



David Becomes King

Scripture Reference:

[1 Samuel 31:1-6](#); [2 Samuel 5:1-5](#); [6:1-19](#)



Suggested Emphasis:

Obedying the Lord is more important than being popular.

Memory Verse: “So, you people are not loyal to God! You should know that loving the world is the same as hating God. So if a person wants to be a friend of the world, he makes himself God’s enemy.” [James 4:4](#), [ICB](#)



Story Overview:

After Saul and Jonathan died in battle, David became the king of Israel. The people loved David. He made Jerusalem the capital and the main place of worship for Israel. He made two attempts to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. On the first attempt, he did not follow all of God’s instructions, but the people were still celebrating, and David was very popular. When a man named Uzzah touched the ark, he immediately died. On the second attempt, David followed God’s instructions and the ark was safely moved to Jerusalem. David learned that being popular does not mean that one can forget the Lord.

Background Study:

The Lord had rejected Saul as king many years before ([1 Samuel 13:14](#); [15:23](#)). Finally, Saul’s life ended. The Israelites and the Philistines were fighting on the plain of Jezreel. The Mount of Gilboa stands on the south side of this plain. As the Israelites were being overcome, they fled up the slopes of Gilboa, seeking refuge. But there was no refuge for Saul. On the slopes of Mount Gilboa, King Saul and three of his sons, including Jonathan, were killed.

Although the death of Saul and Jonathan deeply grieved David, their deaths made it possible for David and his followers to return to Israel. They returned to Judah, the southern part of the country, and settled in the town of Hebron, fifteen to twenty miles south of Jerusalem. At Hebron, the leaders of Judah anointed David and proclaimed him their king.

At first, David's reign was limited to Judah, the southern part of Israel. Ish-Bosheth, one of Saul's remaining sons, was proclaimed king over Israel, the northern part of the country. A civil war raged for seven years between Israel and Judah.

Finally, two of Ish-Bosheth's military leaders betrayed and assassinated him. Then they hurried to Hebron to tell David what they had done. They explained that they had killed Ish-Bosheth to avenge David for all the wrong Saul had done to him. When David heard about Ish-Bosheth's murder, he was furious! He turned on the murderers and exclaimed that they had betrayed and murdered an innocent man and that he, David, would never tolerate or condone such despicable behaviour. David immediately had the two men executed.

David trusted God to fulfil His promise at the right time and did not tolerate the interference of others who tried to fulfil the promise through human means. David's integrity in dealing with Saul's family and his restraint in pressing his claim for the throne of Israel won him the respect and acceptance of the people. It was after David's righteous response to the assassination of Ish-Bosheth that the leaders of Israel also anointed David and accepted him as their king.

As king, one of David's dreams was to move the Ark of the Covenant to his capital, Jerusalem. As David basked in the glory of his popularity, he ignored the special instructions required to move the ark. He had them carry the ark on a new cart. It should have had poles running through the rings. Levite priests were to prop the poles on their shoulders so that no one would touch the ark ([Exodus 25:12-15](#); [Numbers 4:5-6, 15](#)). If the ark had been carried according to the Lord's instructions, then Uzzah would never have had to touch it. Even if his intentions were good, the whole incident was not done according to God's instructions. As the ark was brought to its new home, it seems the Lord wanted to make it clear to everyone that He expected His laws to be obeyed. [1 Chronicles 15:11-15](#) is the parallel passage to this one. It explains David's conversation with the priests after they transported the ark the first time.

Three months later, on David's second attempt, he followed the Lord's instructions and successfully brought the ark into the capital city. This time, the priests carried the ark using the proper poles. There was much rejoicing as David brought the ark into the city.



Way to Introduce the Story:

"What are some of God's rules? Do you think it is important to obey God's rules? What if all of your friends say that you don't have to obey the Lord? In today's story we are going to learn about a time when all of the people thought it was okay to break God's rules. They learned a very hard lesson."

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The Story:

Saul had been the king of Israel for many years. He had started as a good king, but then he began to disobey the Lord. When Saul began to disobey the Lord, the Lord told him that none of his sons would ever be kings of Israel. The Lord would anoint a new king not from Saul's family.

King Saul and three of his sons were in a battle with the Philistines. The Philistines won the battle, and Saul and three of his sons died. One of the sons was Jonathan.

When David heard the news, he was very sad. He had loved his friend Jonathan. He had tried to get along with Saul. David knew that the time had come for him to be the new king. He wanted to be a very good one. He knew some people would want only Saul's family to be king. But David knew that Samuel had anointed him all of those years ago. He knew that the Lord wanted him to be king. He just wished everyone would like him.

The people of Israel made David the king. Soon, everyone began to like David a whole lot. He became very popular.

David was happy about this.

David remembered something very important. He remembered the ark of the covenant. The ark of the covenant was very important because it represented the presence of the Lord. David wanted all the people to know that the presence of the Lord was with him. Since the ark was in the tabernacle tent in another town, David decided to bring it to the town where he lived. David wanted to bring the ark to Jerusalem.

All of the people were very excited. They thought David was wonderful. David seemed to notice the people more than he did the Lord. David forgot to follow the Lord's special instructions about moving the ark. One instruction was that no one was to touch the ark. The ark had rings on its sides. The rings were holders for long poles. The priests were supposed to pick up the ark using the poles carefully. They were never to touch the ark – only the poles.

The people were so excited that David told the priests to bring the ark to Jerusalem. The priests placed the ark on a new cart. Remember? That is not the way the Lord said to do it. He said the priests were supposed to carry the ark with the poles.

The people were so excited that they did not even consider obeying the Lord. David and the priests seemed to be trying to make the crowds happy instead of making the Lord happy.

As the ark was being carried in the cart, something terrible happened. The oxen that were pulling the cart stumbled. A man named Uzzah reached out to steady the ark. First, the ark was not carried the way the Lord said, and now someone touched the ark. As soon as Uzzah touched the ark – he fell dead.

The people could not believe what they saw. They had been so excited about moving the ark that they forgot to think about obeying the Lord. They knew that Uzzah had disobeyed the Lord. Now, they knew how important it was to follow the Lord's instructions.

The ark stayed in the same town where Uzzah had died for three months. Finally, David decided it was time to correctly bring the ark to Jerusalem. This time, he did not consider making people happy or being popular. This time, he wanted to make the Lord happy. He told the priests to carry the ark exactly as the Lord commanded.

This time, everything went well. The people were so happy to see the ark arrive in Jerusalem. Even David danced and celebrated. Everyone was happy because they had followed the Lord's rules.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download these illustrations and slideshow.](#) Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Review Questions:

1. When Saul died, who became the king of Israel? David
2. What item did David want to bring to Jerusalem? The Ark of the Covenant
3. What happened when Uzzah touched the ark? He died
4. Why did the priests carry the ark on poles the second time? Because that was the way God commanded it

Song Suggestions:

- [My God is So Big Song](#)
- [Rejoice in the Lord Always Song](#)
- [Rise and Shine Song](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Find pictures of the Ark of the Covenant in bible encyclopaedias
- Find Jerusalem on a bible map.
- Discuss times when we might think being popular is more important than obeying God.
- Discuss the following Scripture: "Peter and the other apostles answered, 'We must obey God, not men!'" [Acts 5:29](#), ICB
- Bring a large box to class and let younger children practice carrying the ark. You can use broomsticks or something similar for poles.

Crafts:

- Make crowns from paper and glue "precious stones" on it or spray it with gold paint.



- Print bookmarks, trading cards or timelines [\(printable pages\)](#).
- Visit the [Teaching Ideas](#) page for additional activities and crafts.

Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets-death of Saul and his sons \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets-becoming king \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets-bringing ark to Jerusalem \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Craft: Instructions for a simple paper crown \(DLTK\)](#)
- [Chart: Comparison between David and Saul \(Bible charts\)](#)

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