

The Ark is Taken Away

A Bible Story for Kids

Find it in the Bible: 1 Samuel 4:1-22, 1 Samuel 5:1-12, 1 Samuel 6:1-21

Characters: Eli, Hophni, Phinehas, Samuel, Philistines

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THE ISRAELITES WERE fighting the Philistines, and they LOST! Four thousand soldiers died. The leaders said, 'Let's bring the ark of God from the temple! Then we'll win!'

The ark was a special golden box that showed God was with them. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, brought it to the army. When the ark arrived, all the Israelites shouted SO loud that the ground shook!

The Philistines heard the shouting. They got scared! 'The Israelite God is in their camp!' But they decided to fight anyway.

But here's the problem: the Israelites weren't obeying God. They thought the ark was like a lucky charm. But God is not magic—He wants people to love and obey Him!

Israel lost the battle. Thirty thousand soldiers died, including Eli's two sons. And the worst part—the Philistines CAPTURED the ark!

Old Eli was sitting by the road, waiting for news. A messenger came running with torn clothes and dust on his head—that meant really bad news! 'The battle is lost, your sons are dead, and the ark was captured!'

When Eli heard about the ark, he fell backward off his chair and died. He was ninety-eight years old.

The Philistines took the ark to their temple next to their fake god Dagon. But the next morning, Dagon had fallen over! They stood him up. The NEXT morning, Dagon's head and hands had broken off! Then people in that city got very sick.

The Philistines moved the ark to another city. Same thing! Everywhere the ark went, bad things happened. After seven months, the Philistines said, 'Send this ark back to Israel! It's too powerful!'

They put the ark on a cart and sent it back. The lesson? God is holy and powerful. We can't use Him like magic. We have to truly love and obey Him!