

The Danger of Ichabod

“And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.”

I Samuel 4:21-22

Preparatory Reading: Exodus 33; II Chronicles 15; Jeremiah 3; Revelation 2; Revelation 3.

Introduction:

1. God chose to dwell symbolically in Israel over the Ark of the covenant (Ex 25:8,10,17-22; 29:41-46)
2. The Ark was kept in the innermost holy of holies of the tabernacle and temple, and it was off-limits.
3. God told Israel He would dwell on the mercy seat between the two cherubim (Ex 25:22; II Sam 6:2).
4. When wicked priests wickedly took the Ark into battle, God let the Philistines kill them and steal it.
5. God also let the old, heavy Eli fall backward at the news, breaking his neck, for not killing his sons.
6. Of course, God judged the Philistines severely for taking His ark, but that is not the lesson here at all.
7. For judgment on the Philistines for the Ark ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/exposition/emeralds-and-mice/sermon.php>.
8. When news reached the wife of one of the wicked priests, she named her son Ichabod for the lost Ark.
9. Ichabod – *the glory is departed* – God left Israel symbolically and actually (Ex 29:43; Ps 78:60-62).
10. Where do you stand about the presence of God? Where does this church stand relative to His presence?
11. Our new building is utterly irrelevant, especially relative to God’s presence, especially in the N.T.
12. God fills heaven and earth, so He is always everywhere, for He is an omniscient God (Jer 23:23-24).
13. But here we speak of fellowship and walking with God and His delight, power, and revelation in us.

The Importance of God’s Presence

- A. Adam was driven out of Eden where God’s presence had been with him (Genesis 3:8).
- B. Cain went out from God’s presence after killing Abel and being rejected (Genesis 4:16).
- C. In the days of Seth and Enos, men began to call upon the name of the LORD (Gen 4:26).
- D. Enoch walked with God 300 years and God took him (Genesis 5:21-24; Hebrews 11:5).
- E. Noah walked with God and saved his family from the Flood (Genesis 6:9; Heb 11:7).
- F. Abraham walked with God and was called His friend (Genesis 15:1; 17:1; James 2:23).
- G. Jacob’s stone and vision became – the house of God (Genesis 28:10-22; 32:24-32; etc.).
- H. Moses did not want to go anywhere without God’s presence with him (Ex 33:12-23).
- I. Joshua did not want to leave the tabernacle where God met with Moses (Exodus 33:11).
- J. Asa led a national revival that sought God’s presence and got it (II Chr 15:2,4,12-15).
- K. David loved the presence of God; David knew God was always with him (Ps 139:1-18).
- L. David loved God’s presence in church (Ps 27:4-5; 31:20; 63:1-2; 84:1-4; 95:2; 100:2).
- M. There is nothing better on earth than God with you (Ps 73:23-28; Habakkuk 3:17-19).
- N. David and Solomon’s temple for God depended on His presence (I Kings 8:1-11; etc.).
- O. The angel of the LORD represented God’s presence in love and pity (Isaiah 63:7-9).
- P. Pentecost brought more of God’s presence (Acts 2:4,38; 4:8,31; 6:3; 8:17; 9:31; 13:52).
- Q. Paul stressed the Holy Ghost’s presence in Romans (Rom 5:5; 8:23-27; 14:17; 15:13).
- R. Paul stressed the Spirit to Ephesus ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/holy-spirit-in-ephesians.pdf>.
- S. This included the local church being the habitation of the Spirit (Eph 2:22; I Cor 3:16).
- T. We walk with God in the N.T. by walking in the Spirit (Romans 8:9-17; Gal 5:16-25).
- U. We can have glorious fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus (I John 1:1-9).

The Danger of Losing God's Presence

- A. God warned Moses that even His chosen priests could be cut off from Him (Le 22:1-3).
- B. Achan cost Israel God's powerful presence, though they did not know it (Joshua 7:1-5).
- C. Israel lost God's glorious presence when the Philistines took the Ark (see introduction).
- D. Samson lost God's presence (and power) by his sin and did not know it (Judges 16:20).
- E. David saw the terrible judgment of God leaving Saul to an evil spirit (I Sam 16:13-15).
- F. Therefore, when he sinned, he begged God not to desert him likewise (Psalm 51:11).
- G. Hezekiah lost God's presence, which quickly revealed his bad faults (II Chron 32:31).
- H. God judged Israel first, though forgiving many times (II Kgs 13:23; Ezekiel 16 and 23).
- I. God cast Judah out of His presence for their many sins (II Kings 24:20; Jer 23:39; 52:3).
- J. This reversal of fortune was terrible: God turned from lover to enemy (Isaiah 63:7-10).
- K. Jesus warned God's kingdom would be taken from the Jews (Matthew 21:41-43; 23:38).
- L. God turned away from Jesus Christ, causing Him likely His greatest pain (Ps 22:1-6).
- M. The great Pauline church at Ephesus would lose God's Spirit (Rev 2:1-7); a candlestick is not a mystery after explained with a male pronoun (Rev 1:4,20; 2:5; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6).
- N. Jesus warned the church at Pergamos that He would fight against them (Rev 2:14-16), which is exactly what He did against Judah, if they did not get hot for Him (Is 63:10).
- O. Jesus warned the church at Thyatira that he would kill some members (Rev 2:20-23).
- P. Jesus warned Sardis He would come like a thief on this imperfect church (Rev 3:1-3).
- Q. The great Pauline church at Laodicea was warned about God's fellowship (Re 3:14-22).
- R. God's presence is not by Sunday religious stuff ... it is not hearing, believing, saying, praying at meals, going to church, Bible reading, loving doctrine, public praise, etc.
- S. Most (98%) churches do not have a candlestick, yet they fill every Sunday and even some other days with the Bible, prayer, singing, doctrine, fellowship, evangelism, etc.
- T. They do not know they have no Spirit, for they never did, or they are too carnal to know.
- U. For more about the seven Spirits of God (4:5) ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/god-in-glory.pdf>.

The Rules to Gain/Regain God's Presence

- A. Repentance can reconcile the offended Husband, and He will take back disloyal whoremongers far faster than we would do (Jer 3:12-15; Hos 5:14 – 6:3; Rev 3:19).
- B. Never forget the power of the 'R' Factor ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/repentance-factor.pdf>.
- C. Ask for Him (Psalm 27:7-9; 63:1-2; 145:18; Isaiah 55:1-2; Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:13).
- D. But ask very fervently (Ps 27:4; 63:8; Isaiah 55:6-9; Jeremiah 3:8-11; Hebrews 11:6).
- E. But ask very boldly, like Jacob and Elisha asked (Genesis 32:24-32; II Kings 2:9-14).
- F. Draw nigh to Him by His stated means and measures (James 4:4-10; Isaiah 58:9,6-14).
- G. Seek Him diligently; lukewarm does not move Him (Heb 11:6; I Chr 28:9; Jer 29:13).
- H. Because He is holy, you must be holy in all parts of life (Ps 4:3; I Thess 4:1; I Pet 1:17).
- I. Wait for Him, for He is not bound to come rushing to you (Ps 27:13-14; Isaiah 45:19).

The Rules to Retain God's Presence

- A. Jesus gave clear step-by-step instructions to Ephesus to salvage the church (Rev 2:4-5).
- B. Ephesus needed to do first works; Laodicea needed to get humble and hot (Re 3:14-20).

- C. Confession and forsaking of sins is obvious to regain favor (I Jn 1:8-10; Job 33:26-28).
- D. Loving God and Jesus by affectionate obedience is key (John 14:15-18,21-23; 15:9-15).
- E. David begged God not to take His Spirit away in fervent faith (Ps 51:11; Heb 11:5-6).
- F. Follow Paul's prayers for Ephesus ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/holy-spirit-in-ephesians.pdf>.
- G. As seven churches of Asia, we must be overcomers (Rev 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 21:7).
- H. We remember and do steps to higher ground ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/higher-ground.pdf>.
- I. We walk in the holy light as He is in the light (I Jn 1:1-10; I Pet 1:16-17; I Thes 4:1-8).
- J. We do not slight, grieve, or quench the Holy Spirit (Heb 10:29; Eph 4:30; I Thess 5:19).
- K. We remember the seven promises for separation from compromise (II Cor 6:14 – 7:1).
- L. We do not give up if He does not come rushing to us with great feelings (Ps 27:9; 101:2).
- M. If you need more details, I fear you let technicalities quench simple passionate priorities.

Conclusion:

1. Our Lord represented the presence of His Spirit in His churches by candlesticks (Rev 1:12-13,20; 2:1).
2. For loss of first love, the great Pauline church at Ephesus was about to lose the Holy Spirit (Re 2:1-7).
3. A New Testament church can have its own Ichabod judgment by losing God's Spirit's presence in it.
4. It behooves each member to walk in the Spirit and to pray and work for the Spirit to stay in our church.
5. Every family head should examine himself, his wife, and his family for God's presence with them.
6. Where do you stand about the presence of God? Where does this church stand relative to His presence?
7. We do not care to have a church for any other reason or reasons, if He is not with us by His candlestick.
8. If you need details, ask why? It is more priority of passion than duty of details. See links at the bottom.
9. Let us pray, confessing our sins for all past offences and begging Him for His presence with us forever.

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.
Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door,
I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”
Revelation 3:19-20

For Further Study:

1. The sermon, *Walking with God (2001,2012)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/walking-with-god.pdf>.
2. The sermon, *Seek Ye My Face (2001)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/seek-ye-my-face.pdf>.
3. The sermon, *Perfecting Holiness* (II Cor 6:14 – 7:1) ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/perfecting-holiness.pdf>.
4. The sermon, *Fellowship with Christ* (slides; 2013) ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/fellowship-with-christ.pdf>.
5. The sermon, *Filled with God* (slides; 2013) ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/filled-with-god.pdf>.
6. The sermon, *Drawing Nigh to God* (slides; 2013) ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/drawing-nigh-to-god.pdf>.
7. The sermon, *Eating and Drinking Christ* (belly worshippers) ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/eating-and-drinking-christ.pdf>.
8. The sermon, *Feasts and Sacrifices* (slides; for the Ark) ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/feasts-and-sacrifices.pdf>.