

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

4 Year Olds

Sunday Morning

Study 5

The True and Living God

The True and Living God

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will teach the students that the **God of the Bible is the only true God and therefore we ought to worship Him and Him alone.**

Key Verses

1 Samuel 5—Main Teaching Passage
Jeremiah 10:1-16

Memory Verse - Psalm 46:1 (August Memory Verse)

"God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble."

Hook

Draw a silly-looking \$1,000 bill on a (green) piece of paper. Show it to the class and ask if they would rather have this \$1,000 bill or a real \$1 bill. Point out the fact that the fake bill has a much higher amount on it.

Explain to the students that no matter what you write on a fake dollar bill, it's not worth any money unless it is real. Tell the students that just like money, it is important that we know that the God we worship is real.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In the story before today's story (1 Samuel 4), Israel had just lost a battle to the Philistines, their greatest enemy, and as a result they lost the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was a special chest containing the Ten Commandments that represented God's presence on earth. In today's story, the Philistines took the Ark and put it in the temple of their god, Dagon. They believed that Dagon had given them victory over Israel's God and put the Ark in Dagon's temple as a trophy to show their victory, but God would show them that He would not be defeated by a false God.

The Philistines left the Ark next to Dagon's statue overnight, but the next day when they woke up, the statue had fallen down before the Ark. They stood Dagon back up, but the next night, it fell again, and this time the head and hands fell off the statue. The false god Dagon quite literally could not stand before the presence of the True and Living God of Israel. Jeremiah 10:1-16 says that those who follow idols foolishly worship the work of men's hands, statues of wood and metal who are no true gods. But the God of Israel is the one True and Living God. He alone can truly save and is truly worthy of worship.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

In Bible times, everybody believed in some sort of god. In fact, most people believed in many different gods. They trusted these gods to give them food, wealth, victory in battle, health, and a number of other things. Countries, cities, and sometimes even families each had their own individual god or gods, and they believed that when one city or nation defeated another, it was because their god was greater. Those people thought that Israel's God was just one God among many.

However, today's story shows that the God of the Bible is not just "one of the gods," but the *only* True and Living God. Dagon was not more powerful than Him, or even equal to Him. Dagon fell before God because Dagon was a false god. He was the work of man's hands and man's imaginations. The God of Israel is the One True God. The Philistines did not beat the Israelites because Dagon was more powerful than God, but because God allowed the Philistines to win (1 Samuel 4 explains that God was actually punishing Israel for their disobedience). Israel's God was and is the only True and Living God, and all other gods are false gods, the works of man's hands.

Today, we live in a world that wants us to worship all kinds of gods. Some of these gods call themselves "gods" and are part of different

LOOK (Continued)

religions, like the god Allah in Islam or the millions of Hindu gods. Other people try to get us to worship gods that are much more subtle, like money or fame. Some will even say that it does not matter what god you worship as long as you worship it sincerely. They might tell you that all gods are the same. Still others claim that there is no God at all. However, all of these beliefs are lies from Satan. There is only one True and Living God, the God of the Bible. All other gods are false. They are the made-up creations of men.

Within the name “the True and Living God” are two reasons we ought to worship Him and no one else. He is the *Living* God. He really is God, and therefore as God deserves our worship. And He is the *True* God. Unlike all other gods, the God of the Bible is real and truly is God. He is the only God, and therefore the only one who we ought to worship. Worshipping any other god is worshipping something that isn’t real. We must only worship the True and Living God, the only God who can save.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the students how we know that God is really God. Ask if there is any other god we should worship.

Pray: Praise God for being the only True and Living God. Worship Him for being the God that is able to save and thank Him for saving you.

Parent Question: Is our God true and alive? Are there any other real gods?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 1 Samuel 5 by David Guzik

1 Samuel 5 - The Ark of the Covenant Among the Philistines

A. The ark in the Philistine city of Ashdod.

1. (1-5) God humiliates the idol Dagon.

Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the temple of Dagon and set it by Dagon. And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set it in its place again. And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands *were* broken off on the threshold; only Dagon's torso was left of it. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor any who come into Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

a. **They brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon:** No doubt, the Philistines were jubilant, and confident in the superiority of their god over the God of Israel. They faced the God of Israel in battle, and believed their god Dagon delivered them and defeated Israel. Now, the Ark of the Covenant of Israel's God stood as a trophy in the temple of their god Dagon. The victory seemed complete.

i. **Dagon** was represented with a half man, half fish figure, and was said to be the father of Baal. "This deity was a personification of the generative and vivifying [life-giving] principle of nature, for which the fish with its innumerable multiplication was especially adapted, to set forth the idea of the giver of all earthly good." (Keil and Delitzsch)

b. **There was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the LORD:** Had the glory of God departed? Not at all. God was more than able to glorify Himself among the Philistines and their pagan gods. God made this statue bow down in worship before Him.

i. God *will* glorify Himself. Sometimes when men disgrace the glory of God, we fear God will go without glory. We think the glory has departed. But when men and women will not glorify God, God will glorify Himself.

c. **The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off on the threshold; only the torso of Dagon was left of it:** Imagine the horror of the Philistine priests when they entered the temple of Dagon the *next* morning. They not only saw their god bowing down before the LORD, they also saw the image broken. It was hard to account for such an accident two days in a row and for the broken head and hands of Dagon.

i. After seeing the superiority of the God of Israel, these Philistine priests had a choice. They could turn from their weak, inferior god Dagon and begin serving the mighty, superior LORD of Israel. Or they could make a religious tradition instead. They chose the religious tradition: **Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor any who come into Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.**

ii. These Philistine priests, like men confronted with the truth today, rejected God *despite* the evidence,

not *because* of the evidence. They wanted to believe it was an accident.

iii. How could they believe something so ridiculous? Because worshipping the LORD instead of Dagon meant a huge change in thinking and living. The Philistine priests were unwilling to make those changes. It was easier when they **took Dagon and set it in its place again**. Setting Dagon up and gluing him together is easier than changing your life and your thinking.

2. (6-8) The LORD afflicts the city of Ashdod with tumors.

But the hand of the LORD was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors, *both* Ashdod and its territory. And when the men of Ashdod saw how *it was*, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh toward us and Dagon our god." Therefore they sent and gathered to themselves all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" And they answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried away to Gath." So they carried the ark of the God of Israel away.

a. **The hand of the LORD was heavy on the people of Ashdod**: They would not listen when God struck down their statue of Dagon; they just set it up again. When we close our ears to God, He often finds another way to speak to us, and we may not like the second way.

b. **He ravaged them and struck them with tumors**: What were these **tumors**? Older commentators often describe them as hemorrhoids, and newer commentators often describe them as signs of the bubonic plague.

i. "According to the Rabbins, swellings on the anus." (Keil and Delitzsch) "Beating Dagon upon his own dung-hill, and smiting his worshippers on their hinder parts, paying their posteriors, as men used to deal with puny boys." (Trapp) "The word *apholim*, from *aphal*, to be *elevated*, probably means the disease called the *bleeding piles*, which appears to have been accompanied with dysentery, bloody flux, and ulcerated anus." (Clarke)

ii. "Of the numerous suggested identifications of the specific malady that struck the Philistines, bubonic plague remains the most likely: 'It is a disease characterized by an epidemic occurrence, by the appearance of tumours, by the production of panic amongst the affected population, by a high mortality rate, and by an association with mice or rats.'" (Wilkinson cited in Youngblood)

iii. The Septuagint adds this to verse six: "And the cities and the fields of all that region burst up, and mice were produced, and there was the confusion of a great death in the city." Some think this was originally in the Hebrew text, and explains why golden images of rats were included in the return of the ark (1 Samuel 6:5).

iv. In *Legends of the Jews*, Ginzberg is much more graphic: "This new plague consisted in mice crawling forth out of the earth, and jerking the entrails out of the bodies of the Philistines while they eased nature. If the Philistines sought to protect themselves by using brass vessels, the vessels burst at the touch of the mice, and, as before, the Philistines were at their mercy."

c. **Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried away to Gath**: Instead of submitting to the God of Israel, they decided to get rid of Him. Yet we can't get rid of God. We can do things to push Him away but even the best of those attempts are temporary. We must all face God and stand before Him one day.

B. The ark of God in Gath and Ekron.

1. (9) The Ark of the Covenant in the Philistine city of Gath.

So it was, after they had carried it away, that the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction; and He struck the men of the city, both small and great, and tumors broke out on them.

a. **The hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction:** The city of Gath didn't do any better than the city of Ashdod. More of the destructive and painful **tumors broke out on them.**

2. (10-12) The Ark of the Covenant in the Philistine city of Ekron.

Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. So it was, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people!" So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go back to its own place, so that it does not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men who did not die were stricken with the tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

a. **Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron:** The Ark of the Covenant was now among the Philistines like a "hot potato," in the children's game, burning every city where it stayed. The **Ekronites** were not happy to see the ark but they still wouldn't submit to the LORD God of Israel.

b. **Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go back to its own place:** The Philistines, if they had repented and turned towards the LORD, could have *benefited* from the ark. Instead it became a curse and a judgment to them. The same is true of the presence of God among men today, which can be as a fragrance of life to some and the aroma of death to others (2 Corinthians 2:15-16).