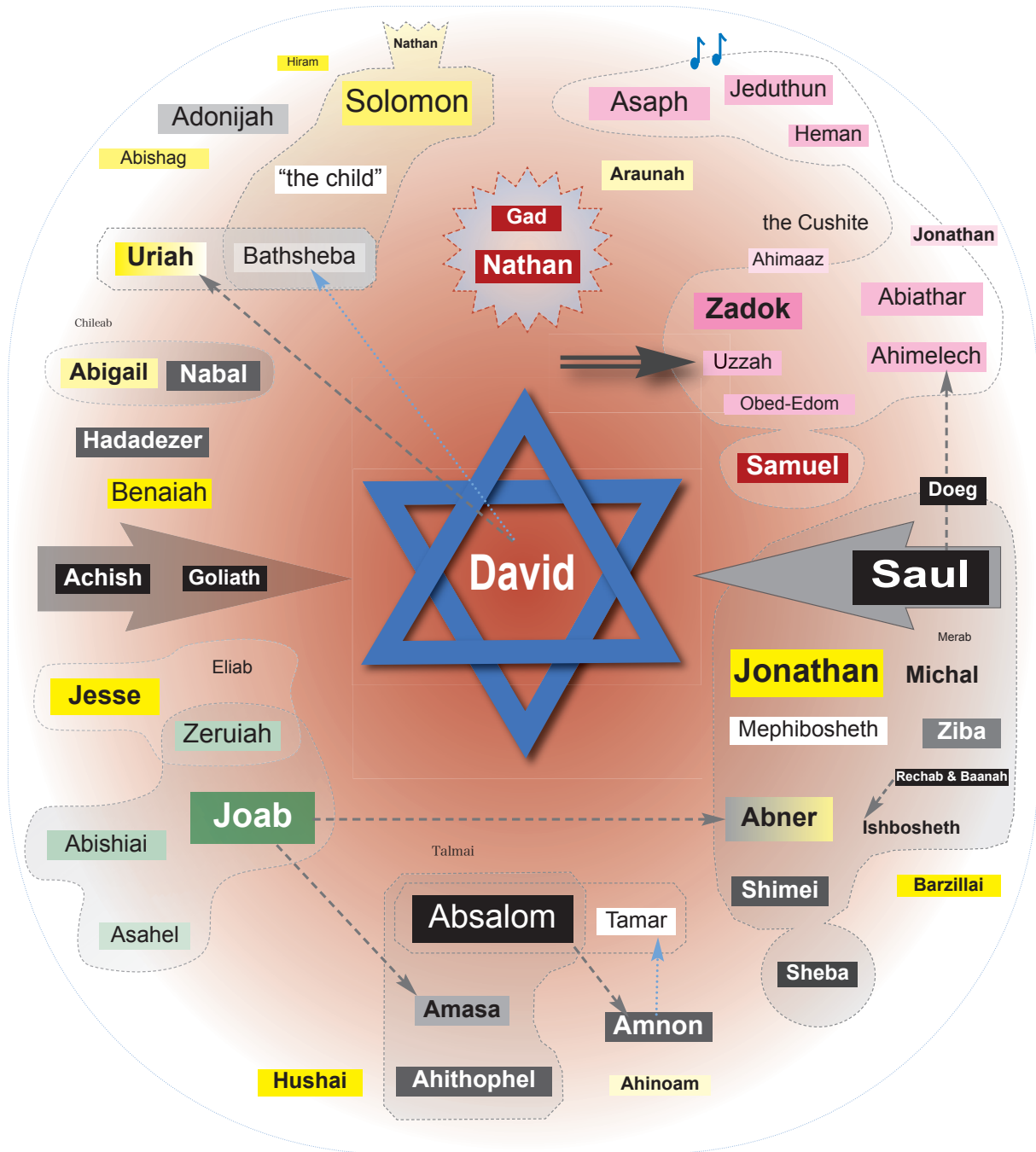


surrounded



people in the life of David

## about Uzzah

1. As the Levites who lived closest to the ark (1 Sam. 7:1), Uzzah and his brother were given key roles in bringing the ark of God up to Jerusalem, according to 2 Sam. 6:1-11 and 1 Chr. 13:1-14, even though they had never moved it before.

2. According to 1 Chr. 15:11-15 other priests should have been involved, but were not. Perhaps a cart was used because of the lack of additional help, even though using a cart was contrary to Numbers 7:6-9.

3. One wonders why Uzzah didn't seem to know that a cart should not be used. Perhaps it was because he was more familiar with how the ark came on a cart from the Philistines decades earlier (1 Sam. 6:7-7:1) than with Moses' instructions which were written many centuries earlier.

4. When the oxen stumbled Uzzah touched the ark to prevent it from falling (6:6). God instantly struck him dead for doing so, however, because it was an irreverent act, even though it was not premeditated. Uzzah had lived with the ark for years and knew that it was not to be touched. In fact, poles were probably used when the ark was put on the cart.

5. Though Uzzah was killed for touching the ark, the earlier error of placing it on an ox cart also led to his death. Unbiblical compromise naturally leads to more of the same and eventually to the judgement of God, though things may seem to go well at first.

## about David

1. In Second Samuel six David was finally king over all Israel and living in Jerusalem. (See ch. five.) One of the first things he did as king was to try to bring the ark of the covenant to his new capital. He was seeking God's blessing for himself and the people.

2. One wonders who prepared the cart to carry the ark. Was it Uzzah, other priests, or David? Since the king was in charge of the move (6:1-2) he was at least partly responsible for what went wrong because of the cart.

3. Verse eight clearly says that David was angry about the death of Uzzah. However, it does not say if his anger was directed toward the Lord, toward himself, or toward the priests. Later, according to 1 Chr. 15:13. he blamed both the priests and himself for Uzzah's untimely death.

4. The death of Uzzah had a powerful effect on David, the most important of which was that he feared the Lord greatly (6:9) and changed his ways. Because of this he stopped trying to bring the ark to Jerusalem until much later. Although this kept him from experiencing the Lord's blessing to some extent for a time, at least he did not repeat the same mistake.

5. Later when David finished bringing the ark to Jerusalem he did so with joy. The change in tone from fear in 6:9 to joy in 6:12-14 implied that he had forgotten about Uzzah, but it really indicates that he had learned from his earlier tragic failure.

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## The death of Uzzah was...

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Read Second Samuel 6:1-11 and describe the death of Uzzah.

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**(    ) Uzzah's own fault?**

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(    ) because of touching the ark?

---

(    ) because Uzzah was a bad man?

---

(    ) avoidable, tragic?

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**(    ) the fault of the other priests?**

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(    ) because of the use of an ox cart (Num. 7:6-9)?

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(    ) because other priests didn't help (1 Chr. 15:11-15)?

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(    ) because of not seeking the Lord (1 Chr. 15:13)?

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**(    ) David's fault?**

---

(    ) because of David's poor leadership?

---

(    ) very upsetting to David (6:8-9)?

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(    ) a powerful lesson for David?

---

**(    ) thought provoking?**

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(    ) seen by many people (6:5)?

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(    ) gory, like in the Indiana Jones "lost ark" movie?

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(    ) commemorated, remembered well (6:8)?

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(    ) like the death of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-3)?

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(    ) not in vain?

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## conclusions and applications

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*Mark the descriptive terms and phrases above as correct (\*), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲).*

people in the life of David series, study #13

### **the Uzzah lawsuit?**

What if the court system in ancient Israel was more like what we have today and Uzzah's brother, Ahio, and other family members had filed a lawsuit against King David for the wrongful death of Uzzah the priest? Would the court have found David responsible and ordered him to pay damages?

Lawyers for the king could have argued that Uzzah's death was an act of God over which David had no control. Moreover, they could have pointed out that Uzzah was the one who offended the Lord by touching the ark, rather than the king. Finally they probably would have called witnesses to show that Uzzah, himself, knew that the ark was not to be touched and that his death was the result of his own carelessness. Even Uzzah's brother would have had to admit that they had carefully avoided touching the ark for years while it was in their home.

Lawyers for Uzzah's family, however, would have focused on the fact that moving the ark was David's idea and that he was in charge (6:1-2). Moreover they would have tried to blame the king for the making and use of the new cart. Just as defective products are attacked in lawsuits today, they could have argued that the inherent instability of the cart and oxen was the real problem, which made it necessary for Uzzah to touch the ark.

David's defenders could have counterargued that the cart wasn't his idea and that it was only necessary because other priests had not sanctified themselves to help (1 Chr. 15:13). Moreover, they might say that Uzzah and Ahio were happy to have the cart and that they should have refused it if they had any concerns about its use. It could easily be argued that accepting the cart at the start involved accepting personal responsibility for its safe use.

How would such a case turn out? Would the judge or jury agree with David's lawyers or those of Uzzah's family? Obviously there was fault on both sides and David was at least partly responsible for Uzzah's death. Thus God judging Uzzah alone doesn't seem fair.

However, to God, touching the ark was a capital sin, to be punished by instant death; whereas improperly trying to carry the ark on a cart, in and of itself, was not. (Others would have died if it had been.) Some may find fault with this, but we must agree with the point of the parable of the potter in Jeremiah chs. 18 and 19 that there is no injustice with God. So, as Job also learned the hard way, lawsuits against God, himself, must always be rejected.

OK, but what about David? Did he get away with it? No! He admitted that he had not sought the Lord (1 Chr. 15:13b). So he and others probably voluntarily helped Uzzah's family. For sure, he learned and remembered some important lessons through Uzzah's death. So should we. --- God's work must be done God's way from the beginning, because one sinful compromise always leads to another.