



Way Point Chronicles

Traveling through the Old Testament by Chronological Stories

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Way Point 63

To Hot to Handle

Story of the Stolen Ark

Travel Log

Personal Notes

The children of Israel journeyed through the wilderness for forty years, crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Every time they moved from encampment in the wilderness they were lead by the priest carrying the ark of the covenant. *Numbers 10:33 And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.* As they crossed the River we read in *Joshua 4:7 Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.*

This ark of the covenant by the time of Israel's history as a nation has now been placed in the tabernacle of the Lord. There were times it was removed from the tabernacle to be taken into battle as it was during the time of Joshua at Jericho. *Joshua 6:6 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 rams' horns before the ark of the LORD. 7 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.*

This Ark of the Covenant contained the Law of Moses on the tablets we know as the Ten Commandments. In addition, a pot of manna and the rod of Aaron that budded were inside the box overlaid with gold. The Ark was the symbol of God's presence with them. It was not an object of worship but was the meeting place of God and the High Priest of Israel. The top of the ark was known as the mercy seat. It is within this historical setting that we enter into our Way Point.

I- Corruption in the Priesthood:

Eli, the priest had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas who were said to be the sons of Belial or Satan. Eli has become an old man as we enter the biblical narrative. *1 Samuel 2:22 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. 24 Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress.*

Because of this gross transgression of the trust of the priesthood and the failure of Eli to discipline his sons God sent an unnamed prophet that

Lined area for personal notes.



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told him concerning his sons, *And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. 1 Samuel 2:34*

The oppressors at the time of these events were the Philistines from the east of Israel toward the Mediterranean Sea.

II- Defeat in Battle:

The battle with the Philistines begins to be recorded in *1 Samuel 4:1-2 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. 2 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.* The first battle did not go well for Israel; in fact, they lost 4000 men as we see. The Philistines were one of the enemies of Israel that warred with them for a large amount of their history even until the time of King David. They were not totally subdued during the time of Hezekiah many years later. (*2 Kings 18:8*)

II- Call for the Ark:

We see a very telling verse next that gave the mindset of the people of biblical times. Most did not think of a battle as a battle of military but one of a contest between the gods of the nations. *1 Samuel 4:3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines?*

They became very introspective about why God would use the Philistines to defeat them. They did not question their military tactics but it was a theological question.

The solution in their mind was to call for the ark and they by assuring the favor of God in the battle. *1 Sam 4:3b ...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.*

The ark is brought to the battle field under the direction of the sons of Eli. *1 Samuel 4:4 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.*

The arrival of the ark was greeted by a great celebration. *1 Samuel 4:5-6 And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the*



Coordinates:
1 Samuel 4:1-7:2

Sights to See:

- 1- The stewardship of leadership is something that should be taken very sacred. The sons of Eli lead the people the wrong way, away from God.
- 2- The presence of the Lord in any endeavor is critical. Only what is done for the Lord will last and only what is done by Him through us will be of any lasting positive consequences.
- 3- Our enemies should know when God is moving in our midst. We need to seek opportunities to celebrate the things of God.
- 4- There is no other God but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There is not image that we should bow before and call a god.
- 5- It is indeed a sad day when the glory of the Lord departs. The seven churches of the revelation all probably thought that God was obligated to continue with them regardless but we see this was not true. We must strive to never have God write "Ichabod" over our door.
- 6- The Lord must be given His rightful place in our heart first and then in our homes and church.

