

Family Worship

God's Holiness

24.1.2021

Opening Prayer

Our Heavenly Father, thank you for our family.

And thank you for the privilege of coming together for worship.

Help us to understand Your Word and obey it with a joyful heart.

In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwuDSw-9cUQ>

Holy holy holy
All the saints adore Thee
Casting down their golden crowns
Around the glassy sea

Catechism Time!

Bible truths for teaching children

Question 32

Q: What do justification and sanctification mean?

- A:**
- Justification means our declared righteousness before God, made possible by Christ's death and resurrection for us.
 - Sanctification means our gradual, growing righteousness, made possible by the Spirit's work in us.

Bible verse (1 Peter 1:1-2)

To those who are elect exiles . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

You will come across the
Philistines and the Ark of the
Covenant in today's bible reading

Background

The Philistines

- ❑ They were Israel's enemy
- ❑ They were fierce fighters (Goliath, killed by David, was a Philistine)
- ❑ They worshipped an idol called Dagon - which looked like a merman!

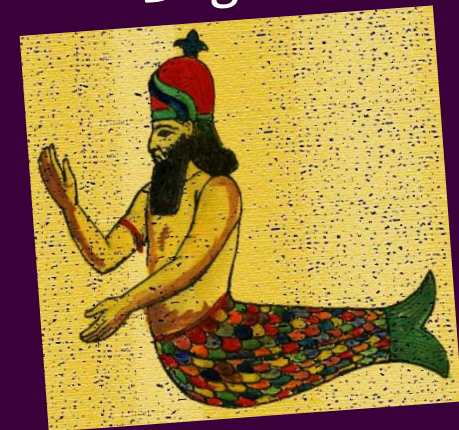
Israel at the time

- ❑ They had sinned against God and there was no repentance

Philistine soldiers

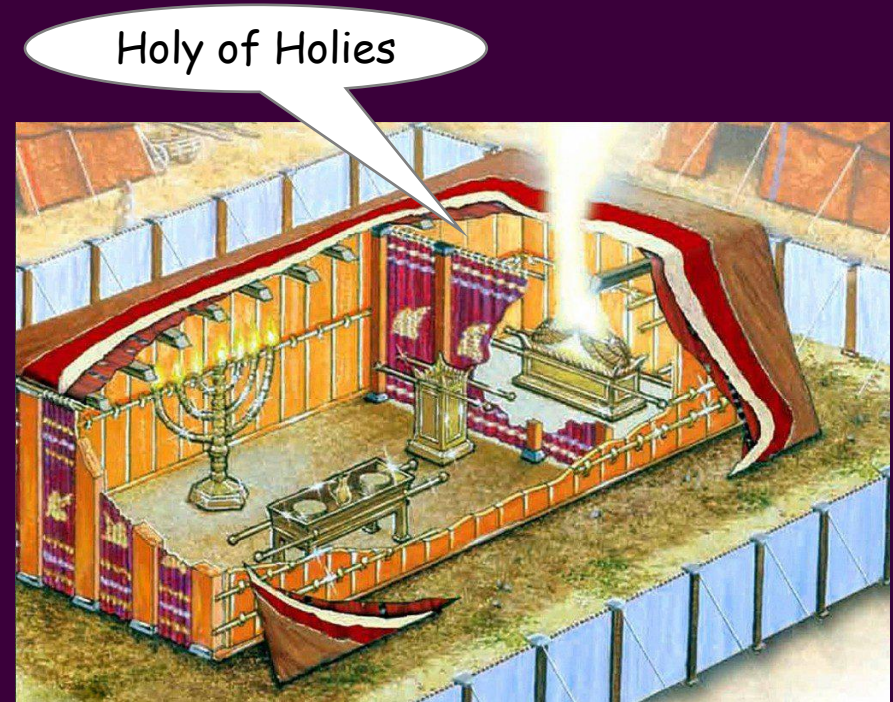
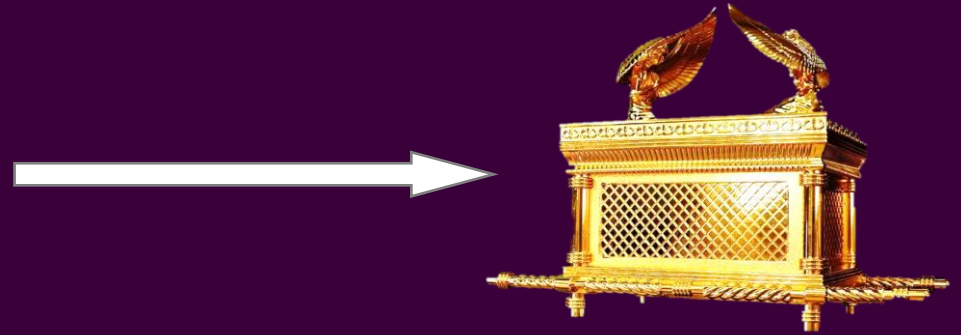


Dagon



The Ark of the Covenant

- ❑ The Ark contained the tablets of the Ten Commandments, a jar of manna and Aaron's rod
- ❑ The Ark was placed in the holiest place in the Tabernacle called "Holy of Holies"
- ❑ Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies once a year with animal blood
- ❑ The animal must be one without defect and was offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the Israelites



Tabernacle

The Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies.
So...the Ark was super holy? Yes!

Holiness is something special to God alone.
It represents God's moral purity and
absolute separation from humans.

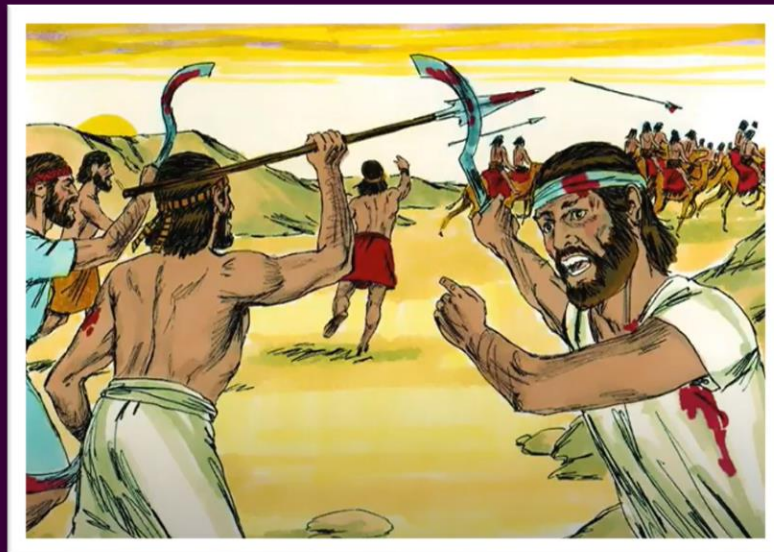
And Holiness is both attractive and
dangerous as we will find out...



Let's open up the Bible
1 Samuel 4-6

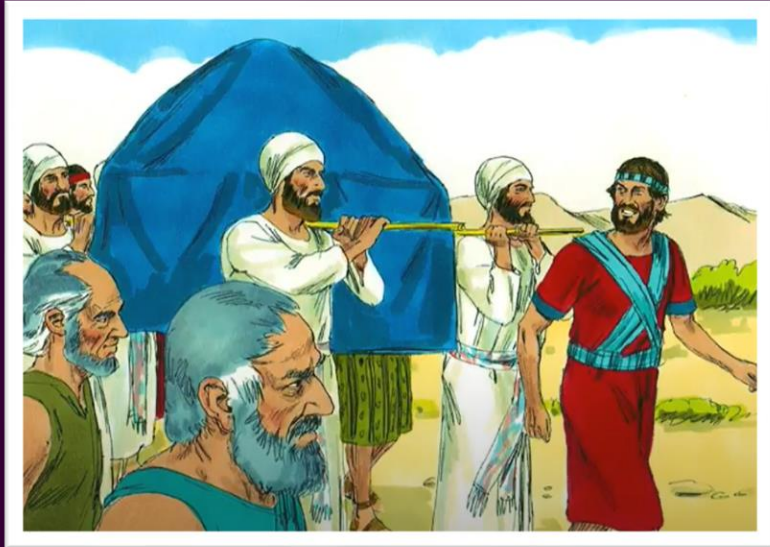
Let's see how the Ark
went into battle

At that time the Israelites went out to fight the Philistines. The Israelites camped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines camped at Aphek. The Philistines went to meet the Israelites in battle. And as the battle spread, the Philistines defeated the Israelites. They killed about 4,000 soldiers of the Israelite army.



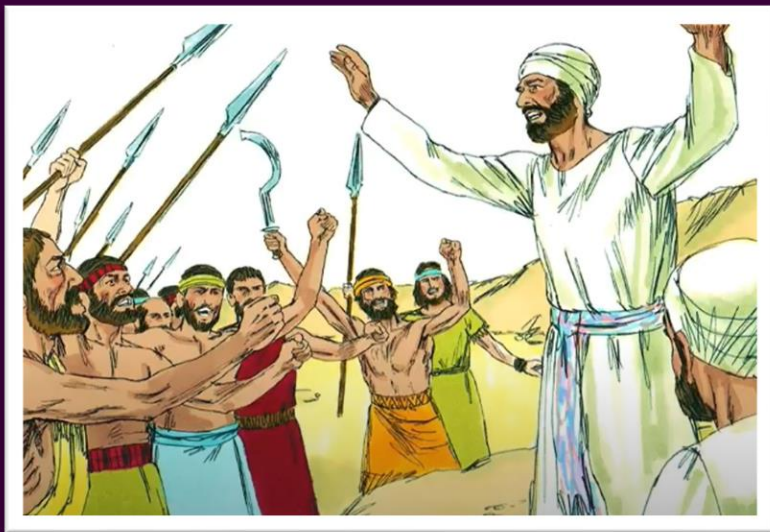
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Then some Israelite soldiers went back to their camp. The elders of Israel asked, "Why did the Lord let the Philistines defeat us? **Let's bring the Ark of the Covenant with the Lord here from Shiloh. In this way God will go with us into battle. He will save us from our enemies.**"



The Ark came into the camp. And all the Israelites gave a great shout of joy. It made the ground shake. The Philistines heard Israel's shout. They asked, "What's all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?"

Then the Philistines found out that the Ark had come into the Hebrew camp. They were afraid and said, "A god has come into the Hebrew camp! We're in trouble! This has never happened before! How terrible it will be for us! Who can save us from these powerful gods? They are the ones who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of disasters in the desert.



Be brave, Philistines! Fight like men! In the past they were our slaves. So fight like men, or you will become their slaves."

Oh no...they took the Ark!

So the Philistines fought hard and defeated the Israelites. Every Israelite soldier ran away to his own home. It was a great defeat for Israel, because 30,000 Israelite soldiers were killed. The Ark was taken by the Philistines. They took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. They carried it into Dagon's temple and put it next to Dagon.



The people of Ashdod rose early the next morning. They found that **Dagon had fallen on his face on the ground. He was lying before the Ark!** They put back Dagon. But the same thing happened the next day...**Dagon's head and hands were broken off!**



The Lord punished the people of Ashdod and their neighbors. He gave them growths on their skin. The people of Ashdod said, "The Ark can't stay with us. God is punishing us and Dagon our god."

They moved the Ark to Gath. But the Lord punished Gath too. Finally the Ark was sent to Ekron. But the same thing happened - people had growths on their skin.

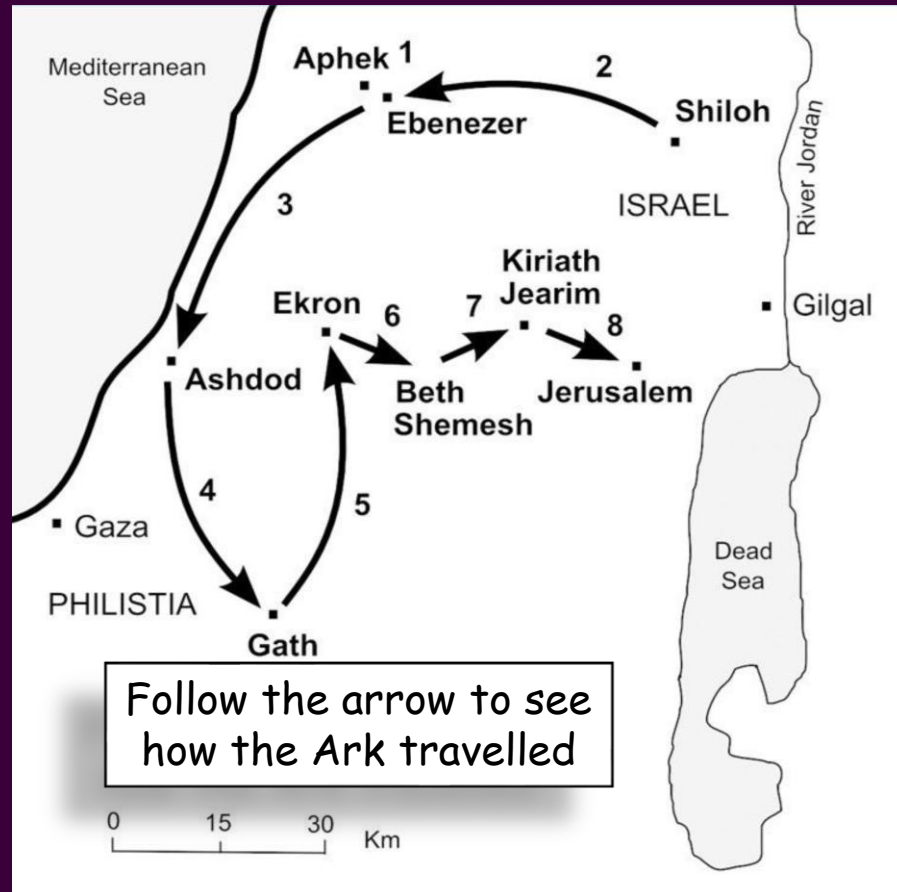
The Ark went home...

The Philistines decided to send the Ark back to Israel in a new cart. They also sent 5 gold models of skin growth, and 5 gold models of rats **so their sins could be forgiven** by the God of Israel.

They got two cows that had just given birth to calves and they had never had yokes on their necks before. They took the calves home so they could not follow their mothers.

Then the cows went straight toward Beth Shemesh in Israel. They stayed on the road, mooing all the way.





Follow the arrow to see how the Ark travelled

The cart came to the field belonging to Joshua. The people of Beth Shemesh chopped up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows to the Lord. The Levites took down the Ark. **But some men looked into the Ark. So God killed 70 of them.**

The people of Beth Shemesh cried because the Lord had punished them so terribly. **They said, "Who can stand before the Lord, this holy God?"** Where can the Ark of the Covenant go from here?" They sent the Ark to Kiriath Jearim. And the Ark stayed in Kiriath Jearim for many years until King David brought it to Jerusalem.

Questions

1. Why did the Israelites lose the battle against the Philistines?
 - They did not have enough weapons
 - They had fewer soldiers than their enemy
 - They did not repent of their sins before God

2. The Israelites knew the Ark's power, e.g. in the battle of Jericho the priests walked around the city with the Ark 7 times on the 7th day and the walls fell. So this time, the elders of Israel, without enquiring of God, decided the Ark should be brought to the battle field.
 - a) Were the elders correct to assume that the battle would be won simply by bringing the Ark to the frontline?
 - b) What should they have done first?

Questions

3. The Israelites didn't obey God but wanted God's help to defeat their enemy. By bringing the Ark to the battlefield, they were trying to "use" or "manipulate" God.
 - ❑ Sometimes we "use" God to achieve our desired results instead of obeying his will. We think our prayers are not answered but God just wants us to examine ourselves first. Do you have an experience to share?
4. It's fascinating to read the story of the showdown between God and Dagon. Who made Dagon fall twice? What did that mean to the Philistines?
5. The Philistines returned the Ark by sending 2 cows who just had calves
 - a) The cows had never been yoked (trained) but worked together perfectly
 - b) They went straight to Israel, leaving their babies behind (against their instinct)How was this possible?
6. God killed 70 people who looked into the Ark. Why was God so harsh? (Hint: think of God's holiness)

Summary - God is Holy

None of these people treated God as Holy

Israel's Elders

They had unconfessed sins and even tried to "use" God to get the results they wanted

The Philistines

They didn't worship God as the true God but put the Ark next to Dagon as if it was another idol

Beth Shemesh's People

They treated the Ark lightly by looking inside

Summary - God is Holy

- ❑ No one can approach the Holy God because of our sins
- ❑ Jesus took away our sins by dying on the cross
- ❑ Jesus, our Great High Priest, carried His own blood into the Holy of Holies
- ❑ By believing in Jesus, we can approach God without fear as God's children



What is Holiness?

<https://youtu.be/I9vn5UvsHvM>



Family Prayer Time

1. Thank God for His Word and help so we may learn from Him.
2. Ask your children to pray for what they have learned just now.
3. Ask your family how you can pray for them specifically.

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Jesus Loves You

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVTAOvZV1HM>

