

# Do You Have An Ark In Your Closet?

Chuck Northrop

After Israel was beaten in battle with the Philistines, the people gathered together and the elders said, “Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to day 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” (1 Samuel 4:3). So they sent to Shiloh for the ark of the covenant and when it came “all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again” (1 Samuel 4:5). The people of Israel felt confident because they had the ark of the covenant. The effects of the possession of the ark of the covenant was even felt in the ranks of the army of the Philistines. The text says that the Philistines “were afraid, for they said, ‘God is come into the camp.’” (1 Samuel 4:7). But when they were engaged in battle, Israel was again beaten.

The religious condition of Israel during that portion of their history was pathetic. Eli had allowed his sons, Hophni and Phinehas to make a mockery of the sacrifices given to the Lord. As a result, the people of Israel saw their mockery and “abhorred the offering of the Lord” (1 Samuel 2:17). It had become so bad that the sons of Eli would “lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” (1 Samuel 2:22).

Because of the religious condition of Israel, it is obvious that God had allowed them to be defeated in battle against the Philistines. Israel had a false hope based upon the fact that they had the ark of the covenant. They thought that since they had the ark of the covenant that God must be with them. The religious condition must have been so bad that they began to think of the true and living God as the heathens did toward their idols. Instead of trusting in God, they trusted in a box overlaid with gold.

They had an ark in which they trusted, but, sadly and like Israel of old. there are some today who have an ark stuck away in their closets. They are no longer trusting in the true and living God but in something that to them represents God. There are some who think that they are holy because they have a Bible. It is never read or studied for it is never opened because it is stuck away in some closet. It is dusty, the pages are yellowed, and the cover is falling off, not because of use but because of non-use. The Bible becomes just another book when it is not engrafted upon our hearts and in our minds (James 1:21). It may represent something holy, but until it sets us apart from the world because of its instruction and guidance, it is just paper and ink.

The Bible is the book of books, and it can change lives, but not until we take it out of the closet, read and study it, write it upon our hearts, and follow its light. It will help us to win the battles of life, but not until we can see beyond its cover.