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## Israel and Judah: 3. David, Philistines, and Uzzah

by David Sielaff, October 2014

Read the accompanying [Newsletter for October 2014](#)

Israel and Judah: 3

David,  
Philistines  
and Uzzah

In this portion of the history of Israel and Judah, King David continues to consolidate the kingdom given him by God (2 Samuel 5:2 and 1 Chronicles 11:2).<sup>a</sup> This presentation begins with a mention that Hiram, a powerful King of Tyre recognizes David's authority as King, and looks favorably upon him, offering help to construct a new palace. Then, David's sons and daughters born in Jerusalem are listed. Next come accounts of Philistine attacks on the new kingdom. Lastly, King David brings the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, with tragedy occurring on the journey.

**The situation:** All the tribes of Israel are unified under a single ruler, King David of Judah. This greatly disturbs the surrounding nations who view this unification as a danger to their own power and autonomy, economically and religiously.<sup>b</sup> The nations know about Israel and their God, YHWH. They know about Israel's exodus from Egypt, the wilderness years, and how the nations in the Promised Land were defeated. A unified Israel was cause for alarm.

### *Compilation of Samuel/Kings and Chronicles*

The books of Samuel/Kings and Chronicles were compiled from documents, just as the books of Genesis, Psalms, and Proverbs were compiled from collected documents. Sometimes the documents were official court records and histories of the Kings of Judah, other times they were written for a specific purpose. As Dr. Ernest L. Martin tells in his book *Restoring the Original Bible*, King David compiled the first set of documents to be canonized and be part of the Old Testament.<sup>c</sup> Complete information is in

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<sup>a</sup> See the first two history articles, "[Israel and Judah: 1 Saul and David](#)" and "[Israel and Judah: 2 David as King](#)."

<sup>b</sup> For the strategic value of Israel, read "[The Geopolitics of Israel, Ancient and Modern](#)" by Dr. George Friedman.

<sup>c</sup> The five books of Moses were their own "canon" of books, the constitution of the Israelite society as well as its religious rule. The priests and Levites kept these books secure (Deuteronomy 17:18).

“[Chapter 12, The Old Testament Periods of Canonization](#).” In that chapter information about the so-called “missing books” of the Old Testament is presented. Those books were histories but the authors of Samuel/Kings and Chronicles chose the most relevant portions for their narrative and used their authority to canonize their narrative. They did not “canonize” or make their sources more than human.

The five books of Moses, the Torah, were kept and preserved by the priests and Levites, and the original 10 Commandments (really, the “ten sayings”) were inside the Ark of the Covenant. Later, David gathered the writings of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel up to his own day. David wrote the first 72 Psalms. Other Psalms were compiled from the writings of Hezekiah and other authors. The last verses of the Book of Second Samuel tell us about David’s purchase of Araunah’s threshing floor as the location for the Temple. This location, above the Gihon Springs, was where Solomon was to build:

- according to God’s specifications;
- with all David’s preparations and accumulated stone, wood, and metals;
- guided by the skills of the Phoenician designers and craftsmen from Tyre; and
- constructed by Levites, along with many other laborers.

The Book of Kingdoms (First and Second Kings in the King James Version) was compiled mostly by Isaiah, with portions after Isaiah’s death likely completed by Jeremiah (or so Jewish tradition tells us, Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Bathra*, 15a), and this makes good sense. The opening chapter of First Kings begins with the end of David’s reign and David’s death. The Book of Chronicles deals mostly with the political and dynastic of the southern kingdom of Judah and focuses on the city of Jerusalem. Dr. Martin wrote:

**“The whole emphasis in the Book of Chronicles, which makes it so different from the parallel Book of Kingdoms, is upon Jerusalem as the center of God’s divine government on earth. It also shows how the proper authorities (the ordained priests and secular rulers as proved by the genealogical lists) were associated with the Temple at Jerusalem, and not in any other area of the world. According to Ezra in the Book of Chronicles, it was at Jerusalem that the standard of all religious teaching was to be centered.”**

**This is why Chronicles gives a great amount of detail to the history of the Ark (1 Chronicles chapters 13–16), the preparations for building the Temple, and the assignments of the priests and Levites in the Temple, and the genealogical lists of proper individuals and families who were necessary to perform the duties in the Temple and to govern Israelite society.”**

• [Martin, Restoring, “The Old Testament Periods of Canonization”](#)

After becoming King of a united Israel, neighboring peoples began to react to the new power situation. Many were negative, some enemies attacked (as we will see later), but one reaction was favorable.

### **[TEXT: The Phoenicians React Positively to David becoming King](#)**

#### **2 Samuel 5:11–12**

<sup>11</sup> Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar timber, carpenters and sidewall masons who built a palace for David. <sup>12</sup> Thus David realized that Yahweh had established him as king over Israel and had uplifted his kingship for the sake of His people Israel.

#### **1 Chronicles 14:1–2**

<sup>1</sup> Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, with cedar timber, sidewall masons and carpenters to build him a palace. <sup>2</sup> Thus David realized that Yahweh had established him as king over Israel, for his kingship was so highly uplifted for the sake of His people Israel. [\[end text\]](#)

The sentences beginning, “**Thus David realized ...**,” seem to be strange to read, but David’s conquest of Jerusalem and quick acceptance by a powerful king like Hiram was proof of God’s blessing and favor of

David as king over God's chosen people Israel. Why? God did this not for the sake of David, but **“for the sake of his people Israel.”**

Hiram built a palace appropriate to David's new status as a powerful ruler where he could hold court over God's people and accept foreign embassies. This fit with the statement in 2 Samuel 5:9 and 1 Chronicles 11:8 that David built up the city and Joab built up the walls of Jerusalem.

No king of Tyre warred against a united Israel, although other Phoenicians did. King Hiram was always a friend to David (1 Kings 5:1) and later Hiram worked with Solomon on joint commercial trading ventures over the oceans. In these passages, Hiram initiated the relationship by offering to build a palace for the King of Israel. This act helped Hiram to receive the “contract” for his best craftsmen to participate in the later construction of Solomon's Temple.

According to Josephus (*Against Apion*, 1:117), Hiram lived 54 years and reigned for 34. It seems that he befriended David early in his 33-year reign, and we know that Solomon had dealings with Hiram for a number of years during his 40-year reign. Were there then two Hiram's who ruled as kings of Tyre? Or, did Hiram rule jointly with his father Abibalus (*Against Apion* 1:113) with authority to make a treaty with David? We do not know from secular sources, and the Bible gives us no more information. It is also possible that Hiram had a longer reign (50+ years) than the sources in Josephus indicate. Some kings of Judah had very long reigns:

- Joash reigned 40 years (2 Kings 12:1),
- Azariah reigned 52 years (2 Kings 15:2), and
- Manassah reigned 55 years (2 Kings 21:1).

**Note:** As we will read later, the people of Tyre, the chief Phoenician city, join with the nations to collectively attack and crush Israel's Kingdom. But the King of Tyre did not participate. This indicates the people of Tyre disliked Israel and their god, while Hiram neither aided nor opposed the allied army fighting against Israel.

Regarding cooperation between Israel and Phoenicia in later commercial ventures, see my January 2012 Commentary “[An Ancient Canal in Egypt.](#)”

### **TEXT: *David's Sons Born in Jerusalem***

#### **2 Samuel 5:13–16**

<sup>13</sup> *After coming from Hebron*, David took more *concubines and wives in Jerusalem*, and more sons and daughters *were born to David*.

<sup>14</sup> These are the names of those born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, and **Solomon**; <sup>15</sup> Ibhah, Elishua, *Nephe*, and Japhia; <sup>16</sup> Elishama, *Eliada*, and Eliphelet.

#### **1 Chronicles 14:3–7**

<sup>3</sup> *In Jerusalem* David took more wives, and *David begot* more sons and daughters.

<sup>4</sup> These are the names of those *who were* born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan and **Solomon**, <sup>5</sup> Ibhah, Elishua *and Elpelet*, <sup>6</sup> *Nogah, Nepheg* and Japhia, <sup>7</sup> Elishama, *Beeliada* and Eliphelet.

[end text]

The compilers of Samuel and Chronicles thought it important to present the sons of King David who were born in Jerusalem, the capital and center of the Kingdom. Yet they have different accounts of names. This narrative is similar to the list of David's sons born in Hebron (2 Samuel 3:2–5 and 1 Chronicles 3:1–4, in “[Israel and Judah: 2. David as King](#)”). A list of all David's sons, and several of their mothers, is given in 1 Chronicles 3:1–9 with some of their mothers indicated. In verse 3:9, other unnamed sons of David are born to unknown concubines (just as 2 Samuel 5:13 states). Note the differences with the two texts above.

**TEXT: David's Jerusalem-Born Sons, 1 Chronicles Chapter 3**

**1 Chronicles 3:4-9**

<sup>4</sup> Then he reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup> These were born to him in Jerusalem: *Shimea*, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon; these four by Bath-sheba daughter of Ammiel. <sup>6</sup> Also there were Ibhar, *Elishama*, Elpelet, <sup>7</sup> Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, <sup>8</sup> Elishama, *Eliada* and Eliphelet, these nine. <sup>9</sup> All were David's sons, **aside from the concubines' sons**; and Tamar was their sister. [end text]

Note that *Shimea* is named *Shammua* in 2 Samuel 5:14 and 1 Chronicles 14:4 above and we are reminded that Bathsheba was the mother of all four sons listed first. *Elishama* is apparently another name of *Elishua*. The next three: Nogah, Nepheg, and Japhia are totally confusing between the three accounts. Finally, *Eliada* and *Beeliada* are likely the same son. David had daughters (2 Samuel 5:13 and 1 Chronicles 14:3) but only Tamar was named in these three lists.

In the table below, the differences from two (2) others are ***indicated*** with bold, italic, underline.

David's Sons Born in Jerusalem			
	2 Samuel 5:13-16	1 Chronicles 14:3-7	1 Chronicles 3:4-9
1.	Shammua	Shammua	<b><i>Shimea</i></b>
2.	Shobab	Shobab	Shobab
3.	Nathan	Nathan	Nathan
4.	Solomon	Solomon	Solomon
5.	Ibhar	Ibhar	Ibhar
6.	Elishua	Elishua	<b><i>Elishama</i></b>
7.		Elpelet	Elpelet
8.		Nogah	Nogah
9.	<b><i>Nephe</i></b>	Nepheg	Nepheg
10.	Japhia	Japhia	Japhia
11.	Elishama	Elishama	Elishama
12.	Eliada	<b><i>Beeliada</i></b>	Eliada
13.	Eliphelet	Eliphelet	Eliphelet

Of all the sons of David, whether born in Hebron or Jerusalem, **only Solomon** (#4. above) inherited the throne, although each of the others was a prince and eligible to rule. None of them had God's favor to do so. God rules in the affairs of men and He chooses who becomes king: **"he removes kings, and sets up kings"** (Daniel 2:21). For David's sons #5 down to #13, the name of the mother is not given.

Nathan was the direct ancestor of Jesus (Luke 3:31). Descendants of Nathan will likely live in Jerusalem before Christ's second coming (Zechariah 12:12), although this may refer to Nathan's tomb.

One son of David born in Hebron, Absalom, tried to seize the throne from David. Another son, from Hebron, Adonijah, was a rival claimant to Solomon. Both were unsuccessful and died as rebels.

Why was it important to list David's sons twice in First Chronicles? The historical genealogies in the first nine chapters of First Chronicles have the appearance of names from "official" lists, likely kept at the Temple, and taken to Babylon after Jerusalem's destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, preserved by Daniel, and compiled by Ezra. A genealogical listing is an outline of a man's place in Israelite society. He is not just part of a tribe, but he is part of history going back to ancestors, the patriarchs, and even back to Adam.

The discrepancies in the list of sons between 1 Chronicles 3:4–9 and 14:3–7 are surprising, but the former names are probably from the official lists (the more “formal” names), and the latter are probably the more common names.

### *The Philistines Attack Israel*

The first people to react negatively to the potential threat of Israel’s united power were the Philistines on the eastern Mediterranean coast. They gathered to attack and hoped to crush Israel as they did some 8 years before at Mount Gilboa when they destroyed King Saul, most of his sons, and Israel’s army. Since that time the Philistines lost much of their influence in the highlands of central Israel through the efforts of Abner (the general of King Ishbosheth of Israel), and Philistine control receded to the coastal areas. David unified Judah with Israel. Sometime after the Phoenician embassy to Jerusalem, the Philistines attempted a lethal attack upon David and his forces:

#### **TEXT: Philistine Response to David’s King of a United Israel**

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##### **2 Samuel 5:17–21**

<sup>17</sup> When the Philistines heard that *they had anointed David* as king over Israel, then **all the Philistines marched up to seek David**; but David heard of it and went *down to the fastness*.

<sup>18</sup> As for the Philistines, they came and *were deployed* in **the vale of Rephaim**.

<sup>19</sup> **David inquired of Yahweh**, saying, “**Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?**” Yahweh replied to *David*, “**Go up, for I will give, yea give the Philistines into your hand.**”

<sup>20</sup> So David entered **Baal-perazim**, and David smote them there. *He* said, “**Yahweh has breached through my enemies before me like a breach of waters.**” Therefore *he* called the name of that place **Baal-perazim**. <sup>21</sup> Since they had forsaken their *fetishes* there, David *and his men carried them off*.

##### **1 Chronicles 14:8–12**

<sup>8</sup> When the Philistines heard that *David had been anointed* as king over *all* Israel, then **all the Philistines marched up to seek David**; but David heard of it and went *forth facing them*.

<sup>9</sup> As for the Philistines, they came and *ransacked* in **the vale of Rephaim**.

<sup>10</sup> **David inquired of Elohim**, saying: “**Shall I go up against the Philistines, and will You deliver them into my hand?**” Yahweh replied to *him*, “**Go up, for I will give them into your hand.**”

<sup>11</sup> So they went up to **Baal-perazim**, and David smote them there. *David* said, “**The One, Elohim, has breached through my enemies by my hand like a breach of waters.**” Therefore *they* called the name of that place **Baal-perazim**. <sup>12</sup> Since they had forsaken their *elohim* there, David *ordered that they be burned in the fire*. [end text]

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“**The vale of Rephaim**” (the Valley of the Rephaim in the King James Version) is west and southwest of the Valley of Hinnom (called Gehenna in New Testament times), outside of the southern part of Jerusalem. The “**vale of Rephaim**” would be a base to cut off the north-south route from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. The goal of the Philistines was likely Jerusalem, either to capture the new capital or put David under siege in the citadel there. As we will see below, the Philistine army also possessed Bethlehem and had a garrison there. These moves effectively cut off communications of Israel’s kingdom with David’s old capital of Hebron still further south from Bethlehem, David’s birthplace.<sup>d</sup>

Remember, the Philistines preferred to fight in valleys and not in the hills where Israel’s army had the

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<sup>d</sup> This was similar to the Philistine divide-and-conquer strategy that led to the battle of Gilboa. They cut the northern portion of Israel in half, established garrisons in the small cities, and likely hoped to settle in the valley of Jezreel. We are not told how Abner caused them to abandon that strategy and return to their lands close to their coastal city-states.

advantage. The core of the Philistine army was their cadre of highly trained chariot troops (the ancient equivalent of tanks). These chariots could only operate on relatively flat surfaces and needed wide spaces to maneuver. They were effective in the battle of Mt. Gilboa where Saul and his army died (1 Samuel 13:5 and 2 Samuel 1:6).

David went with his army to the **“fastness”** (2 Samuel 5:17). It is unclear where or what that “fastness,” (the fortress or stronghold) was. David seems to have retreated to a secure location when the Philistine army appeared. Or, David may have been directing the battle from that location.

The place where this battle occurred was significant enough to memorialize its location with a new name, Baal-perazim (“Lord of the breaches,” or “Lord of the breaking,” or even “the Lord of the breakthrough”) referring to the place where God caused Israel to breach or break through the Philistine enemy army. At this period, it was still permitted for Israel to use the word Baal in reference to God. Later it was forbidden when “baal” chiefly came to mean a pagan god.

Before this battle an incident occurred which is listed among the exploits of three of David’s thirty mighty men. The following incident began from the same area, but the action took place in Bethlehem, some 8 miles south of Jerusalem. I believe it happened before the major battle, but it could have happened after. I insert this side note here because it is relevant to the geography where and the time when the larger battle took place. This incident happened **“during the harvest”**:

### **TEXT: *Three of David’s Mighty Men***

#### **2 Samuel 23:13–17**

<sup>13</sup> Three of the thirty head men went down *and came during the harvest* to David at **the cave of Adullam**, while a *Philistine kinfolk troop* was encamping in **the vale of Rephaim**.

<sup>14</sup> David was then in **the fastness**, and the garrison of the Philistines was then at Bethlehem.

<sup>15</sup> Now David voiced his yearning and said, **“Who may give me to drink water from the cistern of Bethlehem that is at the gate?”**

<sup>16</sup> So three *of the masters of war* rent their way into the camp of the Philistines and bailed water from the cistern of Bethlehem at the gate. When they had carried and brought it to David, then he would not drink it, but poured a libation of it to Yahweh.

<sup>17</sup> He said, **“Far be it from me, *O Yahweh*, for me to do this. Should I drink the blood of *the* men who went risking their souls?”**

And he would not drink it. These are the exploits that the three masters of war performed.

#### **1 Chronicles 11:15–19**

<sup>15</sup> Three of the thirty head men went down *to the rock* to David at **the cave of Adullam**, while a *force of Philistines* was encamping in **the vale of Rephaim**.

<sup>16</sup> David was then in **the fastness**, and the garrison of the Philistines was then at Bethlehem.

<sup>17</sup> Now David voiced his yearning and said, **“Who may give me to drink water from the cistern of Bethlehem that is at the gate?”**

<sup>18</sup> So *the* three rent their way into the camp of the Philistines and bailed water from the cistern of Bethlehem at the gate. When they had carried and brought it to David, *then David* would not drink it, but poured a libation of it to Yahweh.

<sup>19</sup> He said, **“Far be it from me, *my Elohim*, to do this. Should I drink the blood of *these* men who went risking their souls? *For it was at the risk of their souls that they brought it.*”**

And he would not drink it. These are the exploits that the three masters of war performed. **[end text]**

We are not given details how these three mighty men of David accomplished their remarkable feat. Did the three assault the unwallled town of Bethlehem themselves and fight their way to the well? Or, did they use stealth to obtain the water during the night? Whatever the case, the incident took place about the same

time as the first battle with the Philistines.

Military historian Mordechi Gichon understands the “fastness” referred to in the parallel passages above was at or very near Adullam, in the hills above the “**vale of Rephaim**” meaning the Valley of the Rephaim (*Battles of the Bible*, London: Greenhill Books, 1997), pp. 102–104). Adullam is in the hillside just south of the Valley of Elah, the place where David killed Goliath and later the army of Israel chased the demoralized Philistine army (1 Samuel chapter 17). The Valley of Elah connects in the east with the “**vale of Rephaim**,” which is southeast of Jerusalem.

The entire way is a natural route from the five Philistine cities to gather their armies at the city of Gath (where Goliath was from), to the Valley of Elah, to the “**vale of Rephaim**,” to Jerusalem. It is also a natural place to ambush an army traveling that route, but only if the ambushing army is powerful enough and knew an army was coming down that way. The Philistines, after their defeat of Saul and his army, must have had a low opinion of David, his commanders of mighty men, and the Israelite army.

The Philistines retreated along the same route they came, and they fled in such haste that they left the “**fetishes**” or idols of their pagan gods. These David gathered and burned, indicating to all who heard the story of this battle that the Philistine gods were powerless. The idols were likely carried with them, just as the Israelites during the time of Moses and Joshua carried the Ark of the Covenant into battle.

However, the Philistine were experienced and disciplined warriors with superior weapons. After the defeat and panic, they were able to regroup, obtain reinforcements to make up their losses, and went back on the attack. They made a sudden second advance upon Jerusalem. They traveled the same route from the Philistine cities at the coast, but this time prepared for Israelite tricks. They probably had many reasons why they would be victorious — this time. They no doubt made careful preparations, but their planning, training, and caution did them no good.

### **TEXT: *The Second Philistine Attack – and Defeat***

#### **2 Samuel 5:22–25**

<sup>22</sup> Once again the Philistines came up and *were deployed* in **the vale of Rephaim**.

<sup>23</sup> So David inquired of *Yahweh*; yet *He* replied,

**“You shall not go up to meet them. Go around behind them, so that you come against them opposite the aspens.**

<sup>24</sup> **Let it come to be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the aspens, then make your decisive move, for by then Yahweh will have gone forth before you to smite the army camp of the Philistines.”**

<sup>25</sup> David did so, just as *Yahweh* had instructed him; and *he* smote the Philistines from Gibeon as far as *your entry to* Gezar.

#### **1 Chronicles 14:13–17**

<sup>13</sup> Once again the Philistines came up and *ransacked* in **the vale of Rephaim**.

<sup>14</sup> So David inquired again of *Elohim*; yet *the One, Elohim*, replied *to him*,

**“You shall not go up after them. Go around about them, so that you come against them opposite the aspens.**

<sup>15</sup> **Let it come to be, as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the aspens, then go forth into the battle, for the One, Elohim, will have gone forth before you to smite the army camp of the Philistines.”**

<sup>16</sup> David did so, just as *the One, Elohim*, had instructed him; and *they* smote *the camp of* the Philistines from Gibeon as far as Gezer.

<sup>17</sup> Thus the renown of David went forth **into all the lands**, and *Yahweh* Himself put the awe of him upon all the nations. [end text]

The Philistines moved into the “**vale of Rephaim**,” set their camp there, and attacked those living in the valley. In 1 Chronicles 14:13 it says the Philistines “**ransacked**” the valley. This likely means they seized or

destroyed everything of value in the **“vale of Rephaim.”** Then they moved on, probably toward Jerusalem. This Philistine move may have surprised David so soon after the first attack, because he did not immediately attack the Philistine army. David was careful in the manner that he planned for battle, as Jesus told the people:

**“Or what king, going to engage another king in battle, will not, being seated, first plan to see if he is able to meet, with ten thousand, him who is coming against him with twenty thousand?”**

• *Luke 14:31, CLV*

**“Being seated”** means to sit down, take some time, and **“plan”** or consider what to do and in what order. This is in line with this proverb, **“Designs should be established by counsel; Execute war according to strategies”** (Proverbs 20:18, CLV). The King James Version has **“... sits not down first, and consults whether he be able ...”** (Luke 14:31), as do about half of modern translations. Others have a variation on **“plan.”** David consulted God for help and guidance, then he planned the details and executed the plan.

David had to consider that the Philistine army likely was larger, more technologically advanced, and ready for any tricks the Israelites might try. But the Philistines could not foresee God planning and acting (by controlling the wind) on behalf of Israel. When David consulted God, He told David the stratagem he was to follow. In doing what God told David to do, the Israelite army would prevail a second time.

Armies moving overland make noise. The noise comes from the sound of thousands of feet walking, animals and carts (if any) making sounds, and the clanking of armor and weapons hitting each other. The sound of the wind rushing through the Aspen trees (**“sound of marching in the tops of the aspens”**) masked the noise made by movement of the Israelite army. This may give us a time indicator for the battle because such breezes from the Mediterranean Sea are regular around noon each day,<sup>c</sup> although God could cause such a wind to occur any time He chooses to do so.

Finnis Dake understands this passage to mean that God caused the wind to be so loud through the trees that it made a supernatural sound as if a large army was coming through the forest to attack their flank. This caused a panic in the Philistine army.<sup>f</sup>

As the Israelites moved behind the Philistine army: **“Go around behind them”** (2 Samuel 5:23) and **“Go around about them”** (1 Chronicles 14:14), this may have been a flank attack, or the Israeli army was able to maneuver completely around to the rear of the Philistine army. Further detail was not necessary for us to know. Whatever happened, the Israelite army attacked the weakest point again, and the Philistine army was unable to maneuver their chariots or deploy their best units. Their camp was overrun, which meant the food for men and horses, and other supplies were seized. The Philistines fled again, this time in even greater panic.

The description of the aftermath of the battle involved a chase. The Philistine mob (no longer an army) was chased by the Israelites **“from Gibeon as far as your entry to Gezar”** (2 Samuel 5:25). With the battle starting southwest of Jerusalem, the Israelites chased the Philistines north to Gibeon some 5 miles, and then west to Gezar for some 20 miles, before discontinuing the chase about 12 miles from the Mediterranean coast.

The chase likely went on for at least two days. The Philistines fled for their lives and did what most defeated ancient armies did, dropped any object that would lighten their load. They dropped shields, weapons, helmets — anything that would slow them down.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>c</sup> Gichon, *Battles of the Bible*, p. 104.

<sup>f</sup> *Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible* (Lawrenceville, GA: Dake Bible Sales, Inc.), p. 336.

<sup>g</sup> Gibeon was the location of the strange battle where the army of Judah commanded by Joab began to fight with the army of Israel commanded by Abner (2 Samuel 2:12–3:1), as detailed in [“Israel and Judah: 2. David as King.”](#) This led in turn to further killing: **“Now Joab and his brother Abishai had killed Abner because he had put their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon”** (2 Samuel 3:30).

At the “**vale of Rephaim**” two great victories over the Philistines were fought and won by Israel and David. The glory went to God. To repeat:

**“Thus the renown of David went forth into all the lands, and Yahweh Himself put the awe of him upon all the nations.”**

• **1 Chronicles 14:17**

### ***The Aftermath of Two Victories against the Philistines***

This double defeat of the Philistines largely stopped their independent attacks upon the united kingdom of Israel, although as we later read, many Philistines allied themselves with other nations to fight Israel when they thought she was weak. Just as “**the renown of David**” and “**the awe of him**” was upon “**all the lands**” and “**all the nations**,” so too the renown and the awe easily turned to hate and a desire to kill Israel’s people and destroy the united kingdom. This sentiment continued since the entry into the Promised Land. It continues today.

The peoples surrounding Israel knew and remembered the stories of the exodus and their forced entry into the promised land. Now those same people, those Israelites and their God, were in control of the major trade routes of the ancient world from Mesopotamia and Anatolia to Egypt and Arabia. They also likely knew of the prophecies to Abraham and his descendants, that in the future Israel would expand its territory from east of the Nile River (one of its eastern outlets) to the Euphrates River. Israel began that expansion under King David by securing the Philistine threat on their western flank. The other countries were taking notice, and they act in the future.

The two battles were remembered over 100 years later in the days of Isaiah the prophet. He warns Jerusalem that their future destruction shall be as complete as was David’s destruction of the Philistine armies. In Isaiah’s time, Baal-Perazim has taken on a later name, now called “Mount” Perazim:

**“For as at Mount Perazim, Yahweh shall rise;  
As at the vale [valley] in Gibeon, He shall rage up,**

**To do His work; alien is His work! And  
to serve His service; foreign is His service!**

**So now, do not mock, lest your bonds should hold fast; For of a decisive conclusion have I heard from my Lord, Yahweh of hosts, On the entire land.”**

• **Isaiah 28:21–22**

The phrase “**YHWH shall rise**” means that God shall execute judgment against God’s enemies. In the time of Isaiah, Jerusalem and Judah had become God’s enemies, while at the same time they were His people who needed to be punished for their sins against YHWH. “**Mount Perazim**” refers to the first battle against the Philistines, and “**vale in Gibeon**” clearly refers to the second battle where the chase of the Philistines took place. YHWH’s rise to judgment here in Isaiah was to be against God’s own people Judah, not against the enemies of His people. Therefore his work is phrased as being “**alien**” (or “strange” as King James Version phrases it).

If you read the context of the Isaiah chapter 28 passage, the people of Judah were so extreme in their sinful behavior that they foolishly mocked God through their acts and their words, and they apparently did so publicly. The punishment they were to endure would be as sudden and as complete as the Israelite army’s victory over the Philistines, which was why Isaiah used a well-known historical reference.

### ***The Saga of the Ark***

Back during the time of Samuel, before Saul became king, Israel battled with the Philistines and the Ark of the Covenant was captured as a spoil of war in their victory over the Israelite army (1 Samuel 4:3–11). However, possession of it caused them severe problems (1 Samuel chapter 5). The Philistines returned the Ark to the Israelites, leaving it on a large stone (1 Samuel 6:18), then the narrative tells us what happened:

“So they sent messengers to the dwellers of **Kiriath-jearim**, saying, ‘The Philistines have restored the coffer [Ark] of Yahweh. Come down and take it up to you.’

Then the men of **Kiriath-jearim** came and took up the coffer [Ark] of Yahweh and brought it to the house of Abinadab which was on the hill; and they hallowed his son Eleazar to be in charge of the coffer of Yahweh. It came to be, from the day the coffer [Ark] had its seat at **Kiriath-jearim**, after many days had passed, that they amounted to **twenty years**; and all the house of Israel were plaintive after Yahweh.”

• **1 Samuel 6:21–7:2**

Sometime after the second victory over the Philistines, David decided to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem from Kiriath-Jearim. David did so for several reasons.

- The establishment of the religious cult at Jerusalem strengthens the king’s influence over the religious culture, as we find David doing by assigning the priests, Levites, the administrators, and the singers of the Tabernacle and for the future Temple.
- Such a move indicates David’s power, authority, success, and the stability of the kingdom.
- It consecrates Jerusalem as the capital of a kingdom recognizable by other governments.
- It helps unify the people who come to one central location where God placed His name (Deuteronomy 12:5, 11, 21, 14:23–24, 16:2, 6, 11, 26:2).
- In that central location the people would see their government in operation and have pride in its accomplishments such as buildings and public works.
- As the one central location for the feasts of Israel required by God, the people would experience festivities and be taught about God at the capital of the kingdom by professional teachers, the Levites.
- The people and the leaders participate together in the events, strengthening support of the unified monarchy.
- It shows David’s genuine concern for the rituals and required commands of God, which he desired to see operating again.
- Individuals could make sacrifices and conduct personal rituals at one select location.

David makes clear what he wants and how he intends to perform it. In fact, we may have further insight into David’s thinking by looking at Psalm 132, where there seems to be a quote from David about bringing the tabernacle and the ark to Jerusalem.

“<sup>1</sup> Remember, O Yahweh, concerning David, All his humiliation, <sup>2</sup> How he swore to Yahweh and vowed to the Sturdy One of Jacob [quoting David]:

<sup>3</sup> ‘I shall assuredly not come into my tent house,  
 Assuredly not go up onto the cot of my berth,  
<sup>4</sup> Assuredly not give sleep to my eyes, Or slumber to my eyelids,  
<sup>5</sup> Until I should find a place for Yahweh,  
 A grand tabernacle for the Sturdy One of Jacob.’

<sup>6</sup> Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah; We found it in the fields of Jaar. <sup>7</sup> Let us go to His grand tabernacle; Let us worship at His footstool. <sup>8</sup> Do arise, O Yahweh, to Your resting place, You and the coffer [Ark] of Your strength. ... [David’s assessment was correct, note:]

<sup>13</sup> For Yahweh [not David] has chosen Zion; He yearns for it as His dwelling place: <sup>14</sup> This is My resting place unto the future; Here shall I dwell, for I yearn for it. <sup>15</sup> Its provision shall I bless, yea bless; Its needy ones shall I satisfy with bread.”

• **Psalm 132:1–8, 13–15**

David did not write Psalm 132; it was one compiled by Hezekiah, a righteous king of Judah, and possibly written by him to celebrate the temple, with Hezekiah's tribute and quote of David in verses 3–5.

Below is an outline of the storyline of 2 Samuel chapter 6, giving highlights about bringing the coffer or Ark to Jerusalem. It is contained in H.L. Willmington, *The Outline Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), 2 Samuel 6:1–23. It provides insight into various aspects of the transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem.

THE ARK OF GOD (6:1–23): David transfers the Ark of God to Jerusalem.

- A. **The mission** (6:1–2): David goes to Baalah of Judah with 30,000 special troops to bring the Ark of God to Jerusalem.
- B. **The method** (6:3–4): They place the Ark on a new wagon, led by Uzzah and Ahio.
- C. **The music** (6:5): This is accompanied by singing and the playing of musical instruments.
- D. **The mistake** (6:6–8): The Lord strikes Uzzah dead when he reaches out to steady the Ark!
- E. **The months** (6:9–11): For the next 90 days, the Ark resides in the home of Obed-edom, who receives great blessing for his willingness to house the Ark.
- F. **The mad wife** (6:12–23): Michal becomes angry with David for dancing before the Ark, wearing only a priestly tunic.
  1. *David's celebration* (6:12–19): As the Ark is brought from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem, David joins in the celebration by dancing before the Lord in a priestly tunic.
  2. *Michal's condemnation* (6:20–23): David's wife sharply rebukes her husband for his behavior. David tells her that he is willing to look foolish in order to show his joy in the Lord. Michal remains childless throughout her life.

Keep in mind that the Concordant Literal Version uses the term **“the coffer of our Elohim”** to refer to **“the Ark of our God,”** as the King James phrases it. Later it refers to **“the coffer of the Covenant”** (CLV) as opposed to **“the Ark of the Covenant”** (KJV). So when you read “coffer,” I will put [Ark] next to it, so it will be clearer for you. Most of the information about the Ark will come from the Book of Chronicles. There will not be much double-column texts of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles until later.

The saga of the coffer or Ark begins when King David gathers together the leaders of Israel in one place for him to announce his desire to relocate the Ark. His desire meets with approval.

### ***TEXT: King David Convenes the Leaders of Israel***

#### **1 Chronicles 13:1–4**

<sup>1</sup> David consulted with the chiefs of the thousands and the hundreds, with every chief officer. <sup>2</sup> Then David said to the entire assembly of Israel:

**“If it seems good to you and if it is of Yahweh our Elohim, do let us unfold, do let us send to our remaining kinsmen in all the areas of Israel, and also to the priests and Levites who are with them in the cities where they have common pasturelands, that they may gather together to us, <sup>3</sup> and do let us bring around the coffer [Ark] of our Elohim to ourselves, for we did not seek after Him in the days of Saul.”**

<sup>4</sup> **The entire assembly agreed to do so,** [why?] for **the matter seemed upright** in the eyes of all the people.

[end text]

David's conditions for the move are twofold, [1] if the people agree, **“if it seems good to you,”** and [2] **“if it is of Yahweh.”** There is no direct statement in any of the texts that YHWH approved of David's plan to bring

the Ark to Jerusalem. As far as we know for sure, David assumes God's approval because the people approved, although Psalm 132:3–5 may provide the evidence for YHWH's approval.

David made it clear that in the reign of King Saul, the people neglected the Ark. Remember, the Ark held the Ten Commandments, written by the hand of God.

**“Then Moses turned around and descended from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hands, tablets written on two sides across them, on this and on that side were they written. And the tablets, they were the handiwork of Elohim; and the writing, it was the writing of Elohim, chiseled on the tablets.”**

• Exodus 32:15–16

Remember the first part of Proverbs 20:18, **“Designs should be established by counsel”**? David sought counsel from the leaders of Israel in this matter of the Ark, and by extension the tabernacle that housed the Ark. A tent was to be provided for the Ark, as we read later (2 Samuel 6:17).

So we pick up the narrative as the Ark begins to move on its way to Jerusalem.

### TEXT: *The Beginning Journey of the Ark to Jerusalem*

#### 2 Samuel 6:1–5

<sup>1</sup> David again gathered all the choice men in Israel, thirty contingents [Ed. note, most translate this as “thousands”].

<sup>2</sup> Then David and all the people with him set out and went to Baale of

Judah to bring up from there the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim, over which the Name is called, the Name of Yahweh of hosts, dwelling over the cherubim.

<sup>3</sup> They let the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim, ride on a new cart and carried it away from the house of Abinadab on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart.

<sup>4</sup> Thus they carried it away from the house of Abinadab on the hill with the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim; and Ahio was walking before the coffer [Ark].

<sup>5</sup> David and all the house of Israel were gamboling before Yahweh with all their strength and with songs, with harps and zithers, with tambourines, with sistrums and cymbals.

#### 1 Chronicles 13:5–8

<sup>5</sup> So David assembled all Israel from the Shihor of Egypt as far as Lebo-hamath, to bring the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim, from Kiriath-jearim.

<sup>6</sup> Then David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kiriath-jearim, that belongs to Judah, to bring up from there the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim, over which the Name is called, the Name of Yahweh dwelling over the cherubim.

<sup>7</sup> They let the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim, ride on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, with Uzzah and Ahio leading the cart.

<sup>8</sup> David and all Israel were gamboling before the One, Elohim, with all their strength and with songs, with harps and zithers, with tambourines, cymbals and bugles. [end text]

Some locations had two names, here Baalah seems to be a second name for Kiriath-jearim which means “town of woods.” The Shihor of Egypt has an uncertain identification that may not be able to be identified. The point is that **“the choice men in Israel”** and **“all Israel”** came from all over to escort the Ark to Jerusalem.

The Ark was the precise location **“over which the Name is called, the Name of YHWH,”** wherever the Ark happened to be. That was where the presence of God on earth went forth, the very center of the Holy of Holies when the tabernacle, and later the Temple, was established.

Be assured that the nations round about Israel knew that this important ritual object was being taken to

the recently conquered capital of a unified Kingdom of Israel. All had heard, some had witnessed, and some had experienced the power of Israel's God, even though they thought of YHWH as merely another Elohim. The Philistines certainly knew and understood the importance of this ritual object simply because of the problems they had when it was in their possession (1 Samuel chapter 5–6). Read those chapters in a modern translation, the problems of the Philistines are very entertaining.

The Ark was placed **“on a new cart”** and this was deemed a proper and perhaps safer mode of transport for this important artifact from the time of Moses, some 450 years before. (See Dr. Martin's article [“Chronology” The Key to Prophetic Understanding - Part 1,](#)” then read “Part 2.”)

The trip proceeded nicely. Everyone was happy. David and all Israel were **“gamboling,”** which has many synonyms: frolicking, leaping, and skipping, all with great happiness. This was not ecstatic dancing in an altered state of consciousness as far as we can tell from the text; they were simply overjoyed at the significance of the event linking them to Moses and their ancestors. There was energetic dancing like folk or Jewish communal dancing today. There was singing. Instruments performed. All was done **“before YHWH”** and **“before the One, Elohim”** while the procession was moving along. Two brothers, **“sons of Abinidab,”** Uzzah and Ahio, were leading the parade.

Then something evil occurred.

### **TEXT: *Uzzah Touches the Ark and Dies***

#### **2 Samuel 6:6–11**

<sup>6</sup> When they came to the threshing site of *Nacon*, Uzzah stretched forth his hand to the coffer [Ark] *of the One, Elohim, and took hold of it,* for the oxen were restive.

<sup>7</sup> And the anger of Yahweh grew hot against Uzzah. *The One, Elohim,* smote him *there for his carelessness;* and so he died there *by the coffer* [Ark] *of the One, Elohim.*

<sup>8</sup> Now the distress of David grew hot because Yahweh had breached a breach against Uzzah; and one has called that place **Perez-uzzah** until this day.

<sup>9</sup> David became fearful of *Yahweh* on that day; *he* said, **“How can the coffer [Ark] of Yahweh come to me?”**

<sup>10</sup> So David would not take away the coffer [Ark] *of Yahweh* to himself into the city of David; and *David* had it turned aside to the house of **Obed-edom the Gittite.**

<sup>11</sup> So the coffer [Ark] of *Yahweh* remained with the house of Obed-edom *the Gittite* **three months;** and Yahweh blessed Obed-edom and *his whole household.*

#### **1 Chronicles 13:9–14**

<sup>9</sup> When they came to the threshing site of *Kidon*, Uzzah stretched forth his hand to *take hold of* the coffer [Ark], for the oxen were restive.

<sup>10</sup> And the anger of Yahweh grew hot against Uzzah, *and He* smote him *because he had laid his hand on the coffer* [Ark]; and so he died there *before* Elohim.

<sup>11</sup> Now the distress of David grew hot because Yahweh had breached a breach against Uzzah; and one has called that place **Perez-uzzah** until this day.

<sup>12</sup> David became fearful of *the One, Elohim,* on that day *and* said: **“How can I bring the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim, to me?”**

<sup>13</sup> So David would not take away the coffer [Ark] to himself into the city of David; and *he* had it turned aside to the house of **Obed-edom the Gittite.**

<sup>14</sup> So the coffer [Ark] of *the One, Elohim,* remained with the house of Obed-edom, *in its own abode,* **three months.** And Yahweh blessed *the house of* Obed-edom and *all that he had.* **[end text]**

The Ark was not transported in the manner God commanded to Moses. The Ark was put on a cart contrary to God's clear instruction. The ark was to be carried with staves (poles) and only by Levites. In this instance it on a cart (2 Samuel 6:3; 1 Chronicles 13:7), in the same manner the Philistines returned the Ark to Israel (1 Samuel 6:8, 11). Later, the Chronicler writes that the transport was done correctly:

**“Then the sons of the Levites carried the coffer of the One, Elohim, on their shoulders with the slider bars on them, just as Moses had instructed by the word of Yahweh.”**

• **1 Chronicles 15:15**

The place where Uzzah died was given the name Perez-uzzah, which means in effect, **“outburst against Uzzah.”** The name Uzzah itself means “strength.” I suppose a conclusion could be made that Uzzah’s death, which most would consider unfair, may have been an **“outburst against strength”** meaning human strength, which Uzzah represented. However, I would not put too much emphasis on this idea.

The name **Obed-edom** where the Ark stayed for three months. also has a meaning. There are no written vowels in Hebrew. The context is expected to indicate which meaning is correct where there is more than one possible meaning. In the case of Obed-edom, Obed means “servant,” but the meaning of the second part is unclear. Obed-edom could mean “servant of Edom” or it could mean “servant of man” depending how the vowels are determined for the second half of the term. Obed-edom the Gittite is later mentioned as one of the guild of singers (1 Chronicles 15:18–25, 16:38, 26:4, 8, 15; 2 Chronicles 25:24).

David Sielaff, October 2014

### **Appendix, David and a Different Edom / Adam Situation**

As with the name Obed-edom, a similar *edom* / *adam* puzzle arises with regard to Amos 9:11–12:

<sup>11</sup> **“In that day, I will set up again the fallen booth of David: I will mend its breaches and set up its ruins anew. I will build it firm as in the days of old, <sup>12</sup> So that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen [*goyim*], which are called by my name, says YHWH that does this.”**

• **Amos 9:11–12, King James Version**

Like the King James Version, the Jewish Publication Society, has determined from the Masoretic Hebrew text that the Hebrew in Amos 9:11–12 is understood as follows:

<sup>11</sup> **“In that day, I will set up again the fallen booth of David: I will mend its breaches and set up its ruins anew. I will build it firm as in the days of old, <sup>12</sup> So that they shall possess the rest of Edom And all the nations [*goyim*] once attached to My name — declares the LORD who will bring this to pass.”**

• **Amos 9:11–12, JPS Tanakh 1985**

Centuries later at the Jerusalem conference in Acts chapter 15 the *ekklesia* was struggling to determine the status of believing Gentiles. James, the half-brother of Jesus, the leader of the Jerusalem *ekklesia*, gave his opinion in Acts 15:16–17, where he directly quotes Amos 9:11–12. James interprets the common translation of *edom*<sup>h</sup> to be *adam*, a human being, referring to all men. James then connects *adam* with **“all the Gentiles”** a few words later. James changes the understanding to reflect the word “man”:

<sup>16</sup> **“After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: <sup>17</sup> That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, says the Lord, who does all these things.”**

• **Acts 15:16–17 (King James Version)**

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<sup>h</sup> Where *edom* could mean either (1) the descendants of Esau, the Edomite people, or (2) the land of Edom.