

STOWMARKET BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY BIBLE CLUB

24 MAY 2020

Hello

It is James here writing your story for this week.

I hope that you are OK and have enjoyed playing outside in the sunshine?

We still miss you all and are looking forward to when we can all meet again... And I think that the minibus drivers are missing something also... one of these →



We pray that you will have a good week and enjoy reading the story.

With love from everyone at Sunday Bible Club

Today we are going to learn about the 1st of the 10 commandments, which says:

*¹ And God spoke all these words: ² 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ³ 'You shall have no other gods before me.
Exodus chapter 20 verses 1-3*

Our story can be found in the Bible in 1 Samuel chapter 4 verses 1-11 and chapter 5 verse 1 to chapter 6 verse 12. We have printed this out at the end of the story, if you want to read it for yourself.

What is the most important thing that you own?

Maybe it is a toy, your games console, bike, skateboard or even a book?



God's people, the Israelites, had something special that belonged to them. They had a special box that helped them remember the important things God had done for them.

The box was the Ark of the Covenant. It was made of wood and covered in gold. It was precious to the Israelite people. God had given Moses instructions on how to make it and what to put into it.

Inside were God's laws that he had given Moses. These are called the 10 Commandments.

We are going to learn about each of the 10 Commandments over the coming weeks.

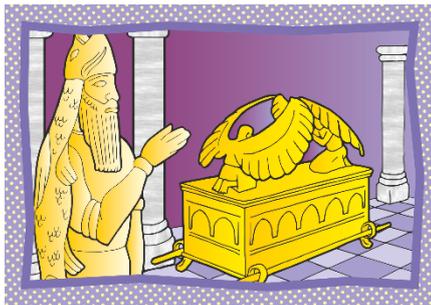
The ark was a symbol of God's presence with his people. It belonged in the tabernacle (church), but the Israelites thought that it was a lucky charm. They believed it would bring success if they took it into battle.



So, the Israelites took the ark, that beautiful gold covered box, into battle against the Philistines but they suffered a dreadful defeat - the Philistines won the battle, captured the ark, and took it away as their prize.

The Philistines had many gods. They believed that in capturing the ark, they had captured Israel's God. They added him to their collection, putting the ark in the temple of their god Dagon and left it there.

They thought they could treat God as they liked. They didn't know what was written on one of the stones inside the box



They left the ark in the temple overnight. When they went into the temple the following morning, they found the statue of their god Dagon had fallen over with his face to the ground in front of the ark.

What made Dagon fall over? I wonder?

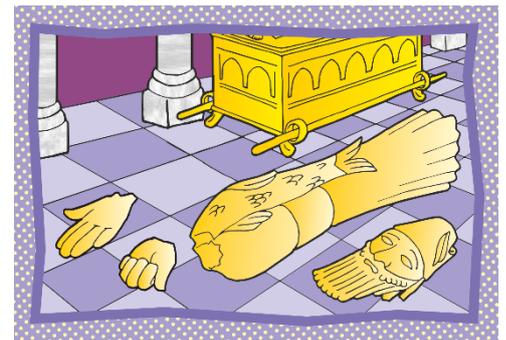
They stood him back up.

The next day when they went into the temple, what do you think that they found?

Dagon had fallen over again in front of the ark, but this time his head and hands had broken off.

What did God want them to know?

He is the only true God.



The Philistines were not sorry and did not worship God, so he punished them and made the people ill.

The Philistines had defeated the Israelites, but God cannot be defeated.

What did God want the Philistines to do?

God wanted the people to be sorry, worship him, and give the back the ark to the Israelites.

But let's find out what they did do...

The Philistines decided that they could not keep the ark in the temple in the city of Ashdod, so they decided to take it to another city called Gath.

But as soon as the ark was taken to Gath, the city was destroyed by God and the people of Gath became ill.

So, they met again and decided to take the ark to a 3rd city. This time to the city of Ekron.

But... the people of Ekron did not want it. They had seen what it had happened at Ashdod and Gath and the same thing happened to their city.

They said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go back to its own place, so that it does not kill us and our people".

God gave them 4 opportunities to see he is the only all-powerful God, but they did not learn, they tried to send him away.

The Philistines had 7 months of suffering before deciding to send the ark back. They were still not sorry for what they had done and were not willing to believe that God is the only true God.

The priests decided on a plan. They decided that they would give the ark back but add some things of their own to try and make things right with God.

This insulted God; it was like a bribe to encourage him to stop hurting them.

Had they learned anything from having the ark amongst them? No, they hadn't!

What lessons have we been reminded of in this story?

We are reminded that God is the only true God and we should not worship anyone or anything else.

What could the Philistines have learned from what was in the ark?

They could have learnt that God gives laws to live by; he provides all our needs and wants us to know more about him.

We should not let anything get in the way of us worshipping and loving God. We must remember that God sent Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins. It is through God's creation that we have everything that we have in our lives.

Dear Lord

Thank you so much that you have given us everything that we need. Help us Lord to trust in you and not let anything else come between us and you. Amen

I Samuel chapter 4 verses 1-11 and chapter 5 verse 1 to chapter 6 verse 12

Chapter 4

¹ Now the Israelites went out to fight against the Philistines. The Israelites camped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines at Aphek. ² The 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. ³ When 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.'

⁴ So the people sent men to Shiloh, and they brought back the ark of the covenant of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim. And Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

⁵ When the ark of the LORD's covenant came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook. ⁶ Hearing the uproar, the Philistines asked, 'What's all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?' When they learned that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp, ⁷ the Philistines were afraid. 'A god has^[a] come into the camp,' they said. 'Oh no! Nothing like this has happened before. ⁸ We're doomed! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? They are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness. ⁹ Be strong, Philistines! Be men, or you will be subject to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Be men, and fight!'

¹⁰ So 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. ¹¹ The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

Chapter 5

After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. ² Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon. ³ When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. ⁴ But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained. ⁵ That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor any others who enter Dagon's temple at Ashdod step on the threshold.

⁶ The LORD's hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation on them and afflicted them with tumours.^[a] 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.' ⁸ So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and asked them, 'What shall we do with the ark of the god of Israel?'

They answered, 'Let the ark of the god of Israel be moved to Gath.' So they moved the ark of the God of Israel.

⁹ But after they had moved it, the LORD's hand was against that city, throwing it into a great panic. He afflicted the people of the city, both young and old, with an outbreak of tumours.^[b] ¹⁰ So they sent the ark of God to Ekron.

As the ark of God was entering Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, 'They have brought the ark of the god of Israel round 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^[c] will kill us and our people.' For death had filled the city with panic; God's hand was very heavy on it. ¹² Those who did not die were afflicted with tumours, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven.

Chapter 6

¹ When the ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory for seven months, ² the 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.'

³ They 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.'

⁴ The Philistines asked, 'What guilt offering should we send to him?'

They replied, 'Five gold tumours and five gold rats, according to the number of the Philistine rulers, because the same plague has struck both you and your rulers. ⁵ Make models of the tumours and of the rats that are destroying the country, and give glory to Israel's god. Perhaps he will lift his hand from you and your gods and your land. ⁶ Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When Israel's god dealt harshly with them, did they not send the Israelites out so that they could go on their way?

⁷ 'Now then, get a new cart ready, with two cows that have calved and have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart, but take their calves away and pen them up. ⁸ Take the ark of the LORD and put it on the cart, and in a chest beside it put the gold objects you are sending back to him as a guilt offering. Send it on its way, ⁹ but keep watching it. If it goes up to its own territory, towards Beth Shemesh, then the LORD has brought this great disaster on us. But if it does not, then we shall know that it was not his hand that struck us but that it happened to us by chance.'

¹⁰ So they did this. They took two such cows and hitched them to the cart and penned up their calves. ¹¹ They placed the ark of the LORD on the cart and along with it the chest containing the gold rats and the models of the tumours. ¹² Then the cows went straight up towards Beth Shemesh, keeping on the road and lowing all the way; they did not turn to the right or to the left. The rulers of the Philistines followed them as far as the border of Beth Shemesh.