

Assign: G. King
RE-ASSIGN (later)
Mo-3-8

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: I Chronicles 13:9-10

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

The usual question here is, Why did God kill Uzza? Some turn to this verse to support their contention that God is a hard, harsh monster who zaps people dead with little or no justification.

III. True Explanation

- A. Preliminary thoughts: God is love (I John 4:8), and Christ gave His life to save people from their sins (John 3:16). Certainly, therefore, anyone who would see in this episode proof that God is harsh has the entire weight of the rest of the Bible against him, and simply misunderstands why and how God acts. God acts only in people's ultimate best interest.
- B. David wanted to bring the ark back from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. In doing so, he had the ark carried on a new cart. As they were going, the oxen stumbled and Uzza put his hand on the ark to steady it -- to keep it from falling. Because Uzza touched the ark, God killed him (I Chronicles 13:1-10).
- C. This is an example of disobedience that ended in disaster. The ark should have been carried on the shoulders of the Levites, not on a new cart (Numbers 7:9, Deuteronomy 10:8). In using a cart, the Israelites were following the example of the pagan Philistines who had returned the ark to Israel that way (see I Samuel 6:7). Also, in Numbers 4:15 God warned the Levites that they were not to touch any of the holy things they were to carry lest they die.
- D. The parallel account in II Samuel 6:6-7 explains that God smote Uzza for "his error," The word error is rendered "rashness" in the margin. It was a rash act to touch the ark of God that even the Levites were forbidden to touch. The ark was so holy that at one time God killed more than 50,000 Israelites for profaning it by opening it and looking inside (I Samuel 6:19).
- E. I Chronicles 15:2 shows that David later realized what he had done wrong. He learned after the death of Uzza how the ark should be transported: It was to be

carried (with poles) on the shoulders of the Levites. In verses 12 and 13, David told the Levites to sanctify themselves so that they could carry the ark. Because they hadn't carried the ark at first, God made a breach upon them. They hadn't sought God after "the due order."

- F. When they did everything according to God's instructions, they were able to bring up the ark with joy (I Chronicles 15:15, 25-26). The principle to learn is that we must do exactly as God commands -- not use our own reasoning or water down His instructions. Also, we must deeply respect anything God has made holy -- for example, the Sabbath and Holy Days.
- G. Notice that when God smote Uzza even David became angry and seemed to resent God's actions (I Chronicles 13:11-12). But God knows that when we begin to stray from His directions and begin to believe we can trust our own way (no matter how well-intentioned), the end of such actions will be for us to stray further and further from Him. That way ends in death (Proverbs 14:12).
- H. Remember, Uzza is dead now but will be resurrected and given a chance for salvation. Probably the lesson his death teaches us makes him far more valuable to us, God and himself than if he had lived a long, uneventful life. Truly, God knows best and treats all with love.