



David's Transfer of The Ark (1 Chr 13-16): *Its Theological and Liturgical Significance*

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ABSTRACT:

The ark narrative in the Books of Chronicles is quite extensive. How should we read it? What is its theological message? In the Bible, a narrative is not merely a report of historical events but the writer's way of telling his theology. The narrative functions as a vehicle for theology. Biblical scholars call it 'a theological narrative'. Accordingly, the ark narrative cannot be read as a mere historical report but as a theological narrative. This study will focus on the narrative of David's transfer of the Ark (1 Chr 13-16). The chronicler seems to organize his narrative to assert the following points: (1) the theological significance of the ark of the covenant, i.e., YAHWE's presence among his people, and (2) the necessity of worship rituals establishment. Mainly following synchronic approach, and intertextuality as well, this paper will elaborate on these two important points embedded in the whole narrative.

ABSTRAK:

Narasi Tabut Perjanjian dalam Kitab Tawarikh cukup panjang. Bagaimana seharusnya kita membaca narasi ini? Apa pesan teologisnya? Dalam Kitab Suci, sebuah narasi bukanlah sebuah laporan peristiwa sejarah semata tetapi merupakan cara penulis untuk menyampaikan teologinya. Artinya, narasi tersebut berfungsi sebagai kendaraan bagi teologi penulis. Para ahli Kitab Suci menyebutnya sebagai 'narasi teologis'. Karenanya, narasi Tabut Perjanjian tidak bisa dibaca sebagai laporan sejarah murni tetapi sebagai sebuah narasi teologis. Studi ini akan berfokus pada narasi pemindahan Tabut Perjanjian oleh Daud (1Taw. 13-16). Penulis kitab ini nampaknya menyusun narasinya untuk menegaskan pokok-pokok berikut: (1) signifikansi teologis dari Tabut Perjanjian, yaitu kehadiran YAHWE di antara umat-Nya, dan (2) pentingnya pendirian ritual ibadah/penyembahan. Mengikuti terutama pendekatan sinkronik dan intertekstual, tulisan ini akan mengelaborasi dua pokok penting ini yang terkandung dalam keseluruhan narasi tersebut.

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Introduction

The ark narrative is quite extensive in the Books of Chronicles, and it is related to Jerusalem, the temple and famous figures of kings, David, and Solomon. If we simply take a quick look, this narrative seems to be just a report of events. This ark narrative, however, must have great theological significance to the author. It is not merely a report of historical

events in the past but the author's way of telling his theology. Narrative functions as a vehicle for theology. Scholars call it 'a theological narrative'.

In terms of narrative as theology, Campbell writes, "The text is not seen simply as reporting the past, but as interpreting it; not as a priestly concoction of wonder and fantasy, but as theology."¹ In the context of theological narrative, we read a biblical text to follow the author's way of thinking and determining his theological message, without being too much troubled by historical or chronological problems that might be found in the report. The chronicler organizes his narrative in a theological perspective, and uses the events, places, personnel, and rituals as means to do theology. In this perspective, the Books of Chronicles appear to be very interesting.

What theological message did the chronicler have in mind to be presented throughout his ark narrative? The chronicler seems to be presenting a theological significance of the ark for the people of Israel, namely as YAHWE's presence among them, and highlighting the liturgical worship related to the ark as the way to keep the intimate relationship with YAHWE present among the people. This paper will elaborate on these two important points embedded in the whole narrative of David's transfer of the Ark (1Chr 13-16).

Method of Interpretation

This analysis will mainly follow synchronic approach. In synchronic approach we focus on investigating the relations between the constituent elements in a biblical text. We then consecrate on the text as we have before us, without investigating its historical layers or development. We try to uncover patterns of the textual organization and make the lines of meaning visible. Following this approach, the readers will have an active role to relate the component parts of the text to one another. From those components parts we gain insight into the text as a whole, while conversely the whole gain sheds its own light on different components. In this connection, this approach will include, among others, analysis of boundaries of a text, the structure or construction of a text, and narrative analysis.²

I will begin this study by analyzing the chronicler's introduction (13:1-4) to determine the important points that the chronicler might have in mind as 'thematic frame or structure' in presenting his ark narrative; and then following that frame I will investigate the whole narrative. As we will see below, the following themes seem to bind all elements in the introduction and elaborated throughout the whole narrative of the ark's transfer: (a) the theological significance of the ark: YAHWE's presence among the people of Israel, and (b) the establishment of ritual of worship.

As the author of the 1 Chronicles is dependent on his *vorlage*³ (2 Samuel 6), the following observation will not ignore its source. Intra-textual and inter-textual reading will also be done to enrich this study in a broader biblical context.

¹ Campbell, Antony F., "Yahweh and the Ark. A Case Study in Narrative," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98/1 (March 1979): 31.

² Wilhelmus Johannes Cornelis Weren, *Windows on Jesus. Methods in Gospel Exegesis*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1999), 12-13.

³ Prior version of the ark narrative and used by the chronicler as textual source.

Chronicler's Introduction to the Transfer Narrative of the Ark (1 Chr 13:1-4)

וַיִּזְעַץ דָּוִד עִם־שָׂרֵי הָאֲלָפִים וְהַמֵּאוֹת לְכָל־נְגִיד: ² וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד לְכֻלּוּ קְהַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־עֲלֵיכֶם טוֹב וּמִן־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִפְרָצָה נִשְׁלָחָה עַל־אֶחָיוּנוּ הַנִּשְׂאָרִים בְּכָל־אֲרָצוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַמָּהֶם הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם בְּעָרֵי מִגְרָשֵׁיהֶם וַיִּקְבְּצוּ אֵלָיוּ: ³ וַנִּסְבֶּה אֶת־אֲרוֹן אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵלָינוּ כִּי־לֹא דְרָשְׁנָהּוּ בִימֵי שָׁאוּל: ⁴ וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל־הַקְּהָל לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכִי־יֹשֶׁר הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי כָּל־הָעָם: ⁴

¹ Then David consulted with the commanders of the thousands and hundreds, with every leader. ² David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you and to YHWH our God, let us spread out and send to our kinsfolk who are left in all the territories of Israel, including the priests and the Levites in the cities of their pasture lands, that they may gather to us. ³ Then let us lead the ark of our God back to us since we did not seek it out in the days of Saul." ⁴ Then the entire assembly said to do so for the matter seemed right in the eyes of all the people.⁵

David's main proposal is bringing the ark to Jerusalem (13:3). He said, "let us lead the ark of God back to us" (v. 3). The king's words should be understood not in the context of mere physical presence of the ark, in a spiritual sense in relation with the spiritual and theological significance of the ark. The ark is absolutely important for the king and all the people of Israel and should be present at the center of their life.

David consulted with the commanders, with every leader and proposed the gathering of all the people of Israel to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem. By saying, "if it seems good to you and to YHWH our God" (v. 2a), the king asked support from the whole assembly, and at the same time determined that his proposal was also God's will. He said his proposal using "we language" (נִפְרָצָה וְנִשְׁלָחָה, *let us spread out and send*; וַנִּסְבֶּה, *then let us lead back to*; כִּי־לֹא דְרָשְׁנָהּ, *since we did not seek*). This reference explicitly unveils the chronicler's emphasis on the participation of all the people of Israel in the transfer of the ark, not only in execution, but also in the planning and decision. David said, אִם־עֲלֵיכֶם טוֹב (*if it is good to you...*) (v. 2), and then follows the confirmation, "the entire assembly said to do so for the matter seemed right in the eyes of all the people" (v. 4).

David proposed to all *assembly* of Israel (כל קהל ישראל).⁶ This term *qāhāl* occurs for the first time here and its use seems to be intentional. For the chronicler always mentions the term *qāhāl* in a liturgical setting,⁷ he seems to call our attention to the theme of worship. Throughout the narrative of the transfer of the ark, the chronicler might have concern to the building a proper worship of the entire Israel. We will observe this

⁴ The Hebrew Text is taken from *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS)*.

⁵ All translations in this paper are taken from John C. Endres, William R. Millar, and John Barclay Burns, eds., *Chronicles and Its Synoptic Parallels in Samuel, Kings, and Related Biblical Texts* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 1998).

⁶ Does this "assembly" refer to the leaders mentioned in v. 1 or to the entire people? It is debatable. Some scholars argue that it refers to the assembly of the officers, for in the first case all Israel is only assembled in v. 5. But some others assign the meaning as indicated in v. 4, where the *congregation* is identical with the *entire people*. The convocation of v. 5 is related to *our kinsfolk who are left in all the territories of Israel* (v. 2). See P. B. Dirksen, *1 Chronicles*, trans. Runia, A. P., *Historical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 194; Edward Lewis Curtis and Albert Alonzo Madsen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles*, ICC (Edinburgh: Bloomsbury, 1976), 204.

⁷ Simon J. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, FOTL 11 (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1989), 136.

possibility. Priests and Levites are mentioned explicitly, their role is greatly important and irreplaceable in this religious activity. Two big themes seem to bind all elements in the introduction and elaborated throughout the whole narrative of the ark's transfer: (a) the theological significance of the ark; (b) and liturgical worship.

Transfer of the Ark of Covenant⁸: Its Theological Significance

Context/setting: Chronological Problem?

There are two attempts of bringing the ark of covenant to Jerusalem (1 Chr 13:5-14//2 Sam 6:1-11 and 1 Chr 15-16:6//2 Sam 6:12-19a). Both in 1 Chronicles and 2 Samuel this event occurs after the coronation of David as the king of Israel (11:1-3//5:1-3) and his capture of Jerusalem (11:4-9//5:6-10), but the sequence of the same events around the transfer is different from one another.⁹ In 2 Samuel, after the coronation and capture of Jerusalem there follow the narratives of Hiram's recognition of David (5:11-12), the birth of David's children in Jerusalem (5:13-16), David defeats the Philistines (5:17-25), then follows the first failed attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem (6:1-11), and finally the second successful one. While in 1 Chronicles, the first attempt to bring the ark (13:1-14) follows immediately as David's first act after the defeat of Jerusalem.¹⁰ The chronicler places the narratives of Hiram's recognition of David, his children, and the defeat of Philistines (chap. 14) between the first and the second attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem (chap. 15-16). Why did the chronicler intentionally change the sequence of his *vorlage*? There is a chronological-historical tension, for the possibility of bringing the ark to Jerusalem should follow the capture of Jerusalem. Obviously, the chronicler seems not to be interested in writing a chronological-historical report, but thematically presenting the (transfer of) ark as greatly significant to David and his kingdom of Israel.¹¹ Editorially, chap. 14 is an 'insertion' with certain role. Glatt argues that the sequential deviation has two motivations.¹² The first is ideological concern to present David as one who gives cultic matters top priority. The second is thematically oriented: 2 Sam 5:11-25 is used to offset the feeling of despair that David must have felt after the first failed attempt. S. Japhet argues that Hiram's recognition of David, his progeny, his victories over the Philistines are benefits or blessing, as sign of God's favor, connected to his first effort to bring the ark.¹³ Klein points out the temporal similarity between David's early attention to

⁸ In Chronicles some modifications appear in the naming of the ark: 'ark of the LORD', 'ark of God', 'ark of the LORD God' (of Israel), 'ark of the covenant', 'ark of the covenant of the LORD', 'ark of the covenant of God, and 'the holy ark'. Do these modifications have theological motive or is it merely stylistic? Japhet does not see any theological or ideological motive in the use of the name 'ark of the covenant'. She considers it as a literary-stylistic phenomenon. See Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, English ed. (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 76–79.

⁹ See Endres, Millar, and Burns, *Chronicles and Its Synoptic Parallels*, 50.

¹⁰ After the capture of Jerusalem, the chronicler presents the list of David's mighty men, his helpers at Ziklag, and his army in Hebron. Chap. 12 is concluded with the rally of the soldiers to Hebron in which together with all the people of Israel they celebrated the coronation of David.

¹¹ See Gwilym H. Jones, *I & 2 Chronicles*, Old Testament Guides (Sheffield, England: Published by JSOT Press for the Society for Old Testament Study, 1993), 35–36.

¹² David A. Glatt, *Chronological Displacement in Biblical and Related Literatures*, Dissertation Series/Society of Biblical Literature 139 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 60.

¹³ Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles. A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1993), 284–85. Japhet points out that the transition from the first to the second phase of the transfer of the ark in 2 Sam is only one sentence: "It was reported to king David, 'YHWH has blessed the household of Obed-edom and everything he has because of the

the ark and Hezekiah's religious reform that took place at the beginning of his reign. "Faithful cultic action without delay" seems to be the chronicler's strategy of having good kings.¹⁴

The ark of covenant: YHWH's presence among the people of Israel

David proposed, "Let us lead the ark of our God back to us". Reading this phrase, we might have impression that until David's time the ark was not in Israelite hands, and he had the wish to retrieve the ark from some place outside Israel. But since the location, as mentioned later, is in Kiriath-jearim which belongs to Judah, i.e., in Israel, Japhet argues that this phrase should be understood in a spiritual sense: let us make the ark "ours". The problem then is not merely the physical presence of the ark – for it had been in Israel all the time – but rather its role in God's worship, as an object of 'seeking God'.¹⁵ In other words, "let us make the ark 'ours'" is a matter of building a proper relationship with God.

The ark of covenant relates to the presence of God. It is a symbol of YHWH's presence, representing 'his being with his people'. However, the ark is not YHWH's anthropomorphic likeness, for he is not present in statues as common images of gods in ancient Near East cultures. YHWH is present above the ark; he dwells between the cherubim (1 Chr 13:6; Ps 80:2; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15; Isa 37:16).¹⁶ But YHWH's presence among the people in the Books of Chronicles should be understood further in connection with three big themes: temple, Jerusalem, and worship. In the Chronicles, the final goal of the transfer of the ark is the temple in Jerusalem. After the second successful transfer, David said to Nathan, "Here I am residing in a house of cedar, while the ark of the covenant of YHWH is under tent curtains!" (17:1). David then planned to build a house for the ark. He said, "Hear me, my brothers and my people! It was my intentions to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of YHWH, for the footstool of our God, and I made preparations to build" (1 Chr. 28:2). Japhet identified some important points: (a) this idea reveals the principal role of the temple, i.e., to provide the ark with a 'house of rest', a permanent home; (b) here, the ark is called the 'footstool' of God. However, from the actual context we should understand that God's footstool is the entire temple, not the ark; (c) the ark's resting in the temple affirms that YHWH is actually present in the midst of his people, whatever happens there happens "before Him" – "to His face".¹⁷ When the ark of covenant was installed in the temple on the occasion of its dedication, as soon as Solomon finished his prayer, a fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of God filled the temple (2 Chr 7:1). This is God's answer to Solomon and the people's worship, which is also a confirmation of his presence in the temple in which the ark was installed. However, the temple cannot be regarded in comparison to God Himself.

ark of God" (6:12). For the chronicler, the blessing on Obed-edom and his household by the presence of the ark did not suffice to confirm David's favor. That is why he inserted chap. 14 in place of that very short transitional sentence. The chronicler shows that the beneficence of YHWH is granted in practical-material matters such as building operation, blessing of progeny, victorious over enemies, etc.

¹⁴ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 330.

¹⁵ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 276.

¹⁶ See James M. Street, *The Significance of the Ark Narrative. Literary Formation and Artistry in the Book of Chronicles*, Studies in Biblical Literature 129 (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 119–20.

¹⁷ Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 60–62.

*Retributive Ideology: Reward and Punishment*¹⁸

In this transfer narrative, rewards and punishments related to the ark are presented clearly. Firstly, YHWH blessed the household of Obed-edom (a foreigner) and all he had, for the ark of God remained in his house for three months after the first failed attempt of transfer (13:14). Chronicler once again mentioned how God blessed Obed-edom by giving the list of his sons among the gatekeepers (1 Chr 26:4-5). Secondly, though the first attempt was failed, David's concern and action for the ark of covenant is certainly favorable in the eyes of the LORD, and therefore, blessings are bestowed on him as listed in chap. 14.¹⁹ After the second successful transfer of the ark, there follow God's covenant with David in which everlasting dynasty is promised to him (chap. 17), and his victories over enemies (chaps. 18-20).

Punishments related to the ark is recounted in the stories of the death of Saul and Uzzah. David's proposal, "let us lead the ark of our God back to us", is followed by further causal explanation, "since we did not seek it out in the days of Saul" (v. 3). How should we understand this? It is best to understand it in connection with the coronation of David in place of Saul after his death. The failure of Saul to seek the LORD and to be faithful to his commandments caused a disastrous end of his reign. In chap. 10, the chronicler recounts that the defeat and death of Saul and his children is caused by his infidelity to the LORD, by neglecting his commandments, and having consulted with medium (the spirit of the dead) to seek guidance (10:13-14). That is why God has punished Saul and turned his kingdom over David (12:23).²⁰

The tragic end of Uzzah's life is caused by his transgression of touching the ark: "When they came to the threshing-floor of Chidon, Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark for the oxen had stumbled. YHWH's anger was kindled against Uzzah, and he struck him down because he had put out his hand against the ark; so he died before God" (13:9-10). R. Braun identifies the reason of the failure and Uzzah's punishment in 1 Chr 15:2, 13-15, i.e., disobedience to YHWH and his word as commanded through Moses.²¹ While Japhet argues that Uzzah's action is basically an instinctive impulse, innocent motion, but is regarded by God as a transgression, and kindled his anger. However, the nature of Uzzah's sin is not spelled out here and can be understood differently. (a) A sacrilege, for Uzzah's has no right to touch the holy object of ark. Touching it is a desecration that brings severe punishment. Its theological justification is found in Num

¹⁸ The principle of retribution is one of the main themes of the books of Chronicles. Faithfulness is followed by reward in the form of military success, building projects, large family for the kings, tribute for the surrounding nations, and rest for the land; and on the contrary, unfaithfulness by punishment in the form of sickness, death, military defeat, or exile for the disobedient. The rewards and punishments in Chronicles are mandatory, immediate and personal/individual, with no accumulated guilt or merit across generations. This well-known theory of 'reward and punishment' seems to be the chronicler's way to portray the history as a concrete manifestation of divine justice in conformity with human free choice, but also with his divine grace in terms of human repentance. See Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles. A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 46-47.; Kelly, B. E., "Retribution Revisited. Covenant, Grace and Restoration," in *Chronicler as Theologian. Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 371 (London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 207-10; Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 129-31; idem, *I & II Chronicles*, 44-45.

¹⁹ See Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 337-44.

²⁰ Begg, Christophel T., "The Ark in Chronicles," in *Chronicler as Theologian. Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 371 (London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 136.; Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 331.

²¹ Roddy Braun, *1 Chronicles*, Word Biblical Commentary 14 (Waco, Tex: Word Books, 1986), 176.

4:15, 20, where the Kohathites, the carriers of the tent of meeting, are forbidden to touch or to “look on” its “holy things” or they will die. (b) A mistrust in the power of God. Uzzah’s action can also be interpreted as an expression of mistrust in the power of God, represented in the ark. Such an interpretation is based on the concept that it is for God and not for man to protect the ark, any attempt to replace God’s position is a demonstration of disbelief.²² This sad accident caused the failure of the first attempt to bring the ark but might have evoked the idea to do comprehensive preparation for the next successful attempt.

Participation of all the people of Israel

The chronicler’s introduction (13:1-4) obviously presents his different motif with that of 2 Samuel 6. The focus of 2 Sam 6 is David himself. The language of the story describes the transfer of the ark as essentially David’s concern, both in decision and execution: ‘David gathered... then David arose and set out... David was angry... David was afraid...and he said...So David was not willing...rather took it aside...’, while the people are mentioned as being present at the occasion (2 Sam 6:2, 5, 15, 18-19). The chronicler shows a different emphasis: the decision and execution of the transfer of the ark is applied to the people as a whole. David is the one who had the idea and initiative. People are full partners of the king, not limited to secondary role as accompanying crowd or audience at a performance. This public full participation is a sign that the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem can be political and liturgical-religious, i.e., to transfer Jerusalem into political and religious center of Israel.²³

Transfer of the Ark: Ritual of Worship

The Ark’s Transfer Narrative

The narrative of the first attempt (1 Chr 13:5-14) follows closely its *vorlage*, 2 Sam 6:1-11. The chronicler describes that David assembled all Israel from Shihor of Egypt to Lebo-hamath to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim (13:5), and then they carried it upon new cart driven by Uzzah and Ahio, from the house of Abinadab. On the way, David and all Israel were dancing before God with all their strength, with songs and lyres and harps and timbrels, cymbals, and trumpets. But this first attempt failed due to Uzzah’s accident and David took the ark aside to the house of Obed-edom.

The main story of the second successful attempt (1 Chr 15:25-16:3) is taken from 2 Sam 6:12-19a). But the chronicler puts two quite long additions flanking the main story. The first addition (15:1-24) describes a scrupulous preparation done by David to avoid another failure. This material is unique to the chronicler, for there is no parallel in any biblical source. However, Japhet might have correctly observed that some details are allusion to Samuel narrative: (a) David prepared a tent for the ark (15:1⇒2 Sam 6:17); (b) he assembled all Israel to Jerusalem (15:2⇒2 Sam 6:15, 18-19); (c) he appointed priests

²² See Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 280; Klein, *I Chronicles*, 334.

²³ See Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 272–74.

and Levites to bring the ark, no mention of cart (15:2, 11-15⇒2 Sam 6:13); sacrificial animals (2 Sam 6:13); (d) musicians for sounding the horn (2 Sam 6:15).²⁴

In this preparation, greater attention is given to the priests and Levites: (a) their appointment as bearers of the ark and ministers to YHWH (15:2; cf. Deut 10:8); (b) division of Levites into six groups (15:5-10); (c) self-preparation of the bearers, i.e., to consecrate themselves and instruction to carry the ark on shoulders with poles (15:12-15; cf. Num 7:9; Exod 25:13-14; 37:4-5); (d) installation of the singers and instrument players (harps, lyres and cymbals (15:16, 19-22); (e) and doorkeepers (15:18, 23-24).²⁵

Then follows the description of the second transfer (15:25-16:3//2 Sam 6:12-19a). And again, chronicler's emphasis of the participation of all the congregation appears to be the conspicuous difference with his *vorlage*. David and the elders of Israel and the officers of the thousands were going to bring the ark of the covenant of YHWH from the house of Obed-edom with rejoicing. When the transfer went well, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams (an ox in 2 Sam 13), as response to God who already helped the Levites in bringing the ark. The Levites and singers were clothed with robe of fine linen. On David himself was a linen ephod. Shouting of joy and sound of shofar, trumpets, harps, and lyres were heard accompanying their leaping and dancing before the God throughout the procession. No failure was allowed by David, even when Michal despised him in her heart.²⁶ When they reached Jerusalem she set the ark inside the tent prepared by David, presented burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. Then David blessed the people in the name of YHWH and distributed a circle of bread and a date-cake and a raisin-cake to every person in Israel.

The chronicler then put his second addition (16:4-42) before the short ending which is also found in his *vorlage* (16:43//2 Sam 6:19b, 20a), "And all the people went to their own homes. Then David turned around to bless his household." This quite extensive insertion consists of three parts: (a) David appoints a group of functionaries to praise YHWH before the ark (16:4-7). He appoints some Levites to serve, to invoke, to give thanks and to praise YHWH God of Israel (v. 4), musicians (harps and lyres, cymbals, and trumpets) to play continually before the ark of the covenant. (b) Songs of thanksgiving (16:8-36) which are taken from the book of Psalms (16:8-22// Ps 105: 1-15; 16:23-33//Ps 96:2-13; 16:34-36//Ps 106:1, 47-48). At the end, (c) regular worship's establishment. (i) David installs Asaph and his kinsfolk to minister on a daily basis before the ark of the covenant of YHWH, as each day required, and also appoints the doorkeepers (16:37-38). And (ii) he appoints priests to offer sacrifice, to give thanks to YHWH, and musicians before the tabernacle in Gibeon (16:39-42).

Transfer of the Ark: Building a Cultic Worship?

How the chronicler developed the narrative of the transfer of the ark from his *vorlage*, evidently shows his intention to present it as a well-organized liturgical

²⁴ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 292.

²⁵ For detailed explanation including the critical-literary issues, see Klein, *I Chronicles*, 347-50; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 293-396; Dirksen, *I Chronicles*, 206-8.

²⁶ Klein, *I Chronicles*, 357. According to Klein, Michal's disapproval represents the continued failure of Saul and his house to seek YHWH and the ark. The chronicler continues to draw moral contrast of the two kings.

procession,²⁷ following a certain sacred custom and ended in establishment of daily basis-continual liturgical worship in Jerusalem and Gibeon.

Important Elements of Worship

(a) *Congregation*, i.e., the assembly of all Israel. All the people of Israel are presented as active participants throughout the ritual both in the first and the second bringing of the ark. Obviously, it is a public worship, that also indicates the identity of Israel as a nation in communal relationship with God. (b) *Ceremonies or rituals*, i.e., the procession of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, its setting inside the tent, and offerings before God, blessing of the people. As we seen above, the chronicler has interest in doing ceremony/ritual properly, well prepared and organized. The successful bringing of the ark ended in arrangement of regular worship both in Jerusalem and Gibeon. (c) *Functionaries/personnel*, i.e., Levites and priests. (15:1-24). The special attention given to the organization of functionaries (15:1-24) indicates the chronicler's concept that "a right worship depends on ministry by right persons following correct ritual."²⁸ The distribution of responsibility is clear: bearers of the ark, singers, musicians, doorkeepers. (d) *Place of worship*, i.e., Jerusalem (before the ark) and Gibeon (before the tabernacle). The establishment of continual worship in these two cities indicates an endeavor to centralize the worship of Israel (cf. Deut. 12:5).

Worship Full of Joy and Thanksgiving

From the beginning, the liturgical procession of the ark is characterized by "dancing and rejoicing" (13:8; 15:25). The chronicler's great interest in choral and music is evident in the narrative. For him liturgical worship must be full of joy. At the second transfer, he makes a major change by adding more musicians (trumpets, cymbals, harps, and lyres) than his *vorlage* which mentions only shofar (15:28//2 Sam 6:15).²⁹ The songs and sound of various musical instruments, together with the dancing and leaping with all strength of David and the people before the ark, make the bringing of the ark solemn, joyful, and favorable to God.

Other major difference of chronicler from his *vorlage* is David's installation of some Levites to serve, to invoke, to give thanks and to praise YHWH God of Israel (16:4-7), which is followed by the remarkable psalm-prayer (16:8-36). Japhet divides this psalm-prayer into two parts: a hymn of thanksgiving (vv. 8-33) and thanksgiving and supplication (vv. 34-36).³⁰ This special insertion highlights another aspect of the chronicler's theology of worship. Following his *vorlage*, the chronicler recounts the sacrificial ritual (offerings) when the ark reached the tent, but he also adds the ritual of thanksgiving and praising God in music and songs of prayer by right persons (Levites). Accordingly, as Endres argues, this insertion "suggests that Israel's worship of God should contain two related sections: offering of sacrifices and choral and music by Levitical

²⁷ Endres, J. C., "Theology of Worship in Chronicles," in *Chronicler as Theologian. Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 371 (London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 168.

²⁸ Endres, J. C., "Joyful Worship in Second Temple Judaism," in *Passion, Vitality, and Foment. The Dynamics of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Luker, L. M. (Harrisburg, PA, 2001), 164.

²⁹ Endres, J. C., 168.

³⁰ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 316.

choirs... For the chronicler, worship is comprised of vocal (music, sung prayer of praise, thanksgiving, invocation) and ritual (gestures, sacrifices, meals) actions."³¹ Vocal and ritual actions altogether represent a joyful worship of God.

Building of Political Identity of Israel?

The broader context of the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem is kingship. The ark's narrative is preceded by the coronation of David and the capture of Jerusalem, then followed by the covenant with David in which God promise to keep David's house (dynasty) forever (1 Chr 17). Between the two attempts there is Hiram's recognition of David as king. And the narrative of the ark related to king Solomon (2 Chr 5:2-7:3) reconfirms the kingship context. Obviously, the transfer of the ark is not merely religious but also political. Accordingly, the chronicler seems to have interest in portraying Israel as a nation religiously and politically centralized in Jerusalem under the sovereignty of YHWH. Jerusalem is the place of not only the house (palace) of the king, but also the place where YHWH's presence is established, through the transfer and installation of the ark in the special tent, and later in the temple. The people must keep their relationship with YHWH through a continual, proper, and legitimate liturgical worship that is full of joy as we have seen above. The appointment of the Levites and the psalm-prayer (16:8-36) seem to be very essential in terms of continuity between the worship life established by David and that of the chronicler's own day. Klein writes, "David's authority now stands both behind the role of the Levites and the use of psalmody in worship. The Levites' participation in the temple cult of the Chronicler's day is justified by their appointment by Israel's first, and arguably greatest, king of the united monarchy."³²

Does the chronicler look to a revival of the kingdom of Israel, against Persian authority in his time? This narrative does not indicate evidently. But the supplication in the psalm might be a small hint, "*Say also*, 'Save us, God of our salvation; gather us and *deliver us* from the nations; to give thanks to your holy name, to take pride in your praise'" (1 Chr 16:35). Chronicler adds "*Say also*" to indicate that his readers must utter the following prayer, thus he is making an appeal to them, and "*deliver us*" which might refer to Persian authority, since "deliverance from Persian domination may have been a beggar issue that Israel's dispersal in Chronicler's time even if, for political reasons, the author avoided a direct criticism of or an attack upon the Persians."³³

Conclusion

The use of "we language" in David's proposal to bring the ark to Jerusalem unveils the chronicler's emphasis of the participation of all the people of Israel in the transfer of the ark, not only in execution, but also in the planning and decision. Obviously, the ark and its transfer have deep significance not only for the king, but for all the people of Israel. The chronicler's use of the term *qāhāl* calls our attention to the theme of worship. Accordingly, the ark narrative affirms the significance of the ark theologically and liturgically as well.

³¹ Endres, J. C., "The Ark," 172.

³² Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 363.

³³ Klein, 367.

The ark of covenant is a symbol of YHWH's presence, representing 'his being with his people'. However, the ark is not YHWH's anthropomorphic likeness, for he is not present in statues as common images of gods in ancient Near East cultures. He is present above the ark; he dwells between the cherubim. As the physical presence of the ark is not the physical presence of God, its role should be understood in terms of God's worship, as an object of 'seeking God' to build a proper relationship with God.

In the narrative the chronicler connects the ark with the city of Jerusalem, the temple, and worship. In the Chronicles, the final goal of the transfer of the ark is the temple in Jerusalem. David planned to build the temple for the rest of the ark; Solomon built it. When the ark of covenant was installed in the temple on its dedication, as soon as Solomon finished his prayer, a fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of God filled the temple (2 Chr 7:1). This is God's answer to Solomon and the people's worship, which is also a confirmation of his presence in the temple in which the ark was installed.

Regarding God's worship, the chronicler shows us the necessity of building a faithful cultic worship with its necessary elements such as congregation, ritual, functionaries, and place of worship. The establishment of the regular liturgical worship by David must be an inspiration for the people of God today to faithfully maintain a well-organized worship that leads to the deep encounter with God filled with joy and thanksgiving.

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