

More Than a Lucky Charm

Indiana Jones made the **Ark of the Covenant** famous to Americans. The Ark was more than a glorified rabbit's foot. It was a specially designed piece of holy furniture that God directed the Hebrews to place in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and Temple. Two angels adorned the top of the gold-covered box to indicate the Mercy Seat of God and remind the people of His presence.

When the children of Israel finally entered Canaan, they had to go through the Jordan River, similar to their escape from the Egyptians at the Red Sea. The priests carried the ark and stepped into the river. As they did, God parted the waters to allow the Hebrews entrance into Canaan on dry ground.

Over time, the ark became a superstitious item for the people. They did not recognize it for the presence of God, but a lucky charm to ensure victory. Israel won their battles with the ark and lost without it.

During Eli's tenure at Shiloh, the Philistines fought Israel. They prevailed by killing about 4,000 Hebrew soldiers. The Israelite elders decided they lost because they needed their lucky emblem, the ark. Listen to **1 Samuel 4:3-4** (NKJV):

³And when the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD from Shiloh to us, that when it comes among us, it may save us from the hand of our enemies." ⁴So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

The battle did not turn out as the Hebrews had hoped. The Philistines routed them, killing 30,000 soldiers and capturing the Ark of the Covenant. Phineas' wife gave birth to a son and named him "Ichabod," "The Glory Has Departed." Eli also died as a result of the news. The Hebrews had not treated God with the proper reverence, respect, or relationship. They treated Him as a glorified bellboy instead of the sovereign God He is.

I hate to say it, but we often do the same thing. Let me remind you of a **Tim Tebow** story.

On January 8, 2009, in the BCS Championship Game, then-Florida quarterback Tim Tebow wore eye black with the inscription "John 3:16." The Gators won.

On January 8, 2012, exactly three years after he caused ninety-four million football fans to Google the meaning of John 3:16, Tebow played his first NFL playoff game, against the Pittsburgh Steelers. He threw for 316 yards and averaged 31.6 yards per completion, the highest single-game postseason completion average in NFL history. Ben Roethlisberger's second-quarter interception, which led to a Matt Prater field goal and a 17-6 Broncos lead, came on third and sixteen. The Steelers finished the game with a time of possession of 31:06.

And at the time Tebow threw the game-winning 80-yard touchdown pass to Demaryius Thomas, CBS's final quarter-hour overnight ratings were 31.6.

If I were Tim Tebow, his coach, or one of his teammates, I would want to put John 3:16 or the number 316 everywhere I could. The trouble is, I would miss the point of the verse and the presence of God. Some athletes are highly superstitious, but Christians are to look past amulets and irrational actions to God.

Let's dig a little deeper. Christians often trust their outward actions of salvation and worship rather than the Lord. Pleasing God and experiencing salvation are beyond our abilities to "get everything right." We cannot be 100% correct before God. We have to trust Him, not our skills and insights. Our relationship with God is a matter of grace, faith, and faithfulness – God's and ours.

On another level, as Americans, we sometimes think that if we could just get everyone back to following the Constitution we would heal our country. The Constitution is a magnificent document. There is more to it. Founder **Dr. Benjamin Rush** purportedly said this about the Constitution:

I do not believe that the Constitution was the offspring of inspiration, but I am as satisfied that it is as much the work of a Divine Providence as any of the miracles recorded in the Old and New Testament.

Returning Americans to the Constitution without God is a superstition. Since, as **John Adams** said, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other,” we must look beyond its rules and regulations to the God behind and within it.

Following God is no longer popular in America. I have read that church attendance is below 50%, with atheism and Satanic worship rising. If we relegate God to the level of fantasy and superstition, we will lose everything we have held dear. We will get the opposite of what we desire, just as Israel did when they overconfidently trusted in the Ark and faced the Philistines on the battlefield. We border on blasphemy by attempting to manipulate God to do our will through our plans and actions instead of submitting to His.

I have spoken about having a “biblical worldview” in most of our podcasts. The people we admire in the various biblical accounts incorporated God and His word into every aspect of their lives. They filtered life through the lens of scripture. Our forefathers and mothers did the same. We have dropped the ball through neglect, poor biblical teaching, a dumbed-down education process, and idolatry. We have made God into our last resort rather than the One on whom we depend for all of life.

It is possible that we can trust the externals of church attendance, eating the Lord’s Supper, baptizing, singing, and even praying as superstitions instead of relying on God. If we care about our descendants and the blessings of Liberty, we will embrace our first responsibility: to follow God in faith, loving Him with our hearts, souls, minds, and strength (**Mark 12:30**). Our Constitution will not work apart from faith. Our country will be lost without it.

Hezekiah reformed his nation when he became king. The people had neglected God and even converted God's sacred things into idols. **2 Kings 18:4-5** (NKJV) speaks of Hezekiah’s actions. It reads:

⁴He removed the high places and broke the *sacred* pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan. ⁵He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him.

In light of current events, it's time to submit ourselves to God as the sovereign King of the universe and trust Him explicitly as His people. Ruth’s words to Naomi are appropriate (**Ruth 1:16b**, NKJV), “**Your people *shall be* my people, And your God, my God.**”

Keep The Light of *Honoring God for Who He is* Burning!

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