort of a good luck charm. It almost worked, but the Philistines won anyway, and in the process captured the Ark.

I Sa 5:1-7: The Philistines moved the Ark and placed it beside their idol, Dagon, in Ashdod. To their dismay, the next morning they found the idol flat on his face before the Ark. Furthermore, God brought great distress upon the Philistines—disease, tumors and confusion. So the leaders decided it should not remain there.

I Sa 6:1-12: The Ark remained among them for seven months before they finally did something. They decided to make a test by building a new cart and placing two milking cows (with calves) that had never been harnessed before in the harness. They then took to calves bauling back into the city and released the cows. The cows headed straight for Israel, and thus the Ark was returned.

I Sa 7 : The Ark was not returned to the Tabernacle in Shiloh, but instead placed at the home of Abinadab, where it remained for 20 years, during the entire reign of Saul.

Moving the Ark to Jerusalem

I Ch 13:1-14: David had become king, and decided to move the Ark to Jerusalem. Why he wanted to do that is not clear, other than that he sought after God's face and wanted to be in His presence. So he consulted with all the leaders, and in essence he held a vote: "*for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.*" (vs 4). Notice that he did not consult the Torah, the Word of God, but rather the opinion of men. This was his first mistake.

So they went to Abinadab's house in Kiriah-jearim, and like the Philistines, built a new cart drawn by oxen, placed the Ark on the cart and began the trek to Jerusalem. It seemed the endeavor started with great promise, and there was great celebration.

The celebration, however, turned to sorrow when tragedy struck. The cart hit a pot hole, causing it to rock. When Uzza, one of the drivers reached out his hand to steady the Ark he immediately was struck dead. David realized that something was drastically wrong and stopped the procession in its tracks. He refused to move the Ark another foot until he knew what was wrong, so the Ark remained at the house of Obed-edom.

David made his second mistake when he chose to use the pagan/unbelievers' method of moving the ark instead of God's clearly given method of having it carried on the shoulders of the Levites. The Philistines did not know God's word, but David did.

I Ch 15:1-16: While the Ark remained with Obed-edom God bless Obed-edom tremendously. David noticed this blessing, and set out to determine the correct way to move it. He discovered that only the Levites could carry the Ark, so after six months he decided to try it again. "*Because you did not carry it at the first, the LORD our God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance.*" (vs 13) This time they did it right.

The distance they needed to carry the Ark, from Obed-edom's house to Jerusalem, was over 10 km, and it was hard work. But now it was different. God was helping them: *Because God was helping the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams.* (I Ch 15: 26)

Thus, before they took a step they sacrificed 7 bulls and fatlings (sheep), and after every six steps they sacrificed another bull and fatling. (II Sam 6:13) Imagine the joy they felt as they began to move the Ark and nothing bad happened! David commanded that singers, with instruments of music -- harps, lyres, loud-sounding cymbals -- to raise sounds of joy.

When they arrived at Jerusalem they took the Ark to a tent that David had pitched on a hill. This tent where the Ark of the Covenant remained until the Temple was built 37 years later, was the **tabernacle of David**. It was distinguished by two characteristics that foreshadowed the New Testament church:

- The Ark of the Covenant, i.e. the presence of God, was no longer hidden behind closed doors, behind the veil of the Holy of Holies, but now the manifest presence of God was available to all the people.
- Worship, not religious practice, became the focus of the people. David required that worship be conducted before the Ark continuously--24/7/365. (I Ch 16:37)

It is important to note in this context that the presence of God dwelt on the **Mercy Seat**. We know that God has promised to judge the world, so we have a tendency to help Him out by sitting on the **judgment seat**, even though He warned us in Matt 7:1 that we are not to judge. Judgment here does not mean discerning good and bad, as much as it does coming to conclusions about the worth or worthlessness of a

person and coming to conclusions about that one based on those conclusions. Furthermore, the mercy seat was located in the midst of worship; true, humble worship and adoration.

Obed-edom had known the blessing of the Lord while the Ark resided at his house. Now that it was moved to Jerusalem he moved his entire family to Jerusalem to be near the place of blessing. It was more important for Obed-edom to have the blessing of God than to be in his homeplace.