

The *glory of the Lord has departed* said the dying wife of Phinehas as she gave birth to Ichabod & Eli the High Priest jolted off his seat falling backwards breaking his neck & dying when he heard the report that the Ark was taken by the Philistines. So what would Israel do? Mount forces and go to battle to get back the Ark? God commanded Moses to make the box of Acacia wood, cover it w/ gold inside and out place solid gold mercy seat on top & form golden images of cherubim & place them on top of the Ark w/ Aarons rod that budded, jar of Manna & Commandments of stone inside the Ark. All this to remind & represent the unseen presence of God over & around the Nation of Israel.

What to do when a church goes liberal & leaves the Lord in doctrine & worship. God won't stick around... **Rev 2:4,5** Sad when a church or nation that once trusted God, abandons Him & does nothing about it.

A. W. Tozer "If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference."

So what does Israel do? Nothing! Yet God is able to defend Himself w/o mans help. God doesn't need us, we need Him. He loves us so He comes to us and makes Himself known, but He will not huff and puff and blow His way into our lives, we must ask Him in.

1 Now the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2 Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it to the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

Philistines went from fear to triumph, beat Israel and took their prize possession, the Ark. Fascinated by its beauty it doesn't say they looked inside. Seems they held it in reverence more than Israel.

Familiarity breeds contempt. Put in temple of Dagon half man half fish—a merman Hebrew is **dag** a fish or small fish **holo-holo** fish We once lived on **Maninholo** small fish

Dagon was the National god of the Philistines whose main temple was in Gaza – Where Samson met his end Judges 16

Israel was commanded to destroy idols, abomination to God-**golden calf**-ground to powder scattered on water & people drank **Ex32** Philistines kept foreign gods thinking to draw extra power. Ark like a trophy to celebrate & honor Dagon's victory. And yet Dagon bows before the Ark. What man messes up God fixes---**Peter cut off ear HP servant Jesus put its back on.**

3 When the Ashdodites arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set him in his place again. 4 But when they arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. And the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off on the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left to him.

They hurry to set Dagon up again before word gets out-**no transparency when living a lie**. Sad to have a god that needs help to get back up & even sadder when people look to be helped by a god like this.

Common sense says Dagon couldn't have caused Israel's defeat. Up early again to worship their fallen down god & anxious to know if he's still standing. Surprised to find him fallen down and broken in pieces.

The gods of men are always figments of their imagination & grotesque. God shows what He thinks of idols. There are no mermaids much less mermen yet always gullible believers-**Mermaid movies**. Reveals how far man has fallen when they leave the true & living God. **Gender Dysphoria**

Lost head--ability to think & reason & *lost hands* power to act—a picture of how unreal their god was in the first place. **Pr 27:22 AMP** *even though you pound a [hardened, arrogant] fool [who rejects wisdom] in a mortar with a pestle like grain, Yet his foolishness will not leave him.*

Symbolism is striking of how a person stands against God replacing Him w/ a god of their own making—in their own image but less than them--God will break them & when they turn to Him God will lift them up.

5 *Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor all who enter Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.*

They made something holy that was not holy—*superstitious*-synonyms: gullible, irrational, illogical. **Rom 1:28 ESV** *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.* You'd think they would have been convinced of the folly of their man-made god & turned to the true God but instead hardened their hearts & became even more absurd like the phony gods they served. **2Tim 3:13** *But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

What do you tell your children about your pagan deity why the threshold is sacred? Dagon fell before the Ark that represented God of Israel & broke in pieces so we made threshold sacred. *Similar testimony of all pagan gods in Hawaii or among Philistines or any other nation that worships false gods.*

6 *Now the hand of the LORD was heavy on the Ashdodites, and He ravaged them and smote them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territories. 7* *When the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is severe on us and on Dagon our god."*

We make it hard on ourselves when we don't respond to God when He reveals Himself at first or in His initial discipline. Here they rejected Him & did not humble themselves.

If they won't respond to the hand of mercy God will put His hard, heavy, severe hand of them. They realize the pit they were in & the ditch they dug for themselves and now needed to get rid of the Ark. *Instead of repenting people send God away.*

8 So they sent and gathered all the lords of the Philistines to them and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" And they said, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." And they brought the ark of the God of Israel around. 9 And it came about that after they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city with very great confusion; and He smote the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them. 10 So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it happened as the ark of God came to Ekron that the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel around to us, to kill us and our people." 11 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly confusion throughout the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. 12 And the men who did not die were smitten with tumors and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

Emerods tumors **hemorrhoids** also called **Piles** vs 6 *KJ in secret place vs 9* In great pain they cried out & this time not to Dagon but to heaven; God? **Me sunset** vs 12 *Ps 78:66 KJV And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.*

Sending the Ark God's witness to them, away—reminded of the Jews in Gadera **Lk 8:37** *And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to depart from them; for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat, and returned.* God will not stay around where He is not welcome...*Behold I stand at the door and knock...whoever opens*

They made the rounds in sending the Ark--Giants in Gath no match for judgment of emrods--young & old, great & small—**Tap out**. As eager as they were to conquer & get the Ark they now more eager and resolved to get rid of it.

God turns the tables on sinners. They appear to be winning then suddenly they are losers. *The mills of the gods grind exceedingly slow but exceedingly sure*—God never loses. He will easily turn those who cry against the Jews & Jerusalem to their detriment. **Zec 12:3 KJV** *And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.*

God becomes His own witness when His people fail to be. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah, you don't have to defend a lion you just have to let him out of the cage and he will take care of himself. God doesn't need us but He graciously uses us.