

# “We Did Not Consult Him About the Proper Order”

*by Bryan Gibson*

David wanted to bring the ark of the covenant back to Jerusalem, something his fellow-Israelites agreed was the right thing to do (1 Chronicles 13:1-4). And so they went to Kirjath Jearim, where the ark had been for twenty years (1 Samuel 7:2), and began transporting it to Jerusalem. During this trip, “David and all Israel played music before God with all their might” (1 Chronicles 13:8). So far, so good.

It wasn't long, though, before they ran into some serious trouble. “And when they came to Chidon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God” (1 Chronicles 13:9-10). The law of Moses was clear—no one could “touch any holy things, lest they die” (Numbers 4:15). It turns out, though, that Uzzah's error was not the only error they made. They put the wrong people in charge of transporting the ark, and they were transporting it the wrong way. The Levites were supposed to carry it on their shoulders (instead of a cart), using poles inserted through rings on the sides of the ark (Exodus 25:12-15; Numbers 4:1-15; 1 Chronicles 15:15). Their failure is summarized in 1 Chronicles 15:13: “...the LORD our God broke out against us, because **we did not consult Him about the proper order.**” The NIV says, “We **did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way.**” They should have gone to the law to find out exactly how they were supposed to do it.

The lesson in this story is crystal clear. God wants us to do things His way, to consult Him about the “proper order,” or “prescribed way.” *Claiming* that something is done “in His name,” or, “to His glory,” doesn't make it so. God is a stickler for doing things according to His will (Matthew 7:21-23; 12:50).

Let's make just a few applications, and issue a challenge to all our readers. On the question, “What must I do to be saved?” don't accept just any answer, and don't accept an incomplete answer. Look to God, to the New Testament, for the “proper order,” or “prescribed way.” The full answer won't be found in just one “silver bullet” passage. John 3:16 is a wonderful passage, but it doesn't give all the details. Consider everything God says on the subject, and you've got your answer.

On the worship, work, and organization of the local church, the same principle applies. Please don't make the mistake of saying, “there is no prescribed way.” We've written on these subjects in previous bulletins, demonstrating from the New Testament that there is a proper order. The Israelites learned their lesson. They eventually did move the ark back to Jerusalem, and this time they did it God's way (1 Chronicles 15:14-16:1). Here's hoping we learn the same lesson—before it's too late!