



Lesson 59: The Ark goes on a journey

Scriptural Basis:



1 Samuel 4-7

Overview:

Though the Israelites have turned (again) to worshipping false gods and idols, they assume that carrying the ark into battle will give them victory over the Philistines. Of course it does not go well for them; they are soundly defeated by the Philistines and suffer huge casualties, Eli and his sons die (as God had foretold Samuel previously), and the Philistines end up capturing the ark. Like the Israelites, the Philistines, soon learn that the ark is not some sort of power that can be wielded by men; the ark represents the presence of God, and where His presence is, so is His Glory. The Philistines had a BIG lesson in the FEAR of GOD learning that possession of the Ark only was incredibly dangerous for people in opposition to YHWH. After suffering death and affliction, the Philistines return the ark, and Samuel leads the Israelites to repentance.

Things to consider:

God wants the Israelites to be all about His purposes. Not vice versa!

The gospel in the story:



The Israelites learned a valuable lesson that because God is a glorious, and perfect God, His presence is a frightful thing for all who oppose Him. And anyone who has sin in their heart is opposed to God (Matthew 12:30). God sent Samuel to the Israelites to help them repent and turn away from their sin. But He also had a larger plan in mind to send a Savior, Jesus who would defeat Satan sin and death once and for all, and allow anyone who would repent of their sin and put their faith in Him to enter the holy presence of God!

Bible Study for Preparation:



Read 1 Samuel 3-7. Consider the stark difference between approaching God with and without sin. And the only way for the latter is through the cleansing blood of Jesus. The ark represents the significance of this fact: in regard to the "Mercy Seat." The term 'mercy seat' comes from a Hebrew word meaning "to cover, placate, appease, cleanse, cancel or make atonement for." It was here that the high priest, only once a year (Leviticus 16), entered the Holy of Holies where the ark was kept and atoned for his sins and the sins of the Israelites. The priest sprinkled blood of a sacrificed animal onto the Mercy Seat to appease the wrath and anger of God for past sins committed. This was the only

place in the world where this atonement could take place. Read 1 Corinthians 5 which emphasizes the profoundly important truth that Jesus' blood is the final atonement for sin.

Teaching the lesson:

- A: Review – Last week – God calls Samuel (and warns him that Eli and his sons will be punished for their wickedness)
- B: Bible verse memory activity
- C. Story
- D. Additional activity

Application:

Head: **What did we learn?**

Q: Why did God allow the Philistines to defeat Israel in battle? A: Because Israel had rebelled against God and turned to false gods and idols.

Q: What is the ark? A: The ark of the Covenant, which contained the 10 commandments, and represented God's presence.

Q: How did the Israelites misuse the ark? A: They brought it into battle thinking it would give *them* special power.

Q: How did that work out for Israel? A: They suffered a huge defeat

Q: What happened to the Philistines as a result of stealing the ark? A: They (and their god Dagon) suffered death and disease.

Q: How did the Israelites respond after the return of the ark? A: They repented of their rebellion and got rid of their idols

Heart : **Memory verse**

Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this Holy God? 1 Samuel 6:20

Hands: **How does this affect the way I live my life?**

Scripture tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom (Ps. 11:10). And we see from this account why that is: God will not tolerate sin in His presence.

Home: **How does this affect my household?**

In this story we saw that the Israelites tried to use God to achieve their purposes, rather than to seek after God and his purposes. Households that are built on the latter will reflect God's glory

Heaven: **How can we be intentional about sharing our faith?**

The Israelites received mercy in the form of annual atonement for their sins (blood spread on the mercy seat of the ark). Those who have repented of their sins and put their faith in Jesus

 *Learning At Home*

Bible Study:



The gospel in the story:



Application

Head:

Home:

Heart:

Heaven:

Hands: