



LESSON,—SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1908.

**David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem.**

II. Sam. vi., 1-12. Memory verse, 12. Read II. Sam. iv.; Chronicles xiii., xv., xvi.

**Golden Text.**

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. Ps. c., 4.

**Home Readings.**

- Monday, September 28.—II. Sam. vi., 1-23.
- Tuesday, September 29.—I. Chr. xiii., 1-14.
- Wednesday, September 30.—I. Chr. xiv., 1-17.
- Thursday, October 1.—I. Chr. xv., 1-3, 11-16, 25-29.
- Friday, October 2.—I. Chr. xvi., 1-22.
- Saturday, October 3.—I. Chr. xvi., 23-43.
- Sunday, October 4.—Ps. cxxxii., 1-18.

**FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.**

The title of our lesson speaks about David bringing the ark to Jerusalem—who knows what the ark was that is here spoken of? You all know about Noah's ark and the animals that went into it, but this is not a great ship like that was. Who can tell me what this ark was like, what it was meant for, who made it, what was in it, and where it had been all this time? (Ex. xxxvii., 1-9 will supply the teacher with a fair description of the ark.) It was made, then, in the time of Moses and came up with the Israelites into Canaan. For hundreds of years it had been in the tent, or tabernacle, at Shiloh until it was taken, during a battle, by the Philistines. For seven months, when Samuel was quite a young man, it remained in the land of the Philistines, but at last they sent it back and it had remained since then, until our lesson story of to-day, for about seventy years at Kirjath-Jearim, or Baalah, as our lesson calls this town (Josh. xv., 9), one of the border towns of Judah. The ark, you know, was the centre of the Hebrew religion, so this long neglect showed how little the Israelites had cared for God all this time, or they never could have left the ark so long for just one man and his family to look after. David, however, was now king of Israel, and had conquered his enemies on all sides; and among those enemies the very Philistines who had once taken God's ark. David's country was now at peace and he thought this would be a good chance to give God's ark its right place, to bring it to his capital, Jerusalem. So he gathered together a great many men from all over the land, soldiers, princes, priests, and all sorts of great people, and one day they had one of the biggest, happiest, noisiest processions that there ever had been, when David led the way to bring the ark to Jerusalem. Have you ever followed a procession and listened to the band? I hardly need ask you that, for surely you must have all done that at some time. They didn't have musical instruments such as we have (verses 5, 15), but ones that made a good deal more noise; cymbals, two sorts of metal plates or shallow bowls that were clanged together; long silver trumpets, not made like our trumpets are at all; cornets, again nothing like our cornets, but just separate pieces of metal that were made to strike and jangle together; other instruments too, but all making a happy joyous noise and the people singing and shouting for happiness. Would you like to have been there?

**FOR THE SENIORS.**

'More haste less speed' is an old saying, and David, who had learnt caution at an early age, was here caught up by impulse

that carried a serious retribution with it. 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' is good advice, and this is only one of the many instances where Bible characters have failed in their strong points. David thought the time had come when the ark should be given a suitable place, and stirred by his enthusiasm he did not stop to find out that God had given explicit directions as to how the ark should be carried (Num. i., 50, 51; iii., 30, 31; iv., 5, 6, 15, and many other places). He took, instead of God's directions, a page out of the book of heathen example (compare verses 3, 5 with I. Sam. vi., 7). Instead of the security on uneven roads that human bearers would have given the ark, the jolting of the cart occasioned the sad incident that clouded the joyous day and turned it into a day of mourning and fear. God had cared for his ark when there was no human being nearby even to guide the kine that drew it (I. Sam. vi., 12), and he doubtless would have done so again. The action of Uzzah may seem at a glance a slight offense, yet it was expressive of that lack of reverence and faith which, if suffered, would destroy the whole life of the new movement instituted by David's zeal. Better a time to pause and think what kind of service this God required and what was the nature of Jehovah, than a careless enthusiasm engendered by the king's and likely to flicker out as quickly as it rose if founded on nothing more sure. If God thinks it worth while to give directions concerning anything, he certainly thinks them necessary to be obeyed. There are several instances in the Bible where in the early stages of a new movement towards his worship God has taken the occasion to impress by some such example the fact that reverence and obedience are emphatic prerequisites of all true worship. The mistaken belief that the ark was a thing to be feared, he took care to remove very shortly (verse 11). God's presence is gracious and merciful to everything but sin, and that physician is never harsh who cauterizes a wound to prevent the poison spreading through the whole body.

**(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')**

14. David danced before Jehovah. Dancing was performed at first on sacred occasions only. It was a part of the religious ceremonies of the Egyptians as well as of the Hebrews. Among the Hebrews it was joined with sacred song, and was usually participated in by the women only. When the men danced it was in company separate from the women, promiscuous dancing not being practised. Dancing was an outward expression of tumultuous joy.—Freeman.

The man who stands straightest in the presence of sin bows lowest in the presence of God.—F. B. Meyer.

There is little hope for an irreverent fellow. It is hard to get hold of him. There is so little in him to get hold of,' wisely remarks Bishop Vincent. Am I guilty of irreverence in any way, of treating holy things as if common, of profaning the Sabbath, of speaking jestingly of the Bible, of taking God's name in vain?

Praise and thanksgiving lift the soul upward.—David Swing.

The Christian life that is joyless is a discredit to God and a disgrace to itself.—M. D. Babcock.

**(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES.')**

For seventy years the ark as the centre of religious worship had lain in partial neglect. Soon after the settlement of the Israelites in Palestine Joshua deposited the ark at Shiloh, twenty miles north of Jerusalem, and ten miles north of Bethel (Josh. xviii., 1). It was still there at the close of the period of the Judges (I. Sam. i., 3); and Samuel lived at Shiloh with Eli. The sons of Eli had carried the ark from Shiloh into a battle against the Philistines, hoping that God would give them the victory for the sake of this symbol of his worship. But God did not reward wickedness in that way. The Israelites were defeated, and the Philistines captured the ark. But the Lord would not permit them to retain it. Their idol Dagon fell before it. The people were smitten with severe sickness wherever the ark was sent. Finally it was restored to Israel, and sent up the Sorek valley as far as Kirjath-jearim,

eleven miles southwest of Jerusalem, in the house of Abinadab on the hill (I. Sam. vii., 1. In verse 3 of to-day's lesson the name 'Gibeah' simply means 'the hill'), who put it under the charge of one of his sons.

The neglect of the ark and its separation from its place in the tabernacle at Shiloh, with one high priest following Saul and another David, shows to what a low and divided state religion had fallen in Israel under Saul. The neglect of the means of religion, of places of worship, and set times for devotion is generally accompanied by a decline in the spirit of religion. It is both a sign of the decline and a means toward it.

The place of music—Christianity's triumph is strikingly illustrated by an incident in the work of missionaries in the Philippines. One of the conditions with which they have to contend, as Jesus did in his day, is leprosy. . . . And now a physician in a leper hospital has solicited musical instruments from friends and has organized a leper-orchestra—the San Lazaro Hospital Orchestra. A photograph shows a bright-faced group with mandolins, guitars, violins, flute, and fife. Isn't that an advance for the kingdom over the early days of the church? It is a greater triumph for Christ that men while still lepers can make music in their rejoicing, than that they should merely be freed on earth from bodily disease.—'Sunday School Times.'

Verse 15. 'It was the greatest day of David's life. Its significance in his career is marked by his own pre-eminent position—conqueror, poet, musician, priest, in one. . . .

It was felt to be a turning-point in the history of the nation. David was on that day the founder, not of freedom only, but of an empire; not of religion only, but of a church and commonwealth.'—Stanley. The ark was born on the shoulders of the Levites (I. Chron. xv., 15), amid the greatest enthusiasm.

'Every care was now taken to carry out to the letter all that had been ordered with regard to the removal of the ark. It was done in a splendid manner, and with stately music, and with the proper ordering of the priests and the Levites. The king himself was dressed in a linen ephod, and with a harp in his hands, and with singing and with sacred dancing he led the procession. As they drew near Mount Zion the women of the city came out to welcome them. Trumpets pealed, there were shouts as of a victorious army, and now all felt that the wanderings of the ark had ended even as the wanderings of the king had on this day of triumph.'—W. F. Knox Little in 'Temple Series of Bible Characters.'—'David.'

**Bible References.**

I. Sam. ii., 30; Ezek. xxii., 26; Heb. ii., 28, 29; Psa. xxvi., 8; Deut. xii., 10-12; Psa. xxiv. is believed to have been sung as the ark was carried into Jerusalem.

**Junior C. E. Topic.**

Sunday, October 4.—Topic—Songs of the Heart. X. Our vows and their fulfillment. Ps. cxvi. (Consecration meeting.)

**C. E. Topic.**

Monday, September 28.—Going astray. Luke xv., 11-16.

Tuesday, September 29.—Coming to himself. Luke xv., 17-19.

Wednesday, September 30.—His father's welcome. Luke xv., 20.

Thursday, October 1.—Saying, 'I am sorry.' Luke xv., 21.

Friday, October 2.—His father's forgiveness. Luke xv., 22-24.

Saturday, October 3.—His elder brother. Luke xv., 25-32.

Sunday, October 4.—Topic—The story of a boy who was sorry. Luke xv., 11-19. (Consecration meeting.)

**Sunday School Offer.**

Any school in Canada that does not take the 'Messenger' may have it supplied free on trial for three weeks on request of Superintendent, Secretary or Pastor, stating the number of copies required.

**N.B.—Ask For Our Special Year End Offer.**