

How to Stand Before a Holy God

1 Samuel 5-6

Introduction:

1. Have you ever gotten something you wanted, but after you got it, you wish you had never gotten it? It caused you nothing but trouble. This is what happens in our text.
2. The Philistines had defeated God's people, Israel. In the midst of the battle, they managed to steal something very precious to Israel, the Ark of the Covenant. This was the most important item in Israel's tabernacle (the place of worship).
 - It represented God's presence, power, and holiness, and now it was gone.
3. The Philistines thought they really had something terrific, but God brought immediate judgment to the Philistines. No matter what city they would take it to, judgment followed.
4. Finally, after seven months, the Philistines returned the ark to Israel, to the city of Beth-shemesh. These men were also careless and disrespectful, and judgment came upon them.
5. After this, the men of Beth-shemesh asked a great question (6:20). *"Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?"*
6. It is important to understand that the Ark of the Covenant was a type, or picture, of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was on the Ark of the Covenant where the blood was sprinkled, and God would meet with man and be reconciled to man. Jesus Christ is the place where God meets man, today, and the place where man can be reconciled to God.
7. Inside the ark were three items:
 - The two tablets of stone which contained God's written law - Jesus was the Word incarnate, who kept and fulfilled God's law in every way.
 - A pot of manna - Jesus was the bread (manna) from heaven, broken on the cross for us.
 - Aaron's rod that budded - This was a picture of the resurrection of Christ.
8. Christ's sinless life, His cross work, His shed blood, and His resurrection were all pictured and typified by the Ark of the Covenant. Now do you see why God was so particular about it?
9. Who can stand before a holy God? Have you ever had to stand before somebody and it made you fearful (principal, boss, first time to preach)? Imagine standing before an eternal, righteous, holy God. One day we all will. Romans 14:12
10. Let's remember that the ark was a picture of Christ, and let's learn from this story how we can one day stand before a holy God. Who is able to stand before a holy God?

Only those who believe that Christ is Lord of all. 5:1-12

1. The Philistines made a grave mistake. They placed God's ark in the temple of their false god, Dagon (vs. 2). They placed the ark on the same level as their other

- gods and idols as if it was just another superstitious relic. They would soon learn differently.
2. Remember, the ark was a picture of Christ that was to one day come. So, where did they find the image of Dagon the next morning? On his face before the ark. vs. 3
 3. The next morning it was more severe (vs. 4). God is saying, "Your false god can't help you. He is powerless. He can't see (eyes gone), hear (ears), or help (hands)."
 4. What is the lesson that we get from this for today? Only Christ (as typified by the ark) is Lord. The Father will not allow anybody or anything else to share in His Son's glory. Philippians 2:9-11
 5. Because Christ is risen and has been exalted as Christ **the** Lord, He **alone** is able to save (Hebrews 7:25; Acts 4:12). Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the risen Lord, the only Lord? Nobody will be able to stand before God who does not believe that.

Only those who put Christ in His proper place. 6:1-16

1. Notice 1 Samuel 6:1. The ark was in the country of the Philistines for seven months. While it was there, it caused them nothing but trouble. Instead of doing right and putting the ark back in its proper place, they blamed the ark and shifted it from city to city. 5:7-10
 - Finally, they decided to put the ark back in its proper place. 6:8
2. Where was the proper place for the ark? The ark was to be in the innermost part of the tabernacle, or temple of Israel. It was to reside in a room called the "holy of holies."
3. When it was in its proper place, it was a blessing. It was a place of atonement and divine forgiveness. But, if not in its proper place, it would bring divine judgment.
4. Remember, the ark was a picture of Jesus Christ, the One who would come and provide Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. Christ has done that. He cried out, "*It is finished.*" Our sin debt was paid in full on the cross. He rose from the dead.
5. So, where is the proper place for you and me to put Christ today, in this day and age? Here is the simple answer: on the throne of your heart. Ephesians 3:17; Romans 8:9-10; Colossians 1:27
6. The ark, which was a type of Christ, took up residence in a building (the temple). But today, we no longer have the picture. We have the substance, Christ Himself. Christ isn't taking up residence in a building today, but in people's hearts and spirits.
7. When you believe on Christ, He takes up residence in the throne room of your heart, and the Bible says that we become the temple of God. 1 Corinthians 3:16
8. But if you do not accept Christ into your heart and you refuse Him, or you simply have head knowledge of Him, instead of saving you and bringing eternal forgiveness, Christ will bring future judgment and condemnation (just like the ark). 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

9. Have you put Christ in His proper place? Does He now dwell in you? Do you have His resurrection life abiding in you? If not, you will never be able to stand before a holy God.

In Conclusion:

1. If there is one predominant thought that we learn from these two chapters, it is that God was saying, "Don't take My ark of the covenant and treat it flippantly or lightly. You'd better respect the fact that it is **My** ark, and you'd better put it in its proper place. If not, you won't stand before Me." The Philistines and the men of Beth-shemesh learned this.
2. Today, God is saying to mankind, "Don't treat my Son (Jesus Christ) flippantly or lightly. You'd better respect the fact that He is **My** beloved Son, and that He gave His life for your sins. Believe on Him and trust Him completely."
3. Just like the Philistines learned about the ark, it is not Christ **plus** church membership that will cause you to stand before a holy God (baptism, religious rituals, etc.). It is Christ alone.
4. If you will turn to Christ and trust Him, and receive Him into your heart, you don't ever have to fear standing before God one day. Romans 5:2; 1 Corinthians 15:1