

GOD RESCUES AN ARK

Junior High Lesson - June 21



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Main Point: God's people are to trust in Him alone, and not in spiritual superstitions.

Overview: Life hacks generally make use of items for purposes other than what their design intended, and often these uses are clever. But in spiritual matters, trying to “lifehack” a situation can cause big problems. The Israelites once fought against the Philistines and tried to “life hack” their victory using the ark of the Lord’s covenant. They quickly discovered that using something holy to God for personal gain and glory is not clever but blasphemous.

Talk about something you repurposed for a new use?

Example - rubber band as a hair tie

The Philistines drew up in line against Israel, and when the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the field of battle. 3 And when the people came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, “Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD here from Shiloh, that it may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies.” 4 So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. 5 As soon as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the earth resounded. 6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, “What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?” And when they learned that the ark of the LORD had come to the camp, 7 the Philistines were afraid, for they said, “A god has come into the camp.” And they said, “Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. ... 10 So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell. 11 And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The Philistines, a five-city league working together as one, were the major enemy of Israel during the time of Samson, Samuel, Saul, and David. In 1 Samuel 4:1, we are told that the Israelites went out to battle against the Philistines. But their first day of fighting did not go well, and they began to panic. The Israelites staggered into their camp after a long and brutal day of fighting. Faced with the reality of their loss, they looked for answers as to why, and the elders correctly named God as the cause of their defeat (1 Sam. 4:3; see Job 1:21-22; 2:10). Whether actively or permissively, God's sovereign hand delivered the Israelites into the Philistines' hands.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think God allowed the Israelites to be defeated?
2. How do you think the Israelites felt seeing the ark captured and taken from them?
3. What are some idols people trust in today?
4. How do we sometimes put more trust in a symbol than in what the symbol means?



**God wants us to trust in Him alone.
When we trust in other things, we make them our god.**

Now the people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley. And when they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, they rejoiced to see it. 14 The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and stopped there. A great stone was there. And they split up the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. 15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the box that was beside it, in which were the golden figures, and set them upon the great stone. And the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices on that day to the LORD. 16 And when the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned that day to Ekron.... 19 And he struck some of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they looked upon the ark of the LORD. He struck seventy men of them, and the people mourned because the LORD had struck the people with a great blow. 20 Then the men of Beth-shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us?" 21 So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, "The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to you." What's Happening?

The Lord Himself brought His ark of the covenant home to Israel. The Israelites didn't go after it or bargain for it; they moved on with life. But all the while, the Lord was working and displaying His glory among the Philistines. Beth-shemesh was one of the cities set aside for the livelihood of the Levites, the priestly tribe of Israel. This city, among others, specifically was given for the descendants of Aaron, who were responsible for the care of the tabernacle and the sacrifices (Josh. 21:9-10,13-16). How fitting that the ark should return to this city filled with those who were responsible for its care (Numbers 4:1-20). But there may be an indication that the faithfulness of the priests was faltering in that they offered the female milk cows as a burnt offering, which required an unblemished male animal (Leviticus 1:3), and they displayed the ark on a large rock for everyone's eyes to behold which had been forbidden by God (Numbers 4:15,20).

**Share your highs and lows from this past week.
Close in pray for each other giving God thanks for your highs and
asking God to be with you in your lows.**

BIBLE STUDY, GAMES AND FRIENDS

Wednesdays @ 7pm on Zoom

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Pastor Mike (818)-693-0974

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