

- I) V1 INTRO: Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the LORD and The Philistines captured the ark and took it to one of their temples, in Ashdod
- II) They placed it next to Dagon to symbolize Israel's God being in subjection
This was not a good idea
- III) When they entered their temple, they found their idol laying at the feet of the ark
After setting it back in its place, once again they entered and found it on the ground
This time its hands and head were removed, symbolizing that it had been defeated
- IV) This is a very biblical lesson about the futility of idolatry
BRIEFLY
- V) **Idolatry** is giving honor to any created object
It is elevating anything that rivals or replaces the worship of the one true God
It is worshiping created objects, instead of the true God
- VI) Because God is the Creator of all things, He has the exclusive right to all worship
He commanded Israel to worship Him only and to be faithful to Him
Ex 20:4-5 You shall not make for yourself **an image** in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me
- VII) Idolatry Is an internal condition, springing from our fallen nature
Ro 1:21-25 although they **knew God**, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and **their foolish hearts were darkened**. Professing to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into **an image** made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness, **in the lusts of their hearts**, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
- VIII) The pagan civilizations surrounding Israel were completely trapped in idolatry
They trusted in things that could not help them
- IX) The psalmist made this clear

- I) Ps 115:4-8 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; eyes they have, but they do not see; they have ears, but they do not hear; noses they have, but they do not smell; they have hands, but they do not handle; feet they have, but they do not walk; nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; **so is everyone who trusts in them**
- II) The Philistines were idolaters and this should have awakened them
Their idol Dagon was face down, hands broken off, with only the torso intact
- III) The fact that they had to help their god should have made them think
ONE MORE THING
- IV) The NT continues the prohibition against idolatry
1 Co 10:14 Therefore my beloved, flee from idolatry
1 Jn 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols
- V) Anything taken precedence over God in our lives can become an idol
This includes money, power, relationships, and self-love
Mt 16:24 If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and **follow Me**
- VI) Instead of returning the ark immediately they moved it around for seven months
They took it to the five main cities, and in each place, disaster struck
- VII) The people were stricken with tumors, and the land was infested with rats
Ultimately, they put the ark on a cart and sent it back to Israel
- VIII) It ended up in the priestly city of Beth Shemesh, about 20 miles SW of Jerusalem
The people responded with joy but their lack of reverence was met with judgment
- IX) Some looked into the ark, which was restricted to certain priests
Nu 4:15 when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is set to go, then **the sons of Kohath** shall come to carry them; but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These are the things in the tabernacle of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.
V19b-20 Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task. But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered
lest they die

- I) They knew better but did it anyway
God dealt with their impiety severely, and many died
In fear, the people sent the ark away to another city called Kirjath Jearim
- II) V1 The men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the LORD and brought it
Kirjath Jearim was not a priestly city but it was close by
- III) These people acted reverently, and took charge of the ark properly
It seems Abinadab was a priest, and his son was consecrated to care for the ark
- IV) V2 the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there **twenty years**
For twenty years, Israel was under the rule of the Philistines
- V) Over the years, Samuel grew in influence and ministry
Undoubtedly he called the people to repent and to return to God
1 Sa 3:19 The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and He let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground (his words were trustworthy)
- VI) The house of Israel lamented after the Lord
Slowly the ministry of Samuel began to have its effect and the people responded
- VII) Gradually they began to wake up
His voice was heard, and undoubtedly, he moved throughout the land, teaching
1 Sa 3:20 All Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD
- VIII) Over the 20 years Israel finally came to her senses and returned to the LORD
- IX) V2 Israel lamented after the LORD
Lament: To go mourning after; to seek with great humility
Interestingly, the word lament carries a joyful connotation
FRUIT OF MINISTRY
- X) During the twenty years, Israel became broken before the Lord and sought Him
Through the influence of Samuel, Israel grieved over their sin and sought God
They sorrowed over their sin, but also a joy in a renewed desire for God
- XI) V3 Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel saying **If you return to the LORD**

- I) This is where true revival begins: returning to the Lord
Samuel didn't say return to the **Jewish religion**, he said return **to the Lord**
REMEMBER
- II) After the death of Joshua (1400 BC) Israel was a loose tribal confederation
Because Israel needed care and guidance, God gave the nation judges
This was His loving response to their cries for help during times of oppression
- III) Judges gives us the pattern that Israel would go through
They would turn away from God, primarily through idolatry (Jud 2:11)
They would be oppressed and sold into the hands of enemies (Jud 2:14)
They would repent and cry out for deliverance
God would raise up a judge, and deliver them and give rest (Jud 3:11)
- IV) The Book of Judges gives us a list of 12 judges who led the nation
Samuel is the last judge, and the first prophet to lead the nation
- V) Once again, Israel has been oppressed and once again they cry out
WHAT ARE THEY TO DO
- VI) What is the answer for all the misery they have been living in?
They are to repent, follow the Lord, and produce fruits of righteousness
FIRST
- VII) V3 Samuel tells them to **return to the Lord** with complete sincerity
This is a call for repentance
Is 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.
Hosea 6:1 Come and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up.
SECOND
- VIII) **Put away** the foreign gods (Baal-V4) and the Ashtoreths from among you
Baal and Astarte (Babylon) were Phoenician idols thought to be husband & wife
They represented nature and **reproductive power** and were worshipped in orgies
Astarte is Ishtar, Aphrodite, and in Jewish mythology is the demon of lust
POINT
- IX) Repent from your sexual immorality
In the OT, idolatry is associated with fornication because of its sexual rituals
Part of this is because sexual immorality includes the entire person

I) 1 Co 6:18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

II) Sexual sin is a form of idolatry, and engaging in it diminishes the person
It is bent on self-satisfaction and destroys at the deepest human level

III) 1 Co 6:19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you whom you have received from God? **You are not your own**, you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies

IV) This is one of the great sins in the Christian church today (Barna poll)
42% of practicing Christians say **it is wise** to live with someone before marriage

V) It has been demonstrated that such an arrangement has major problems
Unmarried couples lack legal protection such as spousal or inheritance rights
Emotional strain is experienced because of insecurity about the future
Co-habiting parents are more likely to break up, producing damage to children

VI) Idolatry was associated with sexual sin, so Samuel says repent from these sins
THIRD

VII) Prepare (arrange, settle) your hearts for the LORD and **serve Him only**
You shall have only One God, and no foreign god

Dt 13:4 You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.

Mt 6:24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

THE RESULT

VIII) V4 The children of Israel put away the Baals and Ashtoreths and served the Lord
This was a courageous, faith filled act of repentance on the part of Israel

IX) True repentance will always be obvious and even costly

2 Co 7:10-11 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter

- I) The Philistines were dominant and would take this as **an act of defiance**
- II) V5-6 gathered together at Mizpah drew water and poured it out before the Lord
Mizpah (watchtower) it is a hill high enough to be able to see everything around it
By being on a hill, seen by everybody, it is an outward declaration of faith in God
- III) Genuine faith is observable, and often requires courage
- IV) V6 Pouring out the water as a symbol of repentance
Water in the desert is considered life
The pouring out of water symbolizes **pouring out a life**
Ps 22:14 I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me.
- V) V6 And they fasted that day and said there **We have sinned** against the LORD
Fasting can be a symbol of true repentance
- VI) No excuses, no blaming of others: just a complete ownership of their sin
They mourned over their sin, and were overcome with moral grief
Ps 51:4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight--
That You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.
- VII) V7-8 When the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together
The Jews had destroyed the places of worship as well as the idols
- VIII) Because of this the Philistines immediately moved to destroy Israel
- IX) Not everybody is happy when you get right with God!
The people are afraid, and ask Samuel to keep praying for their deliverance
- X) V9 Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord
Suckling lamb was around 7 days old, and reveals something small and tender
A whole burnt offering was a picture of complete consecration
- XI) This best represents the new life Israel had, in the Lord: a picture of conversion
- XII) V10-11 As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering the Philistines drew near

- I) The burnt offering was an atoning sacrifice indicating complete dedication
- II) The lamb is being sacrificed, and the armies of the Philistines draw up for battle
Israel has great fear, but God steps in and thunders against the Philistines
Is 59:19 When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the LORD will lift a standard against him.
- III) The result was Israel being strengthened, and the Philistines fleeing in confusion
Ro 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?
- IV) V12 Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called Ebenezer: stone of help (thus far), but we will continue needing His help!
Phil 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ
- V) V13 The Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore into the territory
This was a significant victory, and was something that Israel would remember
APPLICATION
- VI) The *stone of remembrance* kept the victory before their eyes, constantly
When they passed by, they could remember how God had delivered them
Vine St., Central School, OC, Maple St., Ontario HS, Gardiner Springs, Ayala Park
- VII) V14 The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel **were restored** to Israel
They recovered the things that at one time were lost (leaving Ekron and Gath)
2 Co 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,
AMORITES
- VIII) A powerful nation that had been in conflict with Israel now asks for a truce
Canaanites, were the first enemies Israel dealt with in entering the land
They were inland from the coast
- IX) V15-17 Samuel judged Israel *all the days of his life*
As priest, he went about his ministry duties judging and caring for the people
He always returned home, and made sure to perform sacrifices to the Lord there
He performed his duties, and cared for the things of God in his hometown