

LESSON 53

# The God of Israel Cannot Be Captured

1 SAMUEL 4 – 6



**BIBLE TRUTH**

GOD'S PRESENCE IS NOT A GOOD LUCK CHARM  
THAT CAN BE MANIPULATED FOR OUR BENEFIT

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** . . . . . **5 MIN**  
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
Read 1 Samuel 5:1–7 from the Scriptures or read story 53, “The God of Israel Cannot Be Captured,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
Dagon’s Down  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ three Styrofoam spheres
  - ✓ one Styrofoam cube
  - ✓ toothpicks
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** . . . . . **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
Build Your Own Ark  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ yellow modeling dough (enough for every child to have a small piece)
  - ✓ picture of the ark of the covenant
6. **WORD BIBLE MEMORY** . . . . . **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
Coloring Activity  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ coloring page 53—one copy for each child
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** . . . . . **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
An Empty Box Is Just an Empty Box  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ wooden box purchased from a craft store (optional: spray paint the box gold)
  - ✓ slip of paper on which is written Psalm 37:4, “Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

**TOTAL 75 MIN**

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

**Power lies not in objects, but only in God**—After the Philistines defeat Israel in a battle, the elders of Israel wonder why this defeat happened. Unfortunately, they fail to ask God. Had they asked God, through his prophet they would have learned that they lost the battle because they are not following God.

When Israel brings the ark to the battleground, they show that they do not understand the ways of God. They do not think about their lack of faithfulness, their disobedience, or their lack of repentance. Their trust is in the objects and rituals of their religion not in God. They think a decorated wooden box can save them. Instead they lose the battle and the ark of God is captured.

**God demonstrates his mercy in the midst of Israel's defeat**—Although the ark is captured, God doesn't allow it to be destroyed. In fact, wherever the Philistines take it, God brings judgment on their people and their false gods. In spite of Israel's sins, God remains faithful to his people and judges the Philistines.

**God brings the ark home**—During the seven months the ark is with the Philistines, they develop a holy fear of God. God gives the Philistine priests wisdom about how to return the ark and lift the curse from their people. In some ways, the Philistines seem to fear God more than the Israelites do! When they set the cows loose pulling the ark on a cart, God leads the cows directly back to the people of Israel. The ark may have been taken from Israel for a while, but it was never out of God's control.

## WHERE IS JESUS? \_\_\_\_\_

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read 1 Samuel 7:1–11.

Samuel's offering of a lamb (1 Samuel 7:9) was a picture of Jesus, the Lamb of God, who died on the cross to save us from our sins. While Samuel was sacrificing the lamb, the Philistines were marching against Israel to attack. But because Israel confessed their sins and offered up a lamb, God remembered his promises to Israel and turned against the Philistines and defeated them.

Every time we see a lamb sacrificed for sinners in the Bible, it should remind us of God's plan to send Jesus to die on the cross in our place.

## THE LESSON

### OPENING REVIEW . . . . . 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

### BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN

Read 1 Samuel 5:1–7 from the Scriptures or read story 53, "The God of Israel Cannot Be Captured," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

### OBJECT LESSON 1 . . . . . 10 MIN

#### Dagon's Down

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ three Styrofoam spheres
- ✓ one Styrofoam cube
- ✓ toothpicks

Make a model of Dagon by attaching the spheres to the cube with toothpicks to resemble two arms and a head. Decorate it or not as you see fit.

Use the prop to bring a bit of drama to the story as you read aloud from 1 Samuel 5:1–5.

Then ask the class the following questions:

**Why did God topple the Philistine idol?**

*(God wanted to communicate that he was God and that Dagon had no power.)*

**Why do you think God had the head and arms broken off?**

*(The head and arms represent the part of the image that can do something for the people. God was communicating that Dagon was powerless.)*

**TEACHING/DISCUSSION . . . . . 10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

**OBJECT LESSON 2 . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Build Your Own Ark**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ yellow modeling dough (enough for every child to have a small piece)
- ✓ picture of the ark of the covenant

The object of the activity is to help the children understand that Israel’s power was not in a wooden box but in the presence of the Lord.

Locate a picture of the ark of the covenant from a Bible study aid or the Internet. Make one copy for every desk or table in the classroom. Pass out the modeling dough and ask each child to sculpt a model of the ark. When all students are finished, have them place the models on one table, and have the children pick the one they think looks the best.

Then ask the class the following questions:

**Now that we have picked the best ark, what do you think we can get with it? Could it get us some money? If we asked it to give us a bag of chocolate, could it give us any?**

*(The children should be able to tell you easily that these arks cannot get you anything.)*

**What is missing from our ark?**

*(God is missing.)*

Make the comparison with the ark in Israel. The Israelites tried to use it as a good luck charm and forgot about God. Explain that even for Israel to use the ark as though the ark itself was powerful was to make the ark their God. That is idolatry.

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

**ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Coloring Activity**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ coloring page 53—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

**Why do you think God knocked the idol down?**

*(God wanted to show that he alone is God.)*

**Does anyone know the Ten Commandments that tell about there being only one God?**

*(The first commandment says, “You shall have no other gods before me.” The second commandment says, “You shall not make for yourself an idol ...” [Exodus 20:3–4 NIV].)*

**What do you think the Philistines thought when they came in the second morning only to find Dagon lying down broken?**

*(Then they knew it was not an accident but rather the power of God that caused Dagon to fall and break.)*

**CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s scripture passages.

**BONUS OBJECT LESSON . . . . . 10 MIN**

**An Empty Box Is Just an Empty Box**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ wooden box purchased from a craft store (optional: spray paint the box gold)
- ✓ slip of paper on which is written Psalm 37:4, “Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

Tell the children that you have a very special wooden box. Tell them that you think it is very powerful. Ask them what they would ask for if they were granted one wish.

Ask a few children for their wishes, then give them the empty box and tell them to look inside and get what they wished for. They will open it only to find it is empty.

Ask the children what is missing? They should say it is only an empty box. Draw the parallel between your box and the ark of God from the story. Israel took the ark, which was only an empty box for they neglected to ask God to join them in battle.

Now retrieve the box and slip inside it the paper with Psalm 37:4. Now ask the children again to tell you what they would like to have. Pick a child whose desire is a biblical one, and have them open the box.

Have them read the paper out loud to the class, or if they are not a strong reader, read it to the class yourself. Explain that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, he promises to give us the desires of our heart. That requires faith in God. After the ark of God returned, the people of Israel repented and put their faith in God. Then God enabled them to conquer their enemies!

