

2nd Samuel – Chapter 6

The Ark of the Covenant

“The specific design for the ark is given in Exodus 25.10-22.... It was made of acacia wood, an extremely hard wood common to the Sinai Peninsula. The ark was 3 feet 9 inches long, 2 feet 3 inches wide, and 2 feet 3 inches high. It was plated with gold and had a gold rim around the top. It stood on four legs, and on each side were two gold rings so poles could be inserted for the Levites...to carry it. The cover...was pure gold. On the top of the lid were two cherubim—probably sphinxes with their wings stretched over the cover.

The ark became the focus of God’s presence among his people. God would regularly appear in a cloud of glory on the mercy seat of the ark (Exodus 25.22). On the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the great holy day of the Bible, the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies chamber in front of the ark, and God would appear in the cloud over the cover (Leviticus 16.2).... The people saw the box as God’s footstool (1 Chron 28.2). The ark’s central purpose was to hold the Ten Commandments (Exodus 25.16).” (Vanderlaan)

“Outside the Pentateuch and the historical writings, the ark is mentioned by name only once in the Psalter (Ps 13.8) and once in the Prophets (Jer 3.16)... It is not certain precisely when and how the ark was lost; the Bible is silent on this matter.... According to some Jewish traditions, the Babylonians removed the vessels of gold, silver, and bronze, but Jeremiah removed the ark and the sacred tablets and hid them from the Babylonians [see *e.g.* 2 Maccabees 2.4-8]...” (Anchor Bible Dictionary)

See also Hebrews 9.4; Revelation 11.19

v.2 “The ark could be moved only after the Philistines had been driven from the Gibeonite region.” (McCarter) It had been in Kiriath-jearim 20 years (1 Sam 7.1-2).

v.7 “Although Uzzah’s intent may have been good, he violated the clear instructions the Lord had given for handling the ark.” (NIV) “The ark, being a very holy object, was also, therefore, a very dangerous one.” (McCarter)

v.13 “David had become aware of his previous error (1 Chron 15.13-15).” (NIV)

v.16 To what extent was Michal’s reaction due only to David’s actions, or did the tragedy of her circumstances color her judgment?

“In the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem [the author] saw the climax of a long sequence of events that began in the wilderness of Transjordan when Moses first promised the people of

Israel ‘rest from [their] enemies all around’ (Dt 12.10) and spoke to them of ‘the place that Yahweh your god will choose...to put his name’ (Dt 12.5), and which will find its denouement in Solomon’s long speech in dedication of the temple in Jerusalem (I Kgs 8) after Yahweh ‘has given rest to his people Israel’ (I Kgs 8.56).” (McCarter)

Chapter 7

v.1 “The LORD had given him rest from all his enemies.” Chronologically the victories noted in 8.1-14 probably preceded the events of this chapter. The arrangement of material is topical—ch.6 records the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem; ch. 7 tells of David’s desire to build a temple in Jerusalem in which to house the ark.” (NIV)

v.2 The prophet “Nathan is mentioned here for the first time. We are not told where he came from or how he came to David’s court. He will play an important role in subsequent events, in the aftermath of the Bathsheba affair (chap. 12) and in the dispute involving the succession (I Kings 1)....

Now for the first time David is at rest. The two kingdoms are united under his rule, and the land is at peace. The new capital is secure, and Yahweh’s ark is there. As David sits in the palace built for him by Phoenician craftsmen, he thinks of the ark housed in its tent-shrine nearby. Should a nation’s king have a house of cedar when its god does not?” (McCarter)

v.5 “David’s desire was commendable, but his gift and mission were to fight the Lord’s battles until Israel was securely at rest in the promised land (v.10; 1 Ki 5.3).” (NIV)

“Yahweh is David’s patron, not the reverse” (McCarter)

v.10 “The promise that the people of the Lord, David’s kingdom Israel, would have an enduring land of their own was also based on earlier commitments of the Lord. The seed of Abraham, God said, would be given Canaan as a home forever (Gen 13.15; 15.18; 17.8; Deut 34.4).” (Missler)

v.11 “In a beautiful play on words God says that David is not to build him a house (temple); rather, God will build David a house (royal dynasty) that will last forever (v.16).... This covenant with David is unconditional, like those with Noah, Abram and Phinehas.... It finds its ultimate fulfillment in the kingship of Christ, who was born of the tribe of Judah and the house of David.” (NIV) See Luke 1.31-33