



Where the Presence Dwells: Part 2

(1 Samuel 5–8 Overview)

◆ 1. Recap: Where We've Been

Before diving in, remind students or the congregation:

- We've seen the **loss of the Ark** (ch. 4): Israel treated God's presence like a good-luck charm, lost the battle, and the Ark was captured.
- Eli's house fell, and the spiritual leadership of Israel was in chaos.
- But **God's presence is never defeated**, even when His people fail.

◆ 2. Chapters 5–7: The Ark vs. Dagon (Fake vs. Real)

► 1 Samuel 5 – Dagon Falls

- The Philistines place the Ark in the temple of **Dagon**, their god.
- Twice, Dagon falls facedown before the Ark; the second time, his head and hands break off (1 Sam 5:4).
- **Message:** The living God doesn't share space with false gods. He will not be mocked or diminished.

Key Insight:

- Dagon, though a mighty god to the Philistines, is powerless before the **real presence** of God.
- The Philistines thought they had captured Israel's power — but **God was never under their control**.
- God **afflicted the Philistines** with tumors and panic (1 Sam 5:6–12), demonstrating His sovereignty.

► 1 Samuel 6 – The Ark Returns

- The Philistines, terrified, send the Ark back with a guilt offering.
- They **test God** by sending it on a cart led by cows never yoked — if the cows go straight, it's God; if not, coincidence.
- The cows go straight (1 Sam 6:12), proving God's hand was in their affliction.

- When the Ark reaches Beth-shemesh, some Israelites look inside and are struck down — even **Israel** must approach God with reverence.

► 1 Samuel 7 – Repentance and Victory

- Israel, under Samuel’s leadership, repents (1 Sam 7:3–4).
- They remove foreign gods and worship the Lord.
- At Mizpah, they fast, confess sin, and God grants them **victory over the Philistines**.
- **Samuel sets up the Ebenezer stone** (1 Sam 7:12) — “Thus far the Lord has helped us.”

◆ 3. Major Themes: Fake vs. Real

► The Presence of the Living God Is Better Because...

- He **cannot be controlled** (unlike idols, which are made by human hands).
- He **will not coexist** with false gods.
- He is **holy** and demands reverence (Hebrews 12:28–29).
- He invites **true repentance** and offers mercy and victory.
- He alone is the **true King** — human substitutes will always fall short.

► Modern Application

- **What are our Dagon idols today?** (success, image, relationships, comfort, control, technology?)
- Are we trying to **use God** for blessing without surrender?
- God wants **our hearts**, not just religious symbols.
- Knowing Him means recognizing His authority and holiness.
- Making Him known means living as people of **real faith**, not artificial religion.

◆ 4. Supporting Scriptures

- **Isaiah 42:8** – *“I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.”*
- **John 17:3** – *“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”*
- **Galatians 2:20** – *“I have been crucified with Christ... the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God.”*

◆ 5. Culmination: Knowing Him, the Beginning of Overflow

This series leads us to this truth:

- **To know Him** is to stand in awe of His holiness.
- It’s to turn away from fake substitutes, to die to self, and to be made alive in His presence.
- **When we truly know Him**, making Him known becomes the natural overflow.

We've seen Israel's failures and God's faithfulness.

We've seen false gods fall before the real God.

We've seen repentance bring restoration.

But this is only the beginning:

The King will be known.

And when we see Him clearly, we are forever changed.

Closing Charge

- Will you stand in His presence?
- Will you cast down your idols?
- Will you live as one who knows the King?
- **Because if you know Him — you will make Him known.**