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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1477 ~ The Ark of God Captured.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

When young Samuel was growing up under the care of the High Priest Eli, times had become hard for the Israelites. They were once again enslaved to their enemies, this time the Philistines. Once again, they had forsaken their God and pleased themselves with how they lived. When Almighty God rescued their ancestors from Egypt, they were instructed to live as obedient children and never to become slaves again. But here they were in that very situation they were not to be in.

Did you know there is a species of slave-making ants in the Amazon, South America? Hundreds of these ants swarm out of their nests to capture neighbouring colonies of weaker ants. They do this by destroying the defending weaker ants before carrying off cocoons containing the larvae of the weaker ants. When these cocoons hatch, the new ants assume they are part of the invading ants' family. Not knowing any better they begin the tasks they were born to do. They never realise that they are really forced-labour victims of the enemy.

In contrast to this, the Israelite people were well aware of the problem they had. They wanted to be free of their enemies without returning to the discipline of obeying the Creator God and following His instructions.

Sometimes we would like to be completely free to do whatever we want. We long to break out of our restricting circumstances. But total freedom or complete independence is never an option - whether we realise it or not. The Bible declares that we are servants by nature.

There are two kingdoms: the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. In Joshua, Chapter 24, we are challenged by the words, “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.”

The Israelites were not yet ready to return to God on His terms. First, the elders tried something that had happened before. In past times, when the sacred Ark of God was carried into battle, God gave the Israelites great victory. One instance of this happened when the Ark was carried around the walls of the city of Jericho for seven days. You may recall what happened to that city.

On this occasion, the two priestly sons of Eli took the Ark of God from its permanent place at Shiloh and carried it into battle with the Philistines. Both these men had done great wrong before God, both in their service in the temple as well as living immoral lives. Could the Ark of God at the battlefield manipulate God into giving the Israelites a victory over this great enemy? Would He give victory to His disobedient people? They hoped so but God also knew their hearts, and if successful, they and the rest of the Israelites would only be encouraged to continue in their sin.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

Eli the High Priest had led Israel as both judge and priest for 40 years. At the time of these battles with the Philistines, Eli was about 98 years old, blind and overweight. He had been warned by God through both Samuel and another prophet what would happen if he did not discipline his two sons to respect God’s ways. Eli’s sons did whatever they pleased. They were disrespectful of the Lord God and allowed lust and greed to rule their lives. In doing so, they lived in the kingdom of darkness and were slaves to evil.

Because God Himself had not disciplined these two men when they first did wrong, Eli's sons assumed God was a weak God and would overlook their bad practices. In life, God gives us many chances to change our ways and turn to Him. Over time, God shows His patience towards mankind, which is not any weakness of character.

When Eli did not restrain his sons, the whole nation of Israel then suffered the loss of thousands of men in many battles with the Philistines. Carrying the Ark of God into battle did not help them to win on this occasion.

Have you noticed that a country's leaders will make decisions that impact on the lives of all its citizens? In wartime, soldiers and civilians alike can lose their lives and valuable property is destroyed. This is why the Bible book of First Timothy, Chapter 2, tells us to pray for our political leaders and all those in authority over us, "so we may live a quiet and peaceful life with all reverence toward God and with proper conduct."

The Ark of God was a sign of the presence of God among His people. But God cannot be contained in a box, even if it is the Ark of God. The Ark was a very poor substitute for having Almighty God to fight for the Israelites. As a result, Eli's sons were killed in the battle. Many people think they are protecting themselves by wearing religious jewellery, performing rituals or giving to charities. These things do not please God. He wants people to trust in Him and His dear Son, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Our Creator God is everywhere, all powerful and all knowing.

God has provided ample evidence for people to believe who He is. There is the testimony of nature and conscience as found in Romans, Chapter 1, "Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen. They are perceived in the things that God has made. So those people have no excuse at all!"

There is also the recorded history of the life of Jesus Christ in the Bible and the work of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives.

Even though God has provided all this evidence, great unbelief continues to exist today.

Often those who could own and read a Bible never consider it important enough to do so.

In the 2nd book to Timothy, the Apostle Paul teaches: "All scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed."

Sadly too, the Philistines held onto their pagan gods. They knew the truth of God's great deeds for the Israelites but refused to worship Him or ask for His mercy. When the Ark of God was taken into their cities, it caused them great suffering instead. It is one thing to know about God but it is quite another to know Him personally.

In the Gospel of John in the New Testament, Chapter 3, it says, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life: whoever disobeys the Son will not have life, but will remain under God's punishment." Only Almighty God can rescue us from slavery in the kingdom of darkness. Do not delay! Call on Him today to serve Him only in His kingdom of light!

MUSIC - [Integrity Music](#).

That was Paul Baloche and Ed Kerr singing "Praise be to the God and Father."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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