

SERIES: PROPHETS, PRIESTS AND KINGS

Godly leadership in the house of God and the heart of the believer

TITLE: “What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?”

TEXT: 1 SAMUEL 4-6

PROPHETS, PRIESTS AND KINGS GODLY LEADERSHIP IN THE HOUSE OF GOD AND THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

Title: “What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?”

1 Sam 4:1-4, 10-11, 21

¹Now the Israelites went out to fight against the Philistines. The Israelites camped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines at Aphek. ²The Philistines deployed their forces to meet Israel, and as the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand of them on the battlefield. ³When the soldiers returned to camp, the elders of Israel asked, “Why did the LORD bring defeat on us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the LORD’s covenant from Shiloh, so that he may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies.”

¹⁰So the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers. ¹¹The ark of God was captured, and Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

²¹She named the boy Ichabod, saying, “The Glory has departed from Israel”

Ashdod.

1 Sam 5: 6-8

⁶The LORD’s hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation on them and afflicted them with tumors.⁷ When the people of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, “The ark of the god of Israel must not stay here with us, because his hand is heavy on us and on Dagon our god.” ⁸So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and asked them, “What shall we do with the ark of the god of Israel?”

Ekron.

1 Sam 5: 10-11

As the ark of God was entering Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, “They have brought the ark of the god of Israel around to us to kill us and our people.”¹¹ So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and said, “Send the ark of the god of Israel away; let it go back to its own place, or it will kill us and our people.”

The territories.

1 Sam 6: 1-3

¹When the ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory seven months, ²the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it back to its place.” ³They answered, “If you return the ark of the god of Israel, do not send it back to him without a gift; by all means send a guilt offering to him. Then you will be healed, and you will know why his hand has not been lifted from you.”

Beth Shemesh.

Sam 6: 19-20

¹⁹But God struck down some of the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh, putting seventy of them to death because they looked into the ark of the LORD. The people mourned because of the heavy blow the LORD had dealt them. ²⁰And the people of Beth Shemesh asked, “Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?”

“What shall we do with the ark of the LORD?”

“Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?”

“What shall we do with the ark of the LORD?”

Introduction

I have been intrigued, even enthralled by the ark of the covenant for many years.

This vessel which led the children of Israel to victory after victory and was stationed in the holiest of places.

That ark, which was capped with the golden glimmer of the wings of the cherubim, reminded those who saw it that “here” the presence of God would fall.

Many are reminded of the images in the Indiana Jones where Nazis found it and opened it and experienced the power of God in a way that reminds us of the nature and power of the ark that we see in Scripture.

These same cherubim who attend the throne of heaven declaring the holiness of the Most High

The Journey of the Ark

- The construction of the Ark is commanded by [God](#) to [Moses](#) while the Jews were still camped at Sinai ([Ex. 25:10-22](#); [37:1-9](#)).
- The Ark was a box with the dimensions of two-and-a-half cubits in length, by one-and-a-half cubits in height, by one-and-a-half cubits in width (a cubit is about 18 inches).
- It was constructed of acacia wood, and was plated with pure gold, inside and out. On the bottom of the box, four gold rings were attached, through which two poles, also made of acacia and coated in gold, were put.
- The family of Kehath, of the tribe of Levi, would carry the ark on their shoulders using these poles.
- Covering the box was the *kapporet*, a pure gold covering that was two-and-a-half by one-and-a-half cubits.
 - Attached to the *kapporet* were two sculpted Cherubs, also made of pure gold. The two Cherubs faced one another, and their wings, which wrapped around their bodies, touched between them.
 - This Lid is known as the mercy seat.
- The contents of the Ark are the first tablets containing the [Ten Commandments](#), which were broken by [Moses](#), and the second tablets, which remained intact, were contained in the Ark. The rod of Aaron, and a golden jar holding manna.
- The Ark was built by Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur
- The Ark accompanied the Jews throughout their time in the desert, traveling with them and accompanying them to their wars with Emor and Midian.
- When the Jews crossed into the land of Canaan, the waters of the Jordan River miraculously split and the Ark led them through ([Josh. 3](#)).
- Throughout their conquest of the land, the Jews were accompanied by the Ark.
- The most dramatic demonstration of its power comes when the Jews breached the walls of [Jericho](#) merely by circling them, blowing horns and carrying the Ark ([Josh. 6](#)).
- After the conquest was completed, the Ark, and the entire Tabernacle, were set up in Shiloh ([Josh. 18](#)).

- There they remained until the battles of the Jews with the Philistines during the Priesthood of Eli. The Jews, after suffering a defeat at the Philistines' hands, took the Ark from Shiloh to Even-Ezer in hopes of winning the next battle.
 - But the Jews were routed, and the Ark was captured by the Philistines. Back in Shiloh, Eli, the High Priest, immediately died upon hearing the news ([I Sam. 4](#)).
- The Philistines took the Ark back to [Ashdod](#), their capital city in the south of Canaan, where they placed it in the temple of their god Dagon. The next day, however, they found the idol fallen on its face. After replacing the statue, they found it the next day decapitated, with only its trunk remaining, and soon afterward, the entire city of [Ashdod](#) was struck with a plague.
- The Philistines moved the Ark to the city of Gath, and from there to Ekron, but whatever city the Ark was in, the inhabitants were struck with plague.
- After seven months, the Philistines decided to send the Ark back to the Israelites, and accompanied it with expensive gifts.
- The Ark was taken back to Beit Shemesh, : The men of Beit Shemesh were punished for staring disrespectfully at the Ark, and many were killed with a plague.
- From Beit Shemesh, the Ark was transported to Kiryat Yearim, where it remained for twenty years.
- From there, [King David](#) transported it to [Jerusalem](#).
 - En route, however, the oxen pulling it stumbled, and when Uzzah reached out to steady the Ark, he died immediately.
 - As a result of this tragedy, [David](#) decided to leave the Ark at the home of Obed-edom the Gittite.
 - Three months later, he moved it to [Jerusalem](#), the seat of his kingdom, where it remained until the construction of the [First Temple](#) by [David's](#) son [Solomon](#) ([I Sam. 5-6](#)).
 - When the Ark was finally placed in the [Temple](#),
- The Ark remained in the [Temple](#) until its destruction at the hand of the [Babylonian](#) empire, led by Nebuchadnezzar.
- What happened to it afterward is unknown, and has been debated and pondered for centuries.
- It will not be made again
- [Jeremiah 3:16–17](#)
 - And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days, declares the Lord, they shall no more say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord.’ It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the Lord in Jerusalem . . .
- **Revelation 11:19** says the prophet saw God's temple in heaven opened, "and the **ark** of his **covenant** was seen within his temple."

The Significance of the Ark

The Power of God

- In battle - Jericho
- To guide – the cloud of God led them.
- Over other gods -- Dagon
- In judgement over the wicked and the apathetic

The Glory of God

In the classical Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments, the word *shekinah* is actually not found. It was first introduced by Jewish rabbis through targums and literature in the period between the completion of the Old Testament and the onset of the New Testament.

The etymology of “*Shekinah*” is from the Hebrew word *shākan*, which means “*to reside or permanently stay.*”

1 Chronicles 15:2

Then David said, “No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the Lord chose them to carry the ark of God and to minister to Him forever.”

Rashi - Because in closely related lore and myth, since the destruction of Herod’s Temple in 70 CE., the Shekinah has remained in mournful exile upon Earth, while Yahweh sits in Heaven

The Mercy of God

Exodus 25:21

You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you.

Exodus 25:22

There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.

2 Chronicles 6:41

“Now therefore arise, O Lord God, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your might; let Your priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation and let Your godly ones rejoice in what is good.”

The Presence of God

- The Ark was used in the desert and in Israel proper for a number of spiritual and pragmatic purposes. Practically, God used the Ark as an indicator of when he wanted the nation to travel, and when to stop.
- Spiritually, the Ark was the manifestation of God's physical presence on earth (the *shekinah*).

THE ARK IN YOU

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

- Only Priests carry the Ark.
 - Priests handle the ark as God says.
 - Priests do not take the ark for granted.
 - Priests do not use the ark as a magic trick in times of need.
-
- His Power in us
 - His Mercy on us
 - His Glory through us
-
- The proclamations of God – His Word
 - The provision of the God -manna
 - The power of God – the rod

“What will you do with the presence God in you?”

*“Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God?
To whom will the ark go up from here?”*

The glory and mercy and power of God is in us, his Church.

We stand in the presence of Jesus our High Priest and live our lives to His glory.

Handle it with care!