

THE GOD OF ISRAEL CANNOT BE CAPTURED

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: I SAMUEL 4 - 6



The STORY

Read the following Bible story of the capture and return of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord based on 1 Samuel 4 – 6.

In a battle against the Philistines, Eli's two wicked sons brought out the Ark of God to help them win in battle. They did not inquire of the Lord. They simply brought the ark into battle. The Lord allowed the Philistines to defeat Israel and capture the ark and take it away. Hophni and Phinehas were killed.

The Philistines took the captured ark and placed it in the temple of the idol Dagon. The next morning the idol Dagon was fallen on his face before the ark of God. The Philistines placed Dagon back on his stand but the next morning found the statue on the floor again before the ark of the Lord with his head and hands broken off!

The Philistines in the area became very sick with tumors breaking out on their body. They moved the ark from city to city, but at each place the people would break out with tumors. Finally the Philistines put the ark of God on a cart hitched to two cows to lead it away. Without anyone leading them, the cows pulled the ark back to Israel.

***Please note:** The discussion questions in the following sections are written to serve as a guide in teaching our youngest children. Three to six year olds are not going to be able to answer these questions like their older brothers and sisters. Please refer to the God's Story Preschool Curriculum Outline for additional ideas.*

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion.

- What happened in this story? (Men were trying to capture God. First Hophni and Phinehas were killed when they took the ark of God to battle without God's permission. Then the Philistines took the ark of God to Dagon's temple and they were made very sick.)
- What can we learn about God from this story? (God is all-powerful and cannot be captured or told what to do.)
- Who led the cows back to Israel? (God commanded the cows to go back to Israel.)

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CRAFT QUESTIONS

Coloring sheets have been provided that exemplify today's lesson: the idol Dagon on the floor with the head and arms broken off. Engage the children by asking:

- Why do you think God knocked the idol down? (God wanted to show that He alone is God.)
- Does anyone know one of the Ten Commandments that talk about there only being one God? (The first commandment says "You shall have no other gods before me." The second commandment says, "You shall not make an idol..." see Deuteronomy 5:7-8.)
- 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.)

SNACK QUESTIONS

While the children are eating the snack, engage the children by asking:

- What should Hophni and Phinehas have done? (They should have prayed to the Lord and asked for his help in battle and then followed his instructions.)
- Why do you think Hophni and Phinehas took the ark? (They thought the ark had some power of its own. They thought they could control it. They wanted to win the battle.)
- What did God do in Dagon's temple? (He caused the idol of Dagon to fall face down on the floor before the ark and its head and arms to fall off.)



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Where Is Jesus?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

The ark of the covenant was where the presence of God fell and represented God's presence among His people.

Because Jesus died on the cross for our sins, God's presence is now in the hearts of those who believe, see Ephesians 1:13-14. Because Jesus paid the penalty for all our sin, nothing can take away God's presence in the life of a believer, see Romans 8:38-39. Now we are the ark of God!

After the ark of God returned Samuel mediated before the Lord for Israel. Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it to the Lord. Even as he did so, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. The Lord thundered a mighty sound against them and threw them into confusion and Israel routed them (1 Samuel 7:3-11). Once again we see the sacrifice of a lamb casting a shadow forward toward Jesus.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

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.

