

1 Samuel 6:7-21 - Thursday, September 5th, 2013

(7) Now therefore, make a new cart, take two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them. (8) Then take the ark of the LORD and set it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you are returning to Him as a trespass offering in a chest by its side. Then send it away, and let it go. (9) And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, *then* He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that *it is* not His hand *that* struck us—it happened to us by chance." (10) Then the men did so; they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. (11) And they set the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the chest with the gold rats and the images of their tumors. (12) Then the cows headed straight for the road to Beth Shemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth Shemesh.

- There's an interesting detail that the Holy Spirit deemed necessary to include in the narrative as it relates to the cows lowing as they went.
- The reason this is interesting is that not only did they not turn back, in their natural instinct, they are longing for their calves back home.
- The significance of this is, God was showing the Philistines how all that had been done to them was God's providence and not coincidence.

Charles Spurgeon - "How wondrously God guided these poor beasts; they went of their own accord away from their calves, lamenting them as they went along, and without a driver they chose the road to the nearest city of the Levites. Who can doubt a special providence in this matter?"

Henry Morris - "The cows had been separated from their calves and so kept up a perpetual lowing as they were impelled in spite of themselves to head straight for Beth Shemesh just across the Philistine border in Israel. This surely made a profound impression on all the Philistine people who were observing them."

One commentator has another thought as to why this was impossible in the natural. "Such untamed heifers are wanton, and apt to wander, and keep no certain and constant paths, as oxen accustomed to the yoke do, and therefore were most unlikely to keep the direct road to Israel's land."

- Here's the bottom line, there's absolutely no way these cows could have done this absent the supernatural hand of God causing them to.
- Here's why, they were milking cows that had never been yoked before, and there is no one who is driving them in the right direction either.
- Also, they are leaving their calves behind, and not only don't they turn back to their calves, they never make a wrong turn or stop to feed.

- The take away from this is that sometimes God will do something in the supernatural that's so miraculous there's no mistaking that it's Him.
- These are what I like to call Red Sea clear miracles in the sense that God does it in such a way that it's so clear a fool could not err thereof.
- In other words it's so Red Sea clear that even a fool could know beyond any shadow of a doubt that God was leading them in this direction.

(13) Now *the people of* Beth Shemesh *were* reaping their wheat harvest in the valley; and they lifted their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*. (14) Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there; a large stone *was* there. So they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. (15) The Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the chest that *was* with it, in which *were* the articles of gold, and put *them* on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the LORD. (16) So when the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day. (17) These *are* the golden tumors which the Philistines returned *as* a trespass offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron; (18) and the golden rats, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging* to the five lords, *both* fortified cities and country villages, even as far as the large *stone of* Abel on which they set the ark of the LORD, *which stone remains* to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh. (19) Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people, and the people lamented because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter.

- If it seems their rejoicing over the return of the Ark was short lived that's because their rejoicing over the return of the Ark was short lived.
- You'll forgive the silliness with which I say this it's just that you'd think the Israelites would've read the book; "Ark's Holiness for Dummies."
- You'd at least think they would have learned this lesson after taking the Ark into battle as a lucky charm in the first place, but they do not.

- Lest we be too hard on them, we would do well to consider how we too are slow learners, and often times have to learn this the hard way.
- Be that as it may, let me hasten to say, that there's much debate amongst Bible scholars regarding how many were actually struck dead.
- Some believe it was only seventy men out of the fifty thousand, while others believe that the fifty thousand selected the seventy to do this.

Henry Morris - "This number seems inordinately large, probably larger than the whole population of this town or that could possibly have looked into the ark. The Jewish historian, Josephus, as well as a few Hebrew copies of 1 Samuel, indicate that the number may have originally been only 'seventy men.' It is also possible, of course, that all the men of the Beth Shemesh region were morbidly curious about the ark, and selected 70 representatives to examine it. Thus God could have considered them all guilty."

- Personally, I'm of the belief that it was likely the latter by virtue of how we're told that the Lord had struck the people with a great slaughter.
- Moreover, a great slaughter would seemingly be a better fit in terms of "why" they died, more so than the number of them "that" had died.
- Let me explain, for them to lift the mercy seat off the Ark and look into it, put them directly in front of God's law, which literally brings death.

- I'll expound on this in a moment, but another reason I believe it was fifty thousand and seventy is that it's commensurate with their reaction.
- As we'll see in the next verses, the way the Israelites react to this seems to indicate that, indeed, a very great slaughter had taken place.
- Again, to me it's not so much "that" a great slaughter had taken place it's more about the reason "why" a great slaughter had taken place.

(20) And the men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? And to whom shall it go up from us?" (21) So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD; come down *and* take it up with you."

- Couple of thoughts here, the first of which is, why didn't they send messengers to Shiloh instead of Kirjath Jearim so as to relocate the Ark?
- The second thought is another question, why do they blame God for being so harsh and unfair, when they had only themselves to blame?
- I'll try to answer these two questions with a two-fold answer, both Shiloh and the Israelites lay in ruin, one literally, the other metaphorically.

Adam Clarke of this says, "Why this exclamation? They knew that God had forbidden any to touch his ark but the priests and the Levites; but they endeavored to throw that blame on God, as a Being *hard to be pleased*, which belonged solely to themselves."

Charles Spurgeon - "God who smote His enemies for their blasphemy, also smites His own people for their presumption. He will be had in reverence, of all them that are about Him. Let us never trifle with holy things. Thus instead of confessing their own sin, they laid the blame at the door of God's exceeding great holiness..."

- I'll take it a step further and suggest trifling with holy things was out of their curiosity, and curiosity didn't just kill the cat, it killed them too.
- Actually, I'm not really trying to be funny, in that there is some truth to this when it comes to our curiosity with sin, leading to our destruction.
- This is one of Satan's devices, such that he tempts us under the banner of curiosity so we'll take a peek inside, of that which is forbidden.





- While I realize the chapter has come to an end, I do not think that the powerful lessons that can be learned from it have come to an end.
- It's for this reason I sense the Holy Spirit would have us take the time to embark on one of the most fascinating studies in the entire Bible.
- I'm speaking of the Tabernacle, and how it too paints a profound prophetic picture pointing to Jesus Christ on that canvass of typology.

Exodus 25:1-9 NKJV Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: (2) "Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. (3) And this *is* the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; (4) blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, fine linen, and goats' *hair*; (5) ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; (6) oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; (7) onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. (8) And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. (9) According to all that I show you, *that is*, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make *it*.

- We'll begin with how each and every one of these materials points to the person of Jesus Christ, down to even the seemingly minute detail.

- Gold:** Is a picture of His deity.
- Silver:** Is a picture of the "30" pieces of silver and His betrayal for our redemption.
- Bronze:** Is a picture of fire and His judgment.
- Blue:** Is the dye of a shellfish, seemingly in several different hues and a picture of heaven.
- Purple:** Is from the murex snail; a purple-red color, and a picture of His royal majesty.
- Scarlet:** Is from a worm (*coccus ilicis*). It dies on a tree excreting a scarlet fluid to give birth, a picture of His death on a tree.
- Fine linen:** Modern linens have 86 threads p/inch; Linen in Egyptian tombs had 152 p/inch. This is a picture of His holiness
- Goat Hair coverings:** They were usually black and coarse. This is a picture of the atonement. (The Scapegoat)
- Rams' skins:** Would customarily have the wool removed and would be like fine leather. A picture of His sacrifice. (The ram sacrificed instead of Isaac Abraham's only begotten son.)
- Badger skins:** Which were used for shoes as protection for the feet. This is a picture of bringing the good news of peace with God. (Ephesians 6 - the shoes as part of the armor.)
- Acacia wood:** From out of dry ground, it has thorns on it. Isaiah 53:2 pictures Jesus as a root out of dry ground, no outward beauty that we would desire Him. Arabs pierce the side of Acaicia trees to get a gummy balm which is a healing ointment. This pictures the wooden cross, His crown of thorns, His pierced side, and His stripes by which we are healed.

- It even gets better, notice that God says; "make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among you." It's even more intricate and more exciting.

-  The word "Tabernacle" is the same one used describing Jesus in John 1:14 ...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.
-  The word "dwelt" is the Hebrew word "skeno" which means "to tent, encamp, occupy, reside, or tabernacle."
-  The Tabernacle was to be a picture for them and point them to the person of Jesus Christ Who would be their coming Messiah.
-  The Tabernacle will not only picture the Christ, it will picture the cross and it's finished work by Jesus Christ for the whole world.

TABERNACLE	JESUS CHRIST
A temporary dwelling place, a tent	Temporarily with us in tent form (bodily)
Born in the wilderness	Born in a manger
Humble in its outward appearance	Humble in His appearance
Beautiful and full of riches inwardly	Beautiful and offers His riches inwardly
Was in place for about 33 years	Lived for about 33 years
God's glory dwells in it	God's glory dwells in Him
Where God meets man	How we meet and get to God as man
In the midst of the Israelites camp	He is in the midst of us where two or more are
The law was preserved	The law was fulfilled
A place of sacrifice	He was placed as the sacrifice
A place of worship	He is the focus of our worship

- There is a reason why God is here telling Moses to do it exactly as He says to do it according to the pattern of all its furnishings.
- Not only was the Tabernacle a picture of Jesus and the finished work on the cross, it was a picture of that which is in Heaven now.
- The writer of Hebrews fills in some of the blanks for us and explains to us the significance of all of these details related to how it's built.

Hebrews 8:5-6 NIV They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." (6) But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.

Exodus 25:17-22 NKJV "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length and a cubit and a half its width. (18) And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. (19) Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it *of one piece* with the mercy seat. (20) And the cherubim shall stretch out *their* wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim *shall be* toward the mercy seat. (21) You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. (22) And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which *are* on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

- Notice that God is giving Moses the instructions for what is to be on the inside of the Holy of Holy's even before the Tabernacle is built.
- Normally, you build the structure first, then design the interior and select the furnishings and themes for the interior last.
- One commentator has suggested that one of the reasons for this is because God is saying that He first wants fellowship with them.

- It's also interesting to note that in their fellowship with God, they wouldn't meet at the Ark, but at the Mercy Seat covering the Ark.
- This clearly pictures the finished work of Christ on the cross as His body lay, with two Cherubim at each end of His hammered body.
- When the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holy's on the Day of Atonement, he would sprinkle blood on the mercy seat for their sins.

- This is huge, and we don't want to miss it. God looks down on the Ark with the law that can't be kept by us, and was only kept by Him.
- The law was broken by us, so His body had to be broken for us. God sees His broken body, and shed blood covering the broken law.
- One has well said that; "when God looks down from heaven upon us, He sees not our sin, but His Son Who paid in full for our sin.

- The Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, writes about this profound truth in his letter to the Roman church. It's recorded in Romans 3:21-25.

Romans 3:21-25 NIV But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. (22) This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, (23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (24) and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (25) God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—

- It's interesting to note that the Greek word for propitiation is "hilasterion" and is also used for the "mercy seat."
- What Paul is saying to the church in Rome, is that "Jesus is our mercy seat." He's the only place we find remission of sins.
- By the way, this is why there was a great slaughter among the Israelites, they had removed the mercy seat, and in so doing, they perished.

- One final thought in closing even the arrangement of the articles in the Tabernacle point to Jesus Christ and the finished work on the cross.

