**Cross And Crown Christian Outreach**

[www.crossandcrownchristianministry.org](http://www.crossandcrownchristianministry.org)

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**He Has A Preferred Location\_2.**

**The Lord ’s hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation on them and afflicted them with tumors. -** 1Sam. 5:6 NIV

Today’s Devotional is the concluding part of the Devotional with the same title where the consequence of mishandling the Ark of God was exhaustively discussed. In that Devotional, the need for those expecting such symbols to provide support, to remain in the Will of God was asserted, just as the importance of keeping such symbols in a divinely approved location was also emphasised. Also made clear is the dominant spiritual effect of such symbols in any environment, whether such has been devoted to the Almighty God or not, in a proof that indeed, the earth and all that is in it, all belong to the Lord – Psa. 24:1. That everyone or group who worship the Lord today, always have a symbol of His presence in their midst is not in denial. In whatever form, such areas where such symbols are placed are usually referred to as Altars and without such physical symbols, most Christian denominations would not believe that they have a place ready for worship of Jehovah.

The Ark of Covenant was never God and will never be the God, just as objects been used in similar manner today, by different Christian denominations, are equally not god. They however remain the symbol of God’s presence, just as the Ark is to the Israelites. Right from the time of its construction by Moses, it never ceased living up to its role as the evidence of God’s presence, as the people, when in the Will of God, always had cause to be victorious and celebrate whenever it was in their midst.

Many Christian groups today will always have one form of symbol or the other, indicative of God’s presence, which when placed either in a hall or at any location for that matter, is believed to spiritually transform such hall or location to a temple or a sacred place of worship of the Almighty God. This symbol undoubtedly will possess such abilities, if truly, its existence is rooted in directives given by Jehovah. The expectation of all those who worship in such location is that, all that is asked for in that location will be granted, since Jehovah is expected to be spiritually present, as should be the case when the physical symbol of His presence is in place. This belief will however only be true if the people are operating in the Will of God, else, He may indeed be present, but will not manifest due to the obstacles that their non-compliance to His instructions will constitute. That is why receiving no response to prayers may not always be seen as the indicator of the absence of the Almighty God in that congregation, but may just be a sign of the level of contravention of divine Instructions by the congregants or its leaders. This can be seen in the case where the presence of the Ark of God in the camp of the Israelites did not stop them from losing the battle to the Philistines – 1Sam. 4:1-22; 7:2-4.

Similarly, all those who are in the vicinity of such a symbol will be expected to have great understanding of the tremendous ability of such a symbol, and thus, show caution in their actions when in such environment, in order to avoid the negative effects of not doing so. Using the case of the Philistines as a reference, the Christian today must learn the following;

1. Mere possession of physical, spiritual or financial ability to erect the symbol of the presence of God will not be sufficient to confer on anyone, the right to do so – 2Sam. 7:1-17. It will have to be done in accordance with the directives and approval of Jehovah, who will decide the parameters for its erection, else such gestures may produce negative consequences and at best will have no effect. No wonder, many Christians today who took unilateral decisions to gather a congregation and erect worship centers, supposedly to the glory of God, in expectation of blessings have everything but blessing and success to show for such actions.
2. The true symbol of His presence cannot be placed in just any location, as wrong location may create discomfort for the people. Although the Ark brought great distress to the Philistines within a period of seven months (1Sam. 6:1), the same Ark brought blessings to Obed-Edom within a period of three months – 2Sam. 6:9-11. Today we have many testimonies of great men of Faith, who had to relocate their Ministry before they started experiencing the positive actions of Jehovah. It is not just about the symbol of His presence but rightly locating the symbol.
3. Meanwhile, in whatever location the symbol may be placed, it will always have supremacy. Although Dagon was in its shrine, it still had to give way to the Ark of God. Christians need not worry about the activities of darkness in an environment where the symbol is located, if that symbol of God’s presence in their midst is true and genuine. The successful manifestation of the activities of darkness amidst such congregation, especially when the congregants are faithful to Jehovah, is sufficient reason to question the authenticity of the symbol of God’s presence in that location. The symbol of God’s presence is light and true light does not need the permission of darkness to shine, more so the light of His presence is one that shines in darkness with darkness unable to comprehend it – Jn. 1:5.
4. Atonement by offering the appropriate sacrifice will be necessary to stop the further spread of the anger of the Lord when the symbol of His presence has been defiled. It will not be sufficient for the Philistines to just acknowledge that they erred, in relation to disrespecting the symbol of His presence, as they will have to carry out physical acts to confirm that they are truly repentant and remorseful – 2Chr. 7:14; Acts 3:19; 8:22.

Jehovah is indeed not to be worshipped anywhere, anyhow and by just anyone. He is very selective with regards to the conditions under which He will manifest His presence, and merely placing a symbol of His presence in a location, even if such symbol is authentic, will not guarantee His manifestation. Let all those who desire to worship Him or dedicate a place of worship to Him remain conscious of this, so that a good intentioned act that is done in ignorance, will not be the source of pain and calamity, not just to an individual, but to a whole group of people. May God continue to teach us ways to safely and truly worship Him in Jesus name. Amen.