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The Ark at Abinadab's House
First Samuel 7:1

The Ark at Abinadab's house DIG: Why wasn't the Ark taken to Shiloh? Who were the Gibeonites? How was the Ark the smell of death to Beth-Shemesh, and the fragrance of life and joy to the faithful household of Abinadab? How did he and his son observe the mitzvot of the Ark? What didn't they do with the Ark?

REFLECT: How do you treat the things of God in your life? What have you done with the things that God has entrusted to you? Have you grown weary of it, has it become a burden to you, or have you been faithful? How does Yeshua answer the question: How can we stand in the presence of such a holy God?

The Ark remained in the custody of Abinadab and his family for about 100 years.



The people of **Kiriath-Jerarim** provide a **third** example (**to see link click Bk – The Ark at Beth-Shemesh** for the other two) of **how can we stand in the presence of such a holy God**, namely, **by faith**. **So the men of Kiriath-Jearim**

came and brought back the Ark of God. No doubt **the Ark** was taken there rather than to **Shiloh**, because the latter was destroyed by **the Philistines** (see **Ae – The Tabernacle at Shiloh**). **They took it to the home of Abinadab on the hill and appointed his son Eleazar to guard the ark of God (7:1).** It was noteworthy that **Kiriath-Jearim** was **a Gibeonite city (Josh 9:17)**. **The Gibeonites** were Gentiles who tricked **Joshua** into permitting **them** to live who were assigned as woodcutters and water-bearers for **the Tabernacle (Joshua 9:21-22)**. Thus, **God** shows that **His** true people are those who respond to **Him** in **faith**. Though **they** had not been born into the covenant, those **Gibeonites** trusted **God's Word**; acting according to Scripture, **they** were anxious to have **the Ark** in **their** midst.[162]

Trusting in the grace of **the LORD**, and humbly adhering to **His Word**, **Abinadab** and **his** descendants had the privilege of housing **God's Ark** for about 100 years until **David** carried it back as one of the acts of **his** kingship (see the commentary on **the Life of David Cr – The Ark Brought to Yerushalayim**).[163] Apparently **they** did everything **they** could to observe **God's** mitzvot for **the Ark**. But **they** also refused to do more than **God's Word** permitted. Therefore, **Kiriath-Jearim** was not advertised as the new national shrine, replacing **Shiloh**, which **the Philistines** had destroyed. The traditional feasts were not celebrated there and the sacrifices were not offered, there being no proper Levitical priesthood. Therefore, just as the Gospel is, according to **Paul**, **the smell of death** to those who do not believe, **but the fragrance of life** for those of **faith (Second Corinthians 2:15-16)**; in like manner, **the Ark** was **the aroma of death** to those **irreverent** at **Beth-Shemesh**, and **the perfume of life** and **joy** to **the faithful** household of **Abinadab**.

Who is able to stand in the presence of such a holy God? As Richard Phillips relates in his commentary on **1 Samuel**, we have considered three great questions answered in the chapter: How can we escape **God's** holy wrath? How can we understand **God's** holy ways? And how can we live in the presence of this holy **God**? All three of these questions can be wrapped up in the last of them, asked by **the Israelites** to whom **the Ark** was returned, and answered by the example of **the faithful Abinadab**, "Who is able to stand before **the LORD**, this holy God" **(First Samuel 6:20)**? To stand in **God's** holy presence is to be cleansed from sin and freed from **God's** holy wrath. To believe this message of salvation is to understand the very heart of **God's** will for us. Interestingly enough, the answer to this question is provided by the very construction of **the Ark** of the Covenant, so

that if **the Philistines** had reflected on its unique design, they might have understood **God's** will and salvation far better than they did.

The Ark was a chest of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold. It measured three feet, nine inches **long,** two feet, three inches **wide, and** three feet **high,** with an ornamental **gold** border **around it (Exodus 25:10-11, 37:1-2).** Inside **the Ark** was **the Ten Commandments** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Bk – The Ten Words**) given to **Moses** by **YHVH**. Atop **the Ark** were golden statues of two holy cherubim, angels who served as **God's** attendants and signified **His** holy **Presence**. Looking down, the cherubim saw the Ten Words, **His** holy commandments for mankind, which we have all broken **(Isaiah 64:5; Romans 3:23)**. This is our problem, and the source of **Ha'Shem's** wrath against us. But there was one more feature of **the Ark**, a golden cover, known as **the Mercy Seat** (see the commentary on **Exodus Fs – The Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place: Christ at the Throne of Grace**), upon which the blood of the sacrificial **bulls** and **goats** was sprinkled (see the commentary on **Leviticus Cu – The Blood of the Bull and Goat**), so that the holy **God** no longer saw **His** broken commandments but the atoning blood of the sacrifice that **He Himself** ordained.

In **Romans 3:25a**, which says of **Yeshua Messiah**, the true **Lamb**, that **God publicly displayed as a propitiation** (Greek: *hilasterion*, meaning *the turning aside of God's wrath*) **in His blood through faith.** This happens to be the same word used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the TaNaKh), for **the Mercy Seat**, the cover on which the sacrificial blood was sprinkled on **the Day of Atonement** turn **God's** wrath from our sin (see the commentary on **Leviticus Ef – Yom Kippur**). With **the Ten Commandments** and **the Mercy Seat**, **the Ark** was designed to express **ADONAI's** absolute holiness that burns against all sin and **His** marvelous grace that provides a way for sinners to draw near to **YHVH** through the blood of **His Son**, **Yeshua Messiah**.

Granted, **the Philistines** could not have understood this by merely examining **the Ark**. But **it** could have gotten **them** thinking in the right direction. **They** would have immediately realized that **Isra'el's** relationship with **their God** was completely different from the pagan idolatry that **they** were used to. By seeking further, **they** might have put away **their** pagan schemes and sought to learn more about **Isra'el God** and **His mercy** seat that covers the sins of those who come in **faith**. The fact that **the Ark** found its home among **Gibeonites** proves that anyone – even **a Philistine** – who trusts in the atoning blood may stand in **God's** holy presence. We have the benefit of **God's** completed revelation from **Genesis** to **Revelation**. This

means not only that we can understand **the LORD's** will simply by reading **God's Word**, but also that the story of redemption is now complete in the life and death of **Yeshua Messiah**. **The Ark** played its role for a time, declaring **ADONAI's** holiness and mercy, but now, **John** writes: **grace and truth came through Yeshua Messiah (John 1:17).**

How does **Yeshua** answer the question that looms over every human: **How can we stand in the presence of such a holy God? He** answers: **The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28).** The book of **Hebrews** tells us that **Yeshua** came as **a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make propitiation** (Greek: *hilaskomai*) **for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:17). Yeshua** came to cleanse us from our sins and robe us in the garments of **His** own righteousness, that we might stand unafraid in the presence of **YHVH** and with great **joy**. **Once and for all . . . He offered up Himself (Hebrews 7:27)**, and **consequently, He is able to completely save those who draw near to God through Him (7:25a).**[164]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for **Your** great love that allows entrance into **Your** holy heaven to all who have a living **faith** that trusts and follows you. **For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (Romans 4:3).** How awesome it is that **Abraham** received the sign of **circumcision** as a seal of **the righteousness** that **he** had **by faith** while **he** was still **uncircumcised**, making **Abraham the Father** of all who have **faith** in **ADONAI**. **Is this blessing then only on the circumcised, or also on the uncircumcised? For we say, "trust was credited to Abraham as righteousness." In what state then was it credited? While circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised! And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of the trust he had while he was uncircumcised, so he might be the father of all who are trusting while uncircumcised – that righteousness might be credited to them as well. Also he is the father of the circumcised, to those not only circumcised but also walking in the footsteps of the trust of our father Abraham before his circumcision (Romans 4:9-12).*

*Praise **You** for accepting into **Your** family all who have **faith** in **You**, **Gentile and Jew (Ephesians 2:14)**. What great trust **Ruth** had to leave **her** homeland and to **trust You** as **her God**. **Caleb** also showed amazing **faith** in **You** as **he** encouraged*

the Israelites *to follow* ***Your Word*** *and conquer the land.* ***Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and*** *said:* ***We should definitely go up and capture the land, for we can certainly do it (Numbers 13:30)!*** *What a great joy to have* ***faith*** *in such a wonderful heavenly* ***Father****!* ***Your*** *children delight in pleasing* ***You****! In* ***Messiah Yeshua’s*** *holy* ***Name*** *and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*