



## He Chose the Glory: The Life and Legacy of Obed-Edom

**Louis McCall**

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*In the concise, Bible-based novella He Chose the Glory, believers explore what it means to honor God in both Jewish and Christian contexts.*

Louis McCall's keen historical novella *He Chose the Glory* follows the movement of the Ark of the Covenant throughout biblical history.

Hadar, a Levite priest, serves in the Temple during King Zedekiah's reign. Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem, just as the prophet Jeremiah prophesied. Before Jerusalem is captured, Hadar and others escape with the Ark of the Covenant, headed toward Egypt en route to Ethiopia. On the way, they recount the Ark of the Covenant's history. Hadar and the other exiles are convinced that God is preserving them and preparing them for a better covenant.

The book is in-depth when it comes to its historical details, following from the time when God gives Moses the plans to build the Ark through to its ending up in the hands of the Philistines years later. It shows how the Ark was portered to Jerusalem during King David's reign too. Centered are notions of what the Ark represents to the Israelites.

However, those who flesh out this biblical drama are not constructed on their own merit: who Jeremiah is as a person beyond his role in the life of the Ark is vague, for example; the book dives right into his prophecies against Judah instead of characterizing him on his own. And Hadar, who is accompanied by other exiled people, including his widowed mother, is surrounded by people about whom little personal information is shared. As a story about an object, the book is strong; as a story about people, it is less engaging.

There are few flourishes given to the biblical story of the Ark. Hadar, and a scene in which the exiles hide in a cave during an attack, is an involving addition. Still, many of the events that the book covers (the Babylonian attack on Jerusalem, King Zedekiah's resistance attempts, and Jeremiah's persecution) are familiar lore, without much that's creative in their reiteration here. Hadar's descriptions of the siege and King Zedekiah's reactions to Jeremiah's prophecies are engaging, if also removed from the action; the actual attack on the city and Jeremiah's rescue after he is thrown into a dungeon are narrated from a distance.

Nonetheless, the central theme—about honoring God above all else—is brought out in a clear way: the blessings on Hadar's family member Obed-Edom's household for recognizing and honoring God's presence are covered in a straightforward manner. Further, Obed-Edom's obedience and reverence are contrasted with Ark host Abinadab's indifference to the sacred object, just as King David's high regard for the Ark is contrasted with Saul's lack of concern about it. An emphasis on the shift from Hebrew Bible methods of honoring God to New Testament methods for the same rounds the book out, suggesting that the covenant was realized through Jesus.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (October 4, 2022)

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