

# 1 Chronicles

## Chapter 15

### *The Ark Brought to Jerusalem*

David built houses for himself in the city of David. And he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. 2 Then David said that no one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, for the LORD had chosen them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister to him forever. 3 And David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it. 4 And David gathered together the sons of Aaron and the Levites: 5 of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, with 120 of his brothers; 6 of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, with 220 of his brothers; 7 of the sons of Gershon, Joel the chief, with 130 of his brothers; 8 of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, with 200 of his brothers; 9 of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, with 80 of his brothers; 10 of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, with 112 of his brothers. 11 Then David summoned the priests Zadok and Abiathar, and the Levites Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab, 12 and said to them, "You are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites. Consecrate yourselves, you and your brothers, so that you may bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it. 13 Because you did not carry it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not seek him according to the rule." 14 So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel. 15 And the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD. 16 David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their brothers as the singers who should play loudly on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise sounds of joy. 17 So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brothers Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari, their brothers, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; 18 and with them their brothers of the second order, Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, and Mikneiah, and the gatekeepers Obed-edom and Jeiel. 19 The singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were to sound bronze cymbals; 20 Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah were to play harps according to Alamoth; 21 but Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah were to lead with lyres according to the Sheminith. 22 Chenaniah, leader of the Levites in music, should direct the music, for he understood it. 23 Berechiah and Elkanah were to be gatekeepers for the ark. 24 Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, should blow the trumpets before the ark of God. Obed-edom and Jehiah were to be gatekeepers for the ark. 25 So David and the elders of Israel and the commanders of thousands went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-edom with rejoicing. 26 And because God helped the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams. 27 David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as also were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers and Chenaniah the leader of the music of the singers. And David wore a linen ephod. 28 So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, to the sound of the horn, trumpets, and cymbals, and made loud music on harps and lyres. 29 And as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David dancing and celebrating, and she despised him in her heart.

**15:1–16:3** This account of the successful attempt to move the ark to Jerusalem is greatly expanded over the material in 2 Samuel. Only 15:25–16:3 has a parallel (2Sa 6:12–19); the rest of the material is unique to the Chronicler and reflects his own interests, especially in the Levites and cultic musicians (vv. 3–24). Ps 132 should also be read in connection with this account. (CSB)

**15:1–24** Due to the prominence of the ark in Israel’s worship, 1Ch gives a unique, extended report of its transfer to Jerusalem and the provisions made for it at its new location. (TLSB)

**15:1** *pitched a tent.* David not only built houses for himself in Jerusalem (cf 14:1–2) but also prepared a place for the ark with a tent (cf Ex 33:7–11). (TLSB)

**15:2** Only Levites should carry the ark under Mosaic Law (Nu 1:47–54). No longer “afraid of God,” as he was at the time of Uzzah’s death, David realized that God did not object in principle to the moving of the ark. In its temporary quarters, it brought blessings to the house of Obed-edom (13:13–14). Cf Ex 25:14; Nu 1:50; 4:5–16; Dt 10:8 for the prescribed procedure. (TLSB)

**15:4–10** The three clans of Levi are represented (Kohath, Merari and Gershon), as well as three distinct subgroups within Kohath (Elizaphan, Hebron and Uzziel)—862 in all. (CSB)

Listing represents all three branches of Levi: Kohath, Merari, and Gershom. In addition to priestly representatives, of whom only Zadok and Abiathar are mentioned (v 11), more than 800 Levites were to take part in the procession. (TLSB)

**15:11** *David summoned.* He acts as a leader for the priests here and throughout 1Ch, guiding, organizing, and even participating in their services wearing a priestly garment (v 27). (TLSB)

**15:12** *consecrate yourselves.* Through ritual washings and avoidance of ceremonial defilement (Ex 29:1–37; 30:19–21; 40:31–32; Lev 8:5–35). (CSB)

Purification rites were required of those who engage in holy ceremonies (Ex 19:10, 14; 29:1–37; 30:19–21; 40:31–32; Lv 8:5–35; 11:44). (TLSB)

**15:13** *according to the rule.* In 13:7, they had not considered Moses’ words about how to move the ark (cf v 15). (TLSB)

**15:15** *carried the ark.* To stress that this time the ark was moved “according to the word of the LORD,” the carrying is described as already accomplished. (TLSB)

**15:16–24** Processional music, vocal and instrumental, was to be offered under the direction of three Levites: Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, (v 17; see note, 6:31). Assisting them were “their brothers of the second order” (v 18), i.e., in a subsidiary position to the three leaders. Luth: “[David] himself establishes, arranges, and prepares the entire worship service with all diligence. He himself composes psalms as a model of how they should teach and praise God, and he stimulates and appoints many others for the same work of composing psalms. ‘No,’ dear David says, ‘I will not tolerate liars, hangmen of souls, bloody dogs, and murderers in my kingdom. They shall not mislead my people this way; they shall not murder or persecute the faithful priests and teachers this way. I will not tolerate them. They must go! Then the true teachers will be able to praise my God securely, freely, and joyfully, and to preach to the people in a profitable and salutary manner.’ Oh, what a fine and lovely kingdom it was in which the Word of God for once received a pious and faithful king! There everything had to be in very fine fettle, flourishing and prospering amid all wisdom and virtue; for God’s Word cannot fail to produce virtue. Therefore it was also during this period that this noble book, the Psalter, was produced, the like of which had not existed or been produced among the people. In fact, there were more people properly trained in the Scriptures at that time than before or after. No school will ever match this high school of David, be it high or low” (AE 13:188–89). (TLSB)

**15:19** *cymbals*. Hbr term used only in books written during and after the exile (1Ch; 2Ch; Ezr; Ne). (TLSB)

**15:20** *Alamoth*. Lit, “virgins.” (TLSB)

**15:21** *the Sheminith*. Lit, “the eighth.” (TLSB)

**15:25–29** Ark is brought to Jerusalem. The Levites would continue to care for the ark once it was in its proper place (cf 16:4–6; Nu 10:1–10). (TLSB)

**15:26** *God helped*. God’s Word guided them to move the ark properly. (TLSB)

*seven bulls and seven rams*. Sacrificed when the procession reached its destination. As it started out, “an ox and a fattened animal” were offered (2Sm 6:13). (TLSB)

**15:27** Both 2Sa 6:14 and the Chronicler mention David’s wearing a linen ephod, a garment worn by priests (1Sa 2:18; 22:18). The Chronicler adds, however, that David (as well as the rest of the Levites in the procession) was wearing a robe of fine linen, further associating him with the dress of the cultic functionaries. Apparently the Chronicler viewed David as a priest-king, a kind of Messianic figure (see Ps 110; Zec 6:9–15). (CSB)

David is said to have joined with the Levites, even wearing the linen ephod, a priestly vestment (cf 1Sm 2:18). David is a unique king in that he embodies the promise of the future priest and king, the Messiah. (TLSB)

**15:29** Parallel to 2Sa 6:16, but the Chronicler omits the remainder of this incident recorded there (2Sa 6:20–23). Some interpreters regard this omission as part of the Chronicler’s positive view of David, so that a possibly unseemly account is omitted. On the other hand, it is equally plausible that the Chronicler here simply assumes the reader’s knowledge of the other account (see notes on 10:13–14; 11:1–3; 12:1; 13:6). (CSB)