

God In A Box

The custom began immediately upon completion of Israel's tabernacle, as they watched God's pillar of cloud and fire settle over it. When God moved, they would sing ...

Numbers 10:33-36 33 And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. 34 And the cloud of the LORD *was* upon them by day, when they went out of the camp. 35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. 36 And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.

Later, the custom would be associated with the Ark of the Covenant, where God's presence dwelt. David first sang Psalm 68 when he brought the Ark back to Jerusalem, and the song was later immortalized as it was sung annually at the Feast of Pentecost ...

Psalm 68:1 1 Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.

THE ARK:

- Called Ark of Covenant, Ark of Testimony, Ark of God
- Construction detailed in Exodus 25
- Dimensions: 2 ½ cubits (45") long, 1 ½ cubits (27") wide and high
- Fourth dimension to ark: length X width X height X GOD! (faith)
- Wood overlaid with gold, rings and staves to carry it, mercy seat covered by cherubim, Shekinah presence of God (illuminated Holy of Holies)
- God in cloud upon it (Lev. 16:2), God spoke from it (Num. 7:89)
- The ark still exists somewhere!

CONTENTS:

- MANNA (what is it? / 40 years provision / taste! / Ex. 16:33-34) – REPRESENTS PROVISION
- ROD OF AARON (judgment on Korah's family, 250 offering incense, 14,700 died, Num. 17:10) – REPRESENTS AUTHORITY
- TABLES OF THE COVENANT (10 commandments / Ex. 25:16) – REPRESENTS COVENANT
- Which was most important? COVENANT! When they sang "Arise oh Lord" it was not so much God's provision or authority that sprang into action, but His covenant! AND THAT WAS ALWAYS ENOUGH! At the dedication of the Temple, all that was left in the Ark (after its captivity) was the tables of the covenant – but the glory of the Lord still fell!

1 Kings 8:9-11 9 There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. 10 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, 11 So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

EVERY TIME THE ARK MOVED:

- "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered!"
- Whenever the pillar of cloud or pillar of fire moved forward
- Similar Hebrew expressions: "Arise, Awake, Gird on Thy sword, Make bare Your arm"
- Signifies God being "passive" for a time, restraining His power while His enemies rage
- BUT THEN HE ARISES BECAUSE OF HIS COVENANT!

MIRACLES:

- **Jordan crossed**

Joshua 3:13 13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.

- **Jericho conquered**

Joshua 6:11, 14-16 11 So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp ... 14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days. 15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. 16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.

- **Many battles won** - long before the armies of Israel could come into the fray, enemies were fleeing!

THE ONLY TIME ISRAEL GOT IN TROUBLE WITH THE ARK:

- In a desperate battle with the Philistines, they honored the symbol AS GOD!
- They were saying “Arise oh Lord!” but they were thinking “Arise oh Ark!”
- WE CAN MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE!
- The ranks of Hell are broken by the approach of JESUS IN THE CHURCH, not the church alone!

1 Samuel 4:2-5 2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men. 3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. 4 So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. 5 And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

GOD CAN DO INCREDIBLE THINGS IF YOU LOOK TO HIM!

- Lepers and Syrians in 2 Kings 7

2 Kings 7:3-7 3 And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? 4 If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die. 5 And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there. 6 For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. 7 Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.

- Jesus destroys His foes with their own weapons!
 - He put death to death
 - He entombed the tomb
 - He led captivity captive
- This is how He works in our lives, turning the weapons of the devil against him!
- Enemies vanish like smoke when God arises!

ARISE OH LORD!

- NOT “Arise oh church!”
- NOT “Arise oh myself!”
- Only one prayer of departed saints is made known to us and it is the same prayer – “Arise! Avenge!”)

Revelation 6:9-10 9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

DON'T PUT GOD IN A BOX!

- Don't limit Him by your unbelief

Matthew 13:58 58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

- God may not answer your prayer exactly the way you think He will!
- By forcing your expectations on God, you are trusting in the BOX!
- It is the COVENANT in the box that has the power (not the PROVISION or even the AUTHORITY)
- Get your relationship with God right, and everything else will fall into place!

Matthew 6:33 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.