

Philistine Ox Cart or Levite Shoulders.



All quotations are from the New King James Version of the Bible.

Exodus 24:1 Now He said to Moses, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. “And Moses alone shall come near the LORD, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him.” So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words which the LORD has said we will do.” And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half the blood and put *it* in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.” And Moses took the blood, sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, “This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.” Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel. And *there was* under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in *its* clarity. But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank.

This Book of the Covenant which was the commandments and judgements spoken by God but written by His prophet Moses was the basis and evidence of God’s relationship with His chosen people. It is not the two tablets of stone which God later gave to Moses with the Ten Commandments (words - instructions). The Book of the Covenant was the full text of God’s instructions to His chosen people, to be available for instruction by public reading. The Ten Commandments on the other hand were an abridged representation of this to be kept out of sight in a special container in the Holy Place.

Exodus 25:10 The Ark of the Testimony

“And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. “And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a moulding of gold all around. “You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in its four corners; two rings *shall be* on one side, and two rings on the other side. “And you shall make poles *of* acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. “You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. “The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. “And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you. “You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length and a cubit and a half its width. “And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. “Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it *of one piece* with the mercy seat. “And the cherubim shall stretch out *their* wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim *shall be* toward the mercy seat. “You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. “And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat,

from between the two cherubim which *are* on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

Here we see that the ark was a gilded wooden container for the Ten Commandments and the place where God would meet and speak with His chosen people on the basis of the Covenant represented by the stone tablets therein. It was purposely designed to be carried on the shoulders of men chosen by God for this function.

Exodus 34:27 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

These Ten Commandments (literally The Ten Words or Instructions) were to be a representative, abridged version of the Book of the Covenant which was effectively the full text of God’s instructions to His chosen people.

1 Samuel 4:1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines, and encamped beside Ebenezer; and the Philistines encamped in Aphek. Then the Philistines put themselves in battle array against Israel. And when they joined battle, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men of the army in the field. And when the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, “Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD from Shiloh to us, that when it comes among us it may save us from the hand of our enemies.” So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God. And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the earth shook. Now when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, “What *does* the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews *mean*?” Then they understood that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp. So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, “God has come into the camp!” And they said, “Woe to us! For such a thing has never happened before. “Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These *are* the gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. “Be strong and conduct yourselves like men, you Philistines, that you do not become servants of the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Conduct yourselves like men, and fight!” So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent. There was a very great slaughter, and there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. Also the ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died. Then a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line the same day, and came to Shiloh with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. Now when he came, there was Eli, sitting on a seat by the wayside watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told *it*, all the city cried out. When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, “What *does* the sound of this tumult *mean*?” And the man came quickly and told Eli. Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were so dim that he could not see. Then the man said to Eli, “I *am* he who came from the battle. And I fled today from the battle line.” And he said, “What happened, my son?” So the messenger answered and said, “Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has been a great slaughter among the people. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the ark of God has been captured.” Then it happened, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell off the seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas’ wife, was with child, *due* to be delivered; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and gave birth, for her labour pains came upon her. And about the time of her death the women who stood by her said to her, “Do not fear, for you have borne a son.” But she did not answer, nor did she regard *it*. Then she named the child Ichabod, saying, “The glory has departed from Israel!” because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. And she said, “The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.”

The leaders of Israel, the elders as there was as yet no king, in desperation, superstitiously thought they could get away with treating the Ark of the Covenant as a talisman that would bring about victory. What was needed was repentance and humility before God: which didn't occur to them. The Ark of the Covenant was to be kept in the Holy of Holies in the Tent of meeting (Tabernacle) which was at Shiloh. It wasn't to leave there. World leaders and religious leaders have often acted in similar fashion, treating Holy things as if they were tools to manage either their own subjects or enemies. God however, is not going to be manipulated by anyone. God still demands repentance rather than superstition. When God's people treat that which is Holy with contempt they should not be surprised when God treats them likewise.

1 Samuel 6:1 Now the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it to its place." So they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but by all means return *it* to Him *with* a trespass offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you." Then they said, "What *is* the trespass offering which we shall return to Him?" They answered, "Five golden tumours and five golden rats, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines. For the same plague *was* on all of you and on your lords. "Therefore you shall make images of your tumours and images of your rats that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will lighten His hand from you, from your gods, and from your land. "Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He did mighty things among them, did they not let the people go, that they might depart? "Now therefore, make a new cart, take two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them. "Then take the ark of the LORD and set it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you are returning to Him *as* a trespass offering in a chest by its side. Then send it away, and let it go. "And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, *then* He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that *it is* not His hand *that* struck us—it happened to us by chance." Then the men did so; they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. And they set the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the chest with the gold rats and the images of their tumours. Then the cows headed straight for the road to Beth Shemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth Shemesh. Now *the people of* Beth Shemesh *were* reaping their wheat harvest in the valley; and they lifted their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*. Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there; a large stone *was* there. So they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. The Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the chest that *was* with it, in which *were* the articles of gold, and put *them* on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the LORD.

1 Samuel 7:1 Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD. So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years.

After having brought judgement and punishment on the Philistines the Ark was sent away by the Philistines on an ox cart to see if it would go against maternal instinct back to the Land of Israel. The Levites correctly destroyed the ox cart and sacrificed the oxen. From here the Ark was taken to the house of Abinadab, a Levite, and remained there 20 years, blessing this household.

2 Samuel 6:1 Again David gathered all *the choice men* of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who *were* with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. Then David and all the house of Israel played *music* before the LORD on all kinds of *instruments of* fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals. And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out *his hand* to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for *his* error; and he died there by the ark of God. And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place

Perez Uzzah to this day. David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" So David would not move the ark of the LORD with him into the City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his household. Now it was told King David, saying, "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that *belongs* to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. Then David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.

When Kings and earthly rulers get involved in matters of the kingdom of God there is bound to be trouble. King David meant well but perhaps was not aware of the instructions of God concerning the transportation and handling of the Holy Ark of The Covenant. David wanted the blessing of God associated with the proximity of the ark containing the covenant. He assumed, wrongly, that he could use a method that had worked for the pagan Philistines to transport it. The result was death. To whom much is given, of them much is required. God's covenant and presence has power to bless but also power to curse. This is reflected in the instructions regarding the breaking of bread in remembrance of the Lord Jesus. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11:23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

This observance and celebration of the Lord's Supper is a vehicle for the transmission of the new covenant which is in the blood of Jesus Christ. It parallels the Ark of the Convent, but is the vehicle of the essence or representation of the New Covenant. The visible bread and cup speak of the body and blood of Jesus the Christ which is out of sight. The actual substance of the new covenant is in the indwelling Holy Spirit, Christ in you, the hope of glory. The bread and cup are the representation of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, discerned by the believer but not visible to public gaze. Just as Uzzah's handling of the Ark in an unworthy manner brought the judgement of God and death, so the believer who handles the symbols of the precious blood and flesh of Jesus Christ in an unworthy manner invites judgement upon himself. Our God is a Holy and Jealous God, not to be trifled or messed with. In this regard all the Holy Priesthood of the new covenant in the blood of Jesus are qualified and commanded to 'do this in remembrance of Me'.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was

given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

The Old Covenant has been replaced with a new, better covenant, through the blood of Jesus of Nazareth, Whom God raised from the dead and made both Lord and the Christ – Anointed King.

John 16:16 “A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.”

Like the stone tablets representing the Covenant hidden in the Ark, so is Christ now no longer on public view but perceived by those whom He indwells by His Spirit. The priests perceived the tablets of the Covenant were inside the Ark because of God’s presence on the mercy seat above it and because here God spoke to them just as He promised. When the Royal Priesthood assemble at the Lord’s Table the hidden Jesus makes Himself known to them by His presence and by speaking to them.

2 Corinthians 3:4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers (servants) of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Hebrews 8:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— “not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. “None of them shall teach his neighbour, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Just as the Ark of The Covenant was to be carried only on the shoulders of the Levites, so the servants of the New Covenant alone are the ones qualified and chosen to transmit this message and power in the Holy Spirit. This New Covenant is to be transmitted through the message of repentance and remission of sins by the name of Jesus the Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. God’s approved means is through the apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers whom Jesus has given for this purpose. The old Ark of the Old Covenant was to be transported only on the shoulders of Levites, those chosen and appointed by God for His service. History shows that the message of the kingdom of God has at times been taken captive by the world religion called Christianity. Better there than destroyed completely. When God judges the time is right He has sent it back to His chosen people for them to keep it and benefit from it.

1 Peter 2:9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Even the people chosen by God, like Uzzah, may get involved in men’s methods of handling the message of the New Covenant. The result is death – lack of life. Emperor Constantine thought he could harness the good news of Jesus the Christ for his own political and empirical ends. The results are there to be seen in modern day Churchianity. It is understandable that those not born from above, not washed in the name of Jesus for the remission of sin, not having received the gift of the Holy Spirit, should be ‘playing churches’, It is tragic when those called out of darkness into the marvellous light of the kingdom of God’s Son should do the same. Churchianity’s methods of bigger equals better, of impressive locations, of wonderful music and singing, of theatre, of role playing, of mood creation, of hierarchy, of competitive divisions; may well be

advantageous to men's goals. God's method is the shoulders of His chosen priests. This is played out in the book of Acts in the power of the Holy Spirit and the authority of the name of Jesus Christ through faith in the name of Jesus Christ. By local disciples gathering house to house to break bread to not forget the body and blood of Jesus, the blood of the New Covenant; showing the Lord's death until He comes. By the poor having the Good News of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ declared to them house to house, in public places, wherever there was opportunity. By signs and wonders being wrought by the Lord, confirming the word.

The shoulders of men are not as impressive in the world's eyes as a carriage. God gives grace to the humble, but opposes the proud. May He grant us humility and repentance that the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ may be conveyed according to God's instructions, God's ways by God's Royal Priesthood.

To discuss this or any other matter regarding the good news of Jesus Christ please email;

Colin Thompson, Gateshead, England.

Comments welcome by email to followingjesuschrist@outlook.com

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