

3 – THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (1 SAMUEL 4:1-7:1)

I. The Capture of the Ark (1 Samuel 4:1-22)

A. The Ark Goes to War (4:1-11)

- Israel went out to battle against the Philistines and were defeated after losing 4,000 men.
- The people questioned why the Lord allowed their defeat as they called for the Ark.
- They believed the presence of the Ark would give them victory over the Philistines.
- So, Eli's sons brought the Ark to the camp of Israel and the people gave a great shout.
- The Philistines were afraid of the Ark, but they encouraged their troops to remain strong.
- Israel was defeated, Eli's sons were killed and the Ark was captured.

B. The Death of Eli (4:12-18)

- A Benjamite fled from the battlefield and made his way to Shiloh, where Eli was waiting.
- Eli inquired about the great uproar that was happening and the man gave the report to him.
- He told Eli that Israel was defeated, his sons were killed and that the Ark was captured.
- Upon hearing about the Ark, Eli fell backward, broke his neck and died.

C. The Birth of Ichabod (4:19-22)

- When Eli's daughter-in-law heard the news, she went into labor.
- She gave birth to a son, who was named Ichabod, and she died.
- Ichabod means "the glory has departed from Israel."

II. The Ark Among the Philistines (1 Samuel 5:1-12)

A. The Humiliation of Dagon (5:1-5)

- The Philistines brought the Ark and set it by the god Dagon.
- In the morning, they found the idol on its face before the Ark.
- They reset the idol in its proper place.
- In the morning, they found the idol on its face again and hands were broken off.

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- Because of the destruction of their idol, the priests would not enter that temple area again.

B. The Plague of Tumors (5:6-12)

- The Lord struck Ashdod and ravaged them with tumors.
- The men of Ashdod concluded that the Ark must leave and sent Ark to Ekron.
- The Lord struck Ekron and ravaged them with tumors as well.
- The people called for the lords of the Philistines to send the Ark away.

III. The Ark is Returned (1 Samuel 6:1-7:1)

A. The Decision to Return the Ark (6:1-9)

- After being among the Philistines seven months, they sought how to return it.
- They decided to send it with a trespass offering of five golden tumors and rats.
- They felt that giving God the glory might lighten the judgment against them.
- They would put the Ark on a new cart with two cows whose calves were taken away.
- If the Ark returns to Israel on its own, it was God who struck them.

B. The Return (6:10-16)

- The cart with the cows headed to the territory of Israel and the people rejoiced to see it.
- The cart and cows were offered to the Lord as an offering.
- The Philistines lords observed this and returned to Ekron.

C. The Ark (6:17-7:1)

- The writer acknowledged the golden tumors and rats for each of the Philistine lords.
- The Lord killed some the Israelites because they looked into the Ark.
- So the Ark was then sent to another area and brought to the house of Abinadab.