

## International Lessons.

LESSON 2.

July 13, }  
1884. }

### THE ARK IN THE HOUSE.

{ 2 Sam 6 :  
1-12. }

GOLDEN TEXT.—“He blesseth the habitations of the just.”—Prov. 3 : 33.

TIME.—B.C. Four years later than last lesson.

PLACE.—Jerusalem and Baale.

PARALLEL.—1 Chron. 13.

INTRODUCTION.—During the interval from the last lesson the arms of David had been successful and he was firmly established on the throne of Israel. It was characteristic of him that he should seek to identify in a more special and emphatic way than had yet been done, the worship of Jehovah with the capital of the Kingdom. The artisans of King Hiram had built David an house, but he would feel that there was a greater King over Israel than himself, he was but the representative of Divine sovereignty, and it was eminently fitting that the visible symbol of that power should be fixed in the capital, and the realization of that idea is the subject of our lesson. Apart from the religious aspect of this event, it was in the highest degree wise, politically. Jerusalem, because of this, became the centre of worship, the objective spot of the pious Israelites prayers and pilgrimages. The great importance attached to this aspect of the question is manifested by the action of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, when after the revolt of the ten tribes from the rule of Rehoboam, he set up the worship of the golden calves in Dan and Bethel. (1 Kings 12 : 26-29.) We are sure, however, that the one supreme thought in David's mind was honour and reverence for the God of Israel; in fact some have thought from Psalm 132 : 2-5, that it was a dream of David's youth, and a vow of his early manhood, that the ark of God should be brought to that place where it would please Him to record his name. Call attention to the fact that the ark had remained at Baale (or Kirjath-Jearim), since the incidents narrated in 1 Sam. 4 : 11; 7 : 1, 2, though occasionally brought out for special purposes. (1 Sam. 14 : 18.) It had therefore been in this state of seclusion during the leadership of Samuel, the reign of Saul and the eleven years of the reign of David.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 1. “Again :” after the successes recorded in the preceding chapter. “Chosen men :” the chief men, most influential from the tribes this was for the purpose of taking counsel with them on the subject of bringing up the Ark, thus interesting the whole kingdom in the movement. (See 1 Chron. 13 : 1-4.)

Ver. 2. “With all the people :” we suppose the thirty thousand of ver. 1, and a large number beside who would gladly join in this great religious ceremony. Nothing is said of the soldiers though doubtless an armed force accompanied the king and those with him to protect them from an attack of the Philistines, to which they would be exposed. For the journey to Baale, see 1 Chron. 13, this was the same as Kirjath-Jearim, the old Canaanitish name having continued with the Israelitish one. (See 1 Sam. 6 : 21; 7 : 1; Josh. 15 : 9; 1 Chron. 13 : 6.) “The ark :” made in the wilderness under the direction of Jehovah, it was the most sacred thing in the tabernacle and its place was in the Holy of Holies. “Dwellethe—Cherubim :” this because they were always associated with the presence of God (Psa. 18 : 10; Ezek. 11 : 22); and the Shekinah was here.

Ver. 3. “New cart :” or covered waggon, as did the Philistines. (1 Sam. 6 : 1 on); this was not the divinely appointed way, it should have been carried by the chosen family of Levites. (Num. 4 : 15.) “House of Abinadab :” where it had remained since it was sent back by the Phil-

istines. “Gibeah :” or “in the hills.” “Uzzah :” strength. “Ahio :” brotherly; “sons” or descendants, possibly three or four generations back, we are not told that Abinadab was alive even when the Ark was taken to Kirjath-jearim, and there is no such mention now.

Ver. 4. “Brought it out :” doubtless to the shout of the words which Moses uttered when the Ark was moved forward in the wilderness. (Num. 10 : 35.) “Went before :” to guide the oxen.

Ver. 5. “David—played :” this was a glad day for the king and his people, and they express their gladness as has been done by all people in all ages by musical instruments. “Instruments made of fir-wood :” rather as in the parallel passage in 1 Chron. 13 : 8; “With all their might and with songs.” “Harps, psalters :” a stringed instrument of a triangular form. “Timbrels :” resembling our modern tambourine. “Cornets :” a loud sounding kind of instrument generally made of the horn of some animal. “Cymbals :” resembling our modern instruments of the same name only smaller.

Ver. 6. “Nachon's threshing floor :” Nachon is not a proper name, it is rather a prepared, a fixed place, a place always used for the same purpose, in 1 Chron. 12 : 9 it is called the “threshing floor of Chidox :” it may have been that this latter was the name of the owner, some, however, interpret both names as having reference to the tragedy of the next verse, here, “Nachon's threshing floor” is translated “the threshing floor of smiting,” and in 1 Chron., “the threshing floor of the dart.” “Uzzah—his hand :” which even the priests might not do. “Shook it :” a rude, heavy cart without springs on a rough road. The act of Uzzah was not sinful in its intention but in its disobedience (possibly through forgetfulness, as there seems to have been strange forgetfulness on the part of all, king, priests and people alike), of a divine ordinance.

Ver. 7. “Anger—kindled—died :” why? Was it not a very slight offence to receive so severe a punishment? It may appear so, but apart from the assurance that the Judge of all the earth must do right, we think that we can see reasons for the severity. The ark was the symbol of the Divine presence, and as such was to be held in the deepest reverence, none might look at it much less touch it without danger of death. Uzzah was a Levite, and as such knew the commands of God respecting the ark. It is more than likely that long familiarity had bred—not contempt—but freedom and carelessness with reference to the divine symbol; and it was evident that king and people alike needed the lesson which the judgment conveyed. Did we know better the spirit of the times we should likely understand better the Divine act.

Ver. 8. “David—displeased :” the word elsewhere translated “Grieved :” he was afraid lest the divine anger should extend to himself and the people, the whole arrangement of the journey which had stopped so disastrously was his planning. “Perez-Uzzah :” [the breach, or the rent of Uzzah.

Vers. 9, 10. Not only did this sad incident interfere with the procession, but it stopped the journey. David feared to go on lest a greater catastrophe might happen, so he determined to leave the ark where it was, and not bring it up, as he had intended, to Mount Zion, until he had more explicit Divine direction on the matter, which had he sought at first would have guarded him against the sin that brought the judgment. “So the ark was carried into the house, nigh at hand, of Obed-Edom :” lit. serving Edom. He was a Levite, descended from Kohath to whose family the duty of caring for the ark was originally assigned. (Num. 3 : 27-31.) “Gittite :” so-called from the place of his birth, the Levitical city of Gath-remmon in the tribe of Dan.

Ver. 11. Obed-Edom showed the courage of true faith in receiving the ark when the king feared to continue his