

The Death of Uzzah

In 2 Samuel 6:1-15, we find a very troubling story. God kills Uzzah for what appears that on the surface, Uzzah was doing a good thing. He was protecting the most treasured possession of the Israelites. This ought to be a significant moment in Israelite history. King David has consolidated his reign and the people of Israel. They are marching to Jerusalem with the Ark of Covenant, praising God. A tremendous spiritual revival seems to be taking place! Then all of a sudden, God strikes Uzzah down dead beside the ark. After reaching out to keep the ark from falling off the cart and hitting the ground, he is killed by God.

Why does God do that? And why is it that later in the chapter, the Israelites can move the ark to Jerusalem with no trouble? What is so different about the second attempt compared to the first one?

The Story

- The Ark of Covenant was Israel's most prized possession. It contained sacred items (Hebrews 9:1-5). It was placed in the holiest place in the tabernacle. The high priest would enter this area once a year and sprinkle the atonement blood on the lid. Above the ark were two cherubim, and the Lord was enthroned above them.
- David attempted to move the ark by placing it on a new cart (2 Samuel 6:3). David was so excited about moving the ark that he celebrated before the Lord (2 Samuel 6:5).
- When reaching the threshing floor of Nacon, the ark nearly fell off the cart (2 Samuel 6:6-7). Uzzah reached out to grab hold of it, and God struck him dead!
- David responded to this tragic moment with anger and fear (2 Samuel 6:8-9). He also housed the ark at the house of Obed-Edom for three months (2 Samuel 6:10-11). He wanted to get to the bottom of what happened.

The Lessons

- Good motives are not enough. David had good motives while moving the ark in the way that he did. Uzzah had a good motive when reaching out to grab the ark. Paul had thought he was going God's will when he persecuted Christians (Galatians 1:13-14). And yet, all of them men were did things that God was not pleased. While we need to have good motives, zeal, and passion when serving the Lord (Romans 12:11; John 4:24), God requires more.
- Good motives must be accompanied by the right actions. God had a specific way that He wanted the ark moved (1 Chronicles 15:1-2, 11-15). He warned that a failure to follow His instructions would lead to death (Number 4:15). God has given us specific instructions for how we are to worship Him (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 3:16; John 4:24). We would be wise to do exactly what He has prescribed!

Conclusion:

God also has a specific plan for gaining salvation (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). Have you submitted to His plan?

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