

The Ark Of The Covenant

1. The ark of the covenant was a sacred chest; also known as: The ark of God, The ark of the Lord, and The ark of the testimony. We read in 1 Sam. 3:3: “And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep.” Joshua 6:11 tells us: “So the ark of the Lord compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.” And Exodus 25:22 tells us: “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.” The word ark comes from the Hebrew word arwn (aw-rone); which means coffin, box, ark, or chest.

A. The ark was the most important object of the Levites, during the wilderness wanderings. It represented the presence of God.

B. The ark of the covenant, with the mercy seat, was the only item of furniture in the Holy of Holies; the innermost room in the tabernacle; the room which the priest entered to meet with God. We read in Exodus 26: 33-34: “And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony: and the veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy. And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place.” The mercy seat was a second piece of the ark; which sat on top of the ark; as a lid or cover. It is spoken of in scripture as a separate item. As Exodus 40:20-21 tells us: “And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark: And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the Lord commanded Moses.” And we are told in Numbers 7:89: “And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto Him.”

C. The ark, as well as all the other vessels within the tabernacle, was anointed with an holy anointing oil. Exodus 30:22-29 tells us: “Moreover the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels. And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, and ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil. And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense.

And the altar of burnt offerings with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy.”

2. God gave Moses the exact details for the construction of the ark of the covenant; while he was upon Mount Sinai. We read in Ex. 25:1-22: “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, And rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and shittim wood, Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate, And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And

thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandments unto the children of Israel.”

A. Offerings were taken from the children of Israel; as the children seen fit to give willingly with their hearts; offerings of gold, silver, brass, blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, and goat’s hair. Also, they gave rams skins dyed red, badger’s skins, shittim wood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil and for incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. (V2-7)

B. The ark was to be 2 1/2 cubits long, 1 1/2 cubits wide, and 1 1/2 cubits deep; or 45” long, 27” wide, and 27” deep. (V10) It was to be constructed from shittim wood; which was from a large, thorn tree, called acacia; which was an orange-brown, hard grained wood. It was later called shittim or the shittah tree.

C. The ark was to be overlain with pure gold; within and without; and was to have a crown of gold round about it. (V11)

D. There was to be four rings of gold for the ark; one upon each corner; two upon each side. (V12)

E. There were to be two staves (poles); each from shittim wood; overlain with gold. The staves were to be put into the gold rings; to bear the ark; and were not to be removed from the ark. (V13-15, 1 Kings 8:8)

3. Even though Moses was the one to receive the details for the building of the ark of the covenant, he was not the one to actually do the building. The building, or the construction, of the ark, was done by a man named Bezaleel. We read of his work in Exodus 37:1-15; which tells us: “And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it: And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about. And he cast for it four rings of gold, to be set by the four corners of it; even two rings upon the one side of it, and two rings upon the other side of it. And he made staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold. And he put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat; One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side; out of the mercy seat made he the churbims on the two wings over the mercy seat, with their faces one to another; even to the mercy seatward were the faces of the cherubims. And he made the table of shittim wood: two cubits was the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof: And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made thereunto a crown of gold round about. Also he made thereunto a border of an handbreadth round about; and made a crown of gold for the border thereof round about. And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners that were in the four feet thereof. Over against the border were the rings, the places for the staves to bear the table. And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table.”

4. The ark was to contain the testimony which God was to give unto Moses; the two tablets with the commandments. It also contained the golden pot of manna; which God miraculously preserved as a testimony to future generations. Ex. 16:32-34 tells us: “And Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept.” And the ark also contained Aaron’s rod that budded; to prove that he was God’s chosen. Num. 17:1-11 tells us: “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod according to the house of their

fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod. And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers. And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you. And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you.

And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their father's houses, even twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron was among their rods. And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness. And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds. And Moses brought out all the rods from before the Lord unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod. And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not. And Moses did so: as the Lord commanded him, so did he." Hebrew-meriy (mer-ee): those who are bitter or rebellious (against Moses); those who were disobedient to Moses' rules or to his leadership; those who caused rebellion throughout the camp.

5. It is said that both the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod, were lost out of the ark, by the time of the dedication of Solomon's temple.

6. The ark of the covenant was carried by the sons of Levi during the wilderness wanderings. Deut. 31:9 tells us: "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel."

7. The ark was carried into the Jordan River by the priests; causing the waters to part; so that Israel could cross on dry ground. Joshua 3: 1-9 tells us: "And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore. And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you. And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God."

A. The people were instructed to keep space between them and the ark; about two-thousand cubits; which would be app. three-thousand feet.

B. Joshua told the people to sanctify themselves. Hebrew-qdash (kaw-dash): to become clean (spiritually-to rid oneself of all sin); to become purified or consecrated.

C. The Lord will do wonders among you. Hebrew-pala (paw-law): marvelous things; things which are too high or impossible to come about by man's own power; miracles.

D. I will begin to magnify thee. Hebrew-gadal (gaw-dal): to promote or to advance; to bring honor or recognition upon.

E. The ark was also carried at the fall of the walls of Jericho. We also read in Joshua 6:1-11: "Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of ram's horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of ram's horns before the ark of the Lord. And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord. And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the

seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of ram's horns passed on before the Lord, and blew with the trumpets and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them. And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rearward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout. So the ark of the Lord compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp."

8. The people of Israel learned a great lesson, but they had to learn it by suffering a great defeat. The lesson was, to put faith in God, not in any material thing. Even though the ark of the covenant was a sacred item, there was no power in the ark itself; but the power is in the God which it represented. We read in 1 Sam. 4:1-11: "And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men. And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! For there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us!

Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain."

9. As we read further in 1 Samuel chapter 4, we also learn that the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant; and this tragic event cost Eli his life. We read in verses 12-22 of chapter 4: "And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the way-side watching; for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled today out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast borne a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child I-chabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken."

A. Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching. Hebrew-tsaphah (tsaw-faw): to lean forward and peer into the distance; to observe or to await. Eli sat upon the seat; waiting for a report of the results of the warfare with the Philistines.

B. Eli's heart trembled for the ark of God. Hebrew-chared (khaw-rade): to be fearful or afraid; to be anxious or to be uncomfortable concerning a particular matter (the safe return of the ark).

C. What meaneth the noise of this tumult? Hebrew-hamown or hamon (haw-mone): a large or loud

commotion; a rage or clamor, involving a large, disquietable group of people, such as a riot.

D. When Eli heard the bad news of the conquering of the ark of the covenant, he fell backward off of the wall; breaking his neck; causing his death. He was more troubled over the ark, than he was over the death of his two sons.

E. Eli's daughter-in-law said that the glory is departed from Israel. Hebrew-kabowd (kaw-bode): splendor or honor.

10. After the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant, it continually brought disaster upon them. We will read of one of the tragedies which the Philistines faced, due to the possession of the ark of the covenant. We read in 1 Sam. 5:1-6: "And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod. When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon unto this day. But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and He destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof."

A. The hand of the Lord was heavy upon them. Hebrew-kabad (kaw-bad): burdensome, severe, or dull; abounding with grievous affliction.

B. He smote them with emerods. Hebrew-aphal (aw-fal): swellings. It is not certain, exactly what type of disease this was. But it is believed by Bible scholars to be as hemorrhoids or ulcers. Some have also said that it is a disease which causes boils upon the outer skin; similar to what we know as inphetigo. Dagon was the chief god of the Philistines. There was a temple of Dagon in Ashdod; and evidently, one in Gaza also. We are told that it was the temple of Dagon in Gaza, which Samson pulled down; killing himself and a large number of Philistines. We read in Judges 16:21-30: But the Philistines took him (Samson), and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven. Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars. And Samson said, unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. And Samson called unto the Lord, and said O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life." Dagon is believed by scholars, to of been an image or a statue; which was half fish, and half man.

11. The people of Ashdod wanted the ark of the covenant out of their city; for they knew it would only bring them disaster. It brought disaster everywhere they carried it. We read further in 1 Samuel chapter 5. Verses 7-8 tell us: "And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god. They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither."

A. His hand is sore upon us. Hebrew-qashah (kaw-shaw): dense, tough or severe, cruel, hard hearted, fierce or grievous.

B. The Philistine lords answered: "Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath." (Another Philistine city) And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither. Hebrew-sham (shawm): there; to

the place (Gath); then (at that time).

12. Continuing in 1 Samuel chapter 5, we read in verses 9-10: “And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction: and He smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts. Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.”

A. The hand of the Lord was against the city (Gath) with a very great *destruction*. Hebrew-mehuwmah (meh-hoo-maw): confusion, uproar, trouble, tumult, vexation, or disturbance; to a great or high degree; with great evidence of such.

B. And He *smote* the men of the city, both small and great. Hebrew-nakah (naw-kaw): to strike or beat severely; to kill or to slaughter; to punish severely; to leave strikes or wounds upon.

C. And they had *emerods* in their secret parts. Hebrew-techor (tekh-ore): to burn, as a severe rash; a boil or ulcer; an inflammation; sores which leave scabs upon the body. The Ekronites cried out against the bringing of the ark of God into their city, for they had heard of the destruction which it had brought upon the people of Gath. They feared that they would be slain because of the presence of the ark.

13. Verses 11-12 of 1 Samuel chapter 5 tells us: “So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.”

A. The hand of God was *heavy* there. Hebrew-kabad (kaw-bad): burdensome, severe, or abounding with a very grievous effect.

B. *And the cry of the city went up to heaven.* The grievousness of their pain and suffering was heard for a long distance. Their suffering evidently was extremely great and extreme.

C. The psalmist spoke of the judgment which God brought upon the Philistines, as a perpetual reproach. We read in Psalm 78:66: “And He smote his enemies in the hinder parts: He put them to a perpetual reproach.”

a. *Perpetual*-Hebrew-owlam (o-lawm): continual or lasting; without end. The hand of God remained against the Philistines continually; until they finally sent the ark back to the people of Israel.

b. *Reproach*-Hebrew-cherpah (kher-paw): disgrace, rebuke, or shame.

14. We are told in 1 Samuel chapter 6, verse 1, that the ark of the covenant was kept in the land of the Philistines for seven months. The Philistines decided to return the ark of the Lord unto the Israelites, but they would not return it empty. We read further in verses 2-5: “And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the Lord? Tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place. And they said, If we send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return Him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to Him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords. Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure He will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.”

A. The Philistines called for the priests and the *diviners*. Hebrew-qacam (kaw-sam): a soothsayer, magician, worshiper of idols or false gods.

B. They would not send back the ark empty, but with a *trespass* offering. asham (aw-shawm): an offering for guilt which has been recognized, or admitted; a sin offering.

C. They decided to make replicas or images, which contained the growths or emerods, just as had come upon their bodies; as a representation of the plague which they had been given. One was for each of the five Philistine rulers; of the cities of Ashdod, Gaza, Ashelon, Gath, and Ekron. They also made five golden replicas of the mice which God had sent to mar their land; one for each of the five cities.

15. We read in verses 6-12 of chapter 6: “Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: And take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return Him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and sent it away, that it may go.

And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh, then He hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us. And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: And they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh.”

A. Milch kine-Hebrew-uwl (ool) and parah (paw-raw): a heifer or cow which gives milk.

B. The jewels of gold. Referring to the golden emerods and mice which they had made as a sacrifice offering.

C. In a coffer. Hebrew-argaz (ar-gawz): a wooden box.

16. Verses 13-18 of 1 Samuel chapter 6, tells us: “And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the Lord. And the Levites took down the ark of the Lord, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the Lord. And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day. And these are the golden emerods which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering unto the Lord; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashelton one, for Gath one, for Ekron one; And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great stone of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the Lord: which stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite.”

A. Beth-shemesh-A city just inside the border of northwestern Judah.

B. The great stone of Abel. A large stone in the field of Joshua; which even though there is found no scriptural evidence, is probable named after Adam and Eve’s son; who was murdered by his brother, Cain. It is said that this great stone remains even until this day.

17. Chapter 6 of 1 Samuel, ends with verses 19-21, which tell us: “And He smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even He smote of the people fifty-thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? And to whom shall He go up from us? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, the Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.”

A. God smote 50,070 men; because they looked into the ark.

B. And the people lamented. Hebrew-abal (aw-bal): to mourn or to bewail.

18. The ark stayed at Kirjath-jearim during all the days of Saul. But after Saul was gone, David consulted with all the captains and leaders of the Israelite people; and they all agreed, to go to Kirjath-jearim, and bring up the ark of God (to Jerusalem). We read in 1 Chron. 13:1-5: “And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us: And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul. And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim.”

19. God had previously made it very clear, that no one was to touch the ark, except the Levites; and that anyone who touched the ark, other than the Levites, would die. We read in Numbers 4:15: “And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.” They were to bear the ark upon their shoulders. Numbers 7:9 tells us: “But unto the sons of Kohath He gave none (oxen or carts): because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear (the ark) upon their shoulders.”

20. David failed to make sure that God’s orders were followed; therefore, it cost a man his life. We read in 1 Chron. 13:6-10: “And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjath-jearim, which belongeth to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the Lord, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is

called on it. And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart. And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets. And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and He smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.” We also read of this event in 2 Sam. 6:6-8, which tells us: “And when they came to Nachon’s threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God. And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day.” God had previously made it very clear, that no one was to touch the ark, except the Levites. Uzza failed to remember this very important restriction, and it cost him his life. The ark should not of been carried on a cart to begin with; for God had told them very plain, that the ark was to be carried upon the shoulders; with the use of the staves. (Ex. 25:13-15)

21. 1 Chron. 13:11-14, tells us: “And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called Perez-uzza to this day.

And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me? So David brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.” The Lord made a *breach* upon Uzza. Hebrew-perets (peh-rets): a break or a separation (from God); as a change in mind (of God) as to his permission to allow one to live. Uzza evidently assumed that God would not do anything; for he knew that the ark of the covenant was not to be touched by anyone other than the Levites. This should be a lesson for every one of us to remember; that we are not to just assume, that it will be alright with God, if we think there is a need for action of some kind; if it is an action which we have been previously ordered by Him not to perform.

22. We are told in 1 Chronicles chapter 14, of how David received help from the king of Tyre; in building his house; and of how he was *confirmed* by God, as king over Israel. Hebrew-kown (koon): established, appointed, ordained, or ordered (by God). Chapter 14 also tells us of how David took more wives at Jerusalem; and begat more sons and daughters. And we are told of how God gave him victory over the Philistines in a great and mighty way.

23. Chapter 15, of 1 Chronicles, tells us of how David and his people, brought up the ark to the city of David (Jerusalem). But we also see in these scriptures, that David took the necessary precautions, to make sure that the ark was brought up in the way that God had previously commanded. We read in verses 1-2: “And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto Him for ever.”

A. David made certain that the ark was handled properly this time; and that absolutely no one handled the ark except the Levites; just as the Lord God had previously commanded.

B. Verses 3-12, tell us of how David called together all the people of Israel, to Jerusalem; to make plans for the bringing up of the ark. We read: “And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the Lord unto his place, which he had prepared for it. And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites: Of the sons of Kohath; Uriel the chief, and his brethren an hundred and twenty: Of the sons of Merari; Asaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred and twenty: Of the sons of Gershorm; Joel the chief, and his brethren an hundred and thirty: Of the sons of Elizaphan; Shemiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred: Of the sons of Hebron; Eliel the chief, and his brethren fourscore: Of the sons of Uzziel; Amminadab the chief, and his brethren an hundred and twelve. And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, And said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: Sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it.”

a. David said: “Ye are the *chief* of the fathers of the Levites.” Hebrew-rosh (roshe): the head or top (in rank); the first in authority (of the Levites)

b. *Sanctify* yourselves. Hebrew-qadash (kaw-dash): to become clean (spiritually); to become hallowed or holy; as a result of confession and repentance of sin; a matter of one’s own choice to do such.

C. Verses 13-15 tell us: “For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order. So the priests and Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with

the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord.”

D. We read in verses 16-29: And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding by lifting up the voice with joy. So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari their brethren, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; And with them their brethren of the second degree, Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, Eliab, and Benaiah, and Maaseiah, and Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, the porters. So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass; And Zechariah, and Aziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with psalteries on Alamoth; And Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obed-odem, and Jeiel, and Azaziah, with harps on the Sheminith to excel. And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song: he instructed about the song, because he was skilful. And Berechiah and Elkanah were doorkeepers for the ark. And Shebaniah, and Jehoshaphat, and Nethaneel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, did blow with the trumpets before the ark of God: and Obed-edom and Jehiah were doorkeepers for the ark. So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the house of Obed-edom with joy. And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams. And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers: David also had upon him an ephod of linen. Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps. And it came to pass, as the ark of the covenant of the Lord came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul was looking out at a window saw king David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart.”

E. Verse 29 tells us about the daughter of Saul, who watched David from a window. We read: “And it came to pass, as the ark of the covenant of the Lord came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window saw king David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart.” Hebrew-bazah (baw-zaw): to disesteem, scorn, or to be vile; to hate.

24. We read in 1 Chron. chapter 22, of how David made necessary preparations for the building of the temple of God.

Verse 19 tells us: “Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the Lord.” The ark of the covenant, as well as all the other holy vessels, were to be brought into the house of the Lord.

25. We also find out from 1 Samuel chapter 4, that the ark of the covenant was not to be an item of war. Placing one’s faith in any material item, as the Israelites did in the ark of the covenant, is certain to bring defeat; just as was brought to the Israelites by the Philistines. Victory only comes against any enemy, by faith in God; not by faith in any material item.

26. David had plans to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord; but his plans were forbidden from coming to pass, because he was a man of war; and one to shed blood. We read in 1 Chron. 28:2-3: “Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.”

27. 2 Chronicles chapter 3 and chapter 4, tell us of how Solomon built the temple in Mt. Moriah, at Jerusalem. We read: “Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite. And he began to build in the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign. Now these are the things wherein Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God. The length by cubits after the first measure was threescore cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits. And the porch that was in the front of the house, the length of it was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the height was an hundred and twenty: and he overlaid it within with pure gold. And the greater house he ceiled with fir tree, which he overlaid with fine gold, and set thereon palm trees and chains. And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty: and the gold was gold of Parvaim. He overlaid also the house, the beams, the posts and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold; and graved cherubims on the walls. And he made the most holy house, the length whereof was according to the breadth of the house,

twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits: and he overlaid it with fine gold, amounting to six hundred talents. And the weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold. And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold. And in the most holy house he made two cherubims of image work, and overlaid them with gold. And the wings of the cherubims were twenty cubits lone: one wing of the one cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing was likewise five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub. And one wing of the other cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing was five cubits also, joining to the wing of the other cherub. The wings of these cherubims spread themselves forth twenty cubits: and they stood on their feet, and their faces were inward. And he made the veil blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubims thereon. Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high, and the chapter that was on the top of each of them five cubits. And he made chains, as in the oracle, and put them on the heads of the pillars; and made an hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chains.

And he reared up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that one the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz. Moreover he made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof. Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. And under it was the similitude of oxen, which did compass it round about: ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about. Two rows of oxen were cast, when it was cast. It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward. And the thickness of it was an handbreadth, and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; and it received and held three thousand baths. He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed in them; but the sea was for the priests to wash in. And he made ten candlesticks of gold according to their form, and set them in the temple, five on the right hand, and five on the left. He made also ten tables, and placed them in the temple, five on the right side, and five on the left. And he made an hundred basins of gold. Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid the doors of them with brass. And he set the sea on the right side of the east end, over against the south. And Hiram made the pots, and the shovels, and the basins. And Hiram finished the work that he was to make for king Solomon for the house of God; To wit, the two pillars, and the pommels, and the chapters which were on the top of the two pillars, and the two wreaths to cover the two pommels of the chapters which were on the top of the pillars; And four-hundred pomegranates on the two wreaths; two rows of pomegranates on each wreath, to cover the two pommels of the chapters which were upon the pillars. He made also bases, and lavers, made he upon the bases; One sea, and twelve oxen under it. The pots also, and the shovels, and the fleshhooks, and all their instruments, did Hiram his father make to king Solomon for the house of the Lord of bright brass. In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeredathah. Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: for the weight of the brass could not be found out. And Solomon made all the vessels that were for the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon the showbread was set; Moreover the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn after the manner before the oracle of pure gold; And the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs made he of gold, and that perfect gold; And the snuffers, and the basins, and the spoons, and the censers, of the pure gold: and the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the most holy place, and the doors of the house of the temple, were of gold.”

28. We read further in chapter 5 of 2 Chronicles, verses 1-9: “Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the Lord was finished: and Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God. Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion. Wherefore all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king in the feast which was in the seventh month.

And all the elders of Israel came; and the Levites took up the ark. And they brought up the ark, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, these did the priests and the Levites bring up. Also king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude. And the

priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims: For the cherubims spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above. And they drew out the staves of the ark, that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day.”

A. Solomon transferred the ark of the covenant from the tent; which David had prepared as a sanctuary; to the great temple which he had built; and placed it in the oracle of the temple. It is believed to of remained there in the temple until the time of the destruction of Jerusalem; which is believed to of been app. 587 B.C.

B. *Oracle*-Hebrew-debiyr (deb-eer): the shrine, or the innermost place in the sanctuary; the most holy place; the Holy of Holies.

C. Hebrews tells us a little about the most holy place; and of how the ark of the covenant was placed in it. In Hebrews 9:3-5, we read: “And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censor, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot, that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot speak particularly.”

D. The ark of the covenant was kept in the most Holy place at all times, and never removed. The chief priest entered this most holy place once a year; to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people; as well as for his own sins; for God was to meet with him from above the mercy seat; just as had been ordained by God from the beginning of the creation of the ark of the covenant. (Ex. 25:17-22)

29. We are also told of an ark, in the temple of God in Heaven; which John saw. He tells us of it in Rev. 11:19: “And the temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.”

Conclusion:

The ark of the covenant was the most holy piece of furniture which God ever gave instructions to be built. Most of all, because it contained the tablets of stone, which had the law engraved upon them; which God had given to Moses upon Mt. Sinai. Also, because it was covered with the mercy seat; where God came to meet with the priest; and to communicate with him. It was not to be an item of war; even though it was attempted to be used as such.

But when this mistake was made, disaster came upon the Israelites. We also found out that disaster was brought upon the people; for no more than just touching the ark; when they were not authorized by God to do so. Only the Levites, or the priests, were authorized to touch the ark. Some people lost their lives also, just because of their sinful curiosity; which caused them to sinfully look into the ark. The ark was to be placed within the oracle; or the most holy place in the temple. And absolutely no one was to go within the most holy place, or the Holy of Holies, except the High Priest; and this was only done once a year; to offer the blood of the sacrifice for the sins of the people. The sacrifice was killed, and then the High Priest took the blood of the sacrifice into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkled the blood over the mercy seat; or the top of the ark of the covenant. The ark of the covenant was said to of been lost after the destruction of Jerusalem. But there are stories indicating that it or parts of it, have been found at times during the later centuries. There probably would of had to of been a replica of the original ark, which was placed in the temple; when the temple was rebuilt later.

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