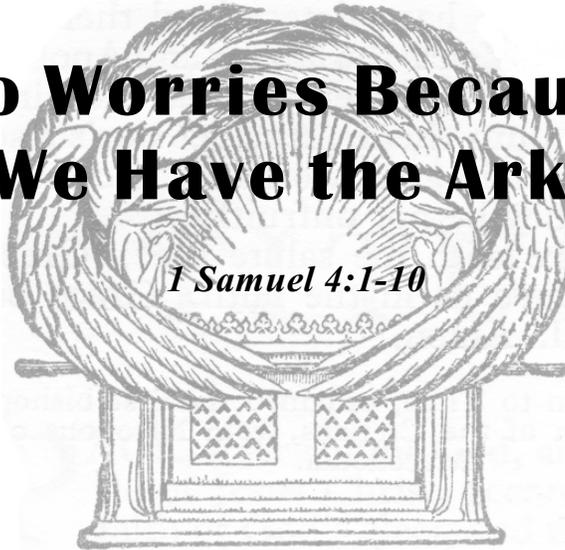


No Worries Because We Have the Ark!

1 Samuel 4:1-10



AT THE END of the corrupt period of the judges, Israel went out to fight their main foe, the Philistines. Israel was soundly defeated and lost about 4000 men that day. They could not understand why the LORD did not give them victory. Without consulting the LORD, they formulated another battle plan that they felt would surely succeed. They would go to Shiloh where the Tabernacle was pitched, and take the Ark of the Covenant, that most sacred piece of furniture which symbolized the holy presence of God. Their plan was to take the Ark with them into battle, and therefore they thought they would have the Almighty God on their side. When the Ark arrived at the Israeli camp, the excited people shouted so loudly that the ground reverberated. Even the Philistines were terrified when they learned that Israel had the Ark because they knew what God had done to the Egyptians centuries before. Yet, the Philistines encouraged their soldiers to be strong and fight like men. The battle results were devastating, as 30,000 Israelites perished (more than seven times their losses in the first battle) and the Ark was captured by the enemy.

Israel learned a hard lesson. The emblems of God's presence will not give victory if the heart is not right with God. The same is true with us today. I may be privileged to attend a sound Bible-believing assembly. The Holy Bible is at my fingertips. Scripture verses may adorn my walls. Why then is God not giving me the victory? It's one thing to possess the Bible; **it's another thing to have the Bible possess and govern me** as I put its truths to work in my life. I can attend a good church, but am I being a healthy, growing, participating member of that body? The heart is the key.

~George Zeller: www.middletonbiblechurch.org