

Ichabod: The Glory Is Gone: Review of Bubonic Plague; Philistines Send the Ark Back to Israel; Israel's Recovery; the Potential Ichabod in America

NOTE: At the beginning of this lesson a summary of the overall context of 1 Samuel 4-6 was presented before resuming the study.

1 Samuel 4:8 - "Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the hand [**יָד** *yath*: **power, strength, & authority**] of these might gods? These are the gods who smote the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness.

1 Samuel 4:10 - So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent [**fear of death in battle**], and the slaughter was very great; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand infantry.

v. 11 - And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

1 Samuel 4:15 - Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were set so that he could not see.

v. 16 - And the messenger said to Eli, "I am the one who came from the battle line. Indeed, I escaped from the battle line today." And Eli said, "How did things go, my son?"

v. 17 - Then the messenger who brought the news answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has also been a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been taken."

v. 18 - And it came about when he mentioned the ark of God that Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and obese.

1 Samuel 4:20 - And about the time of her death the women who stood by her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son." But she did not answer or pay attention.

1 Samuel 4:21 - And she called the boy *Ichabod* [**איִכָּבֹוד** *'Ichavoth*: **no glory, or the glory is gone**], saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," because the ark of God was taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

v. 22 - And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God was taken."

1 Samuel 5:1 - Now the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

v. 2 - Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it to the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon.

v. 3 - When the Ashdodites arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. So they took Dagon and set him in his place again.

v. 4 - But when they arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. And the head of Dagon and both his hands were cut off on the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left to him.

v. 5 - Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor all who enter Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon to this day,

v. 6 - Now the hand of the Lord was heavy on the Ashdodites, and He ravaged them and smote them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territories.

v. 7 - When the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is severe on us and on Dagon our god."

v. 8 - So they sent and gathered all the lords [**mayors**] of the Philistines to them and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." And they brought the ark of the God of Israel around.

v. 9 - After they had brought it around, the hand of the Lord was against the city with very great confusion; and He smote the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them.

1 Samuel 5:10 - So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And as the ark of God came to Ekron the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel around to us, to kill us and our people."

v. 11 - They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, so that it will not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly confusion throughout the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

v. 12 - And the men who did not die were smitten with tumors and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

1 Samuel 6:1 - Now the ark of the Lord had been in the country of the Philistines seven months.

v. 2 - And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? Tell us how we shall send it to its place."

v. 3 - And they said, "If you send away the ark to the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but you shall surely return to Him a guilt offering. Then you shall be healed and it shall be known to you why His hand is not removed from you."

v. 4 - Then they said, "What shall be the guilt offering which we shall return to Him?" And they said, "Five golden tumors and five golden mice according to the number of the lords of the Philistines, for one plague [**bubonic**] was on all of you and your lords.

v. 5 - "So you shall make likenesses of your tumors and likenesses of your mice that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will ease His hand from you, your gods [**Dagon, Baal, & Ashtoreth**], and your land."

- 55- The leaders hurriedly complied with the suggestion of their priests and sent the ark back to Israel on a cart drawn by two cows and accompanied by a box containing the golden tumors and mice.
- 56- When the cart arrived at the village of Beth-shemesh / Beth-SHE-mesh / the cows entered the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite and came to a stop by a large stone.
- 57- Joshua and his neighbors split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord. The Levites then came and took the ark and placed it on the stone where the citizens of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the Lord.
- 58- The ark was later taken to a location north of Beth-shemesh called Kiriath-jearim / KER-i-ath-JEE-a-rim / where it was placed in the house of Abinadab and his son Eleazar was commissioned to keep it. It remained there for twenty years.
- 59- Once Samuel achieved the proper age he became the last judge of Israel and led them in a revival that motivated the restoration of the ritual plan of God to the land.

1 Samuel 7:3 - Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the Lord with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtoreth from among you and direct your hearts to the Lord and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.

v. 4 - So the sons of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtoreth and served the Lord alone.

- 60- The glory had returned to Israel. She was given a costly warning about her spiritual decline and, after 20 years of testing, recovered under the ministry of Samuel.
- 61- Israel's *Ichabod* is a warning to us today. The United States could be experiencing its own *Ichabod*: the glory of God is not yet gone but the glory of client nation America is certainly on the wane.
- 62- There was apparently a big enough Pivot in Israel to sustain it during the twenty years of testing from the Philistines. They ultimately were given victory over them at the Battle of Mizpah \miz'-pa\ the account given in 1 Samuel 7:5-14. The results of that victory shed light on current events:

1 Samuel 7:14 - And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even to Gath; and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines.

- 63- Israel still struggles today over the same land taken from them by the Philistines, a land called by them Palestine, a title given it on another occasion by the Romans in the time of our Lord, and a name misappropriated by the current terrorists who badger Israel for a land that was never theirs.

Obama's Road to Damascus

By John Perazzo

November 11, 2008



History will record that Barack Obama's first act of diplomacy as America's president-elect took place two days after his election victory, when he dispatched his senior foreign-policy adviser, Robert Malley, to meet with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad—to outline for them the forthcoming administration's Mideast policy vis-à-vis those nations. An aide to Malley reports, "The tenor of the messages was that the Obama administration would take into greater account Egyptian and Syrian interests" than has President Bush. The Bush administration, it should be noted, has rightly recognized Syria to be not only a chief supporter of the al Qaeda insurgency in Iraq, but also the headquarters of the terrorist organization Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the longtime sponsor of Hamas—the terrorist army whose founding charter is irrevocably committed to the annihilation of Israel. Yet unlike President Bush, Obama and Malley have called for Israel to engage in peace negotiations with Syria.

A Harvard-trained lawyer and Rhodes Scholar, Robert Malley is no newcomer to the Obama team. In 2007, Obama selected him as a foreign policy advisor to his campaign. At the time, Malley was (and still is today) the Middle East and North Africa Program Director for the International Crisis Group (ICG), which receives funding from the Open Society Institute of George Soros (who, incidentally, serves on the ICG Executive Committee).

In his capacity with ICG, Malley directs a number of analysts who focus their attention most heavily on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the political and military developments in Iraq, and Islamist movements across the Middle East. Prior to joining ICG, Malley served as President Bill Clinton's Special Assistant for Arab-Israeli Affairs (1998-2001), and as National Security Adviser Sandy Berger's Executive Assistant (1996-1998).

Robert Malley was raised in France. His lineage is noteworthy. His father, Simon Malley (1923-2006), was a key figure in the Egyptian Communist Party. A passionate hater of Israel, the elder Malley was a close friend and confidante of the late PLO terrorist Yasser Arafat; an inveterate critic of "Western imperialism"; a supporter of various revolutionary "liberation movements," particularly the Palestinian cause.

It is notable that six months ago the Obama campaign and Malley hastily severed ties with one another after the *Times of London* reported that Malley had been meeting privately with Hamas leaders on a regular basis—something Obama had publicly pledged never to do.

But indeed, within hours after Obama's election victory, Malley was back as a key player in the president-elect's team of advisors—on his way to Syria. Mr. Obama, meanwhile, received a most friendly communication from Hamas, congratulating him on his "historic victory."

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- 64- The glory will continue to be gone from Israel until the Lord restores it at the Second Advent. But the *Ichabod* of America need not be terminal. We can join its Pivot since we still have the freedom to continue our advance. So do many others throughout the land.
- 65- We can assist our nation's recovery and prevent an *Ichabod* from occurring in our generation. The solution is found in our continued intake and application of the Word of God taught in this place.

III. The Potential Ichabod in America:

- 1- The positive advance of cultures and societies is a manifestation of their fulfillment of God's mandate to Adam in:

Genesis 1:28 - "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it."

- 2- The word "subdue" is the Hebrew verb:

כָּבַשׁ / kavash / - "to bring into servitude or bondage by force if necessary."

- 3- It is from this verb that we find the word for "footstool." Operation Footstool you will recall is an idiom which describes the Lord's battlefield victory over Lucifer at the Second Advent. The most well-known reference to Operation Footstool is found in:

Psalm 110:1 - The Lord [God the Father] says to my [David] Lord [Messiah]: "Sit at My right hand [Session] until I make Your enemies [Lucifer and the fallen angels] a footstool for Your feet [battlefield victory at the Second Advent]."

- 4- Consequently, man is given not only the permission but an order to conquer nature, to organize it for his benefit, and to develop its assets in such a way that it will magnify the essence of God who created it.
- 5- In other words, God provided the raw materials by means of His essence and power. Man is given the obligation to discover the many and varied ways these raw materials may be utilized to magnify to mankind the eternal power of God.
- 6- When a group of individuals agree to coexist in a given territory and in mutual accord subscribe to a common culture, they enter into a compact called nationalism. Nationalism expresses itself by placing primary emphasis on its own culture as opposed to those of other nations. Culture according to *Webster's Ninth* is the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.
- 7- Whatever culture any nation has developed its genesis is from a common religion. The culture of the United States at its founding was based on that of the Anglo-Saxon culture of Great Britain. It contained elements of a Western European heritage that included principles and concepts borrowed from Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, and London. It incorporated within its legal and social codes the teachings of the Judeo-Christian ethic.