

- I) **V1-5 INTRO: Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from
As we have seen, the ark of God was taken by force by the Philistines**
- II) **The army of Israel had removed it from Shiloh, and took it to the battlefield
30,000 soldiers died, the ark was captured, and Hophni and Phinehas were killed**
- III) **This event was forever etched in the memory of the nation of Israel
It was something that Jeremiah referred to **400 years later**
Jer 7:12 But go now to My place which **was in Shiloh**, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel**
- IV) **When this happened, a messenger brought the news to Eli, the Priest
He took the news of his sons' deaths calmly, but died when told the ark was taken**
- V) **His daughter in law, (Phineas' wife) died giving birth to a son
As she was dying, she named him Ichabod: the glory has departed**
- VI) **Because of the unrepentant sin and neglect of worship, God removed His presence**
- VII) **V1 The Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod
After capturing the ark, they took it 35 miles south to one of their **5 main cities****
- VIII) **V2-7 When the Philistines took the ark of God they brought it into the house
All scholars say the name and worship of **Dagon** originated in ancient Babylon
POPULARLY**
- IX) **He was represented with the face and hands of a man and the tail of a fish human
Dagon was their chief deity, believed to be the father of Baal, the nature god
He was worshipped with the expectation that he would guarantee harvests**
- X) **V2 They brought the ark into the temple of their fish god
They set it next to a statue of Dagon showing God as subject to their false god**
- XI) **This would have been in response to what had happened around 50 yrs. earlier
Samson had destroyed the Temple of Dagon in Gaza**
- XII) **Samson was a judge in Israel and had dealt harshly with the Philistines
His last act was destroying the temple of Dagon in Gaza**

- I) They had captured him, blinded him, and set him to grinding grain in prison
They later gathered to offer sacrifices to Dagon and brought him out
Judges 16:25 While they were in high spirits, they shouted, Bring out Samson to entertain us. So they called Samson out of the prison and he performed for them
- II) Samson told the servant to put him where he could feel the support pillars
Judges 16:25-30 He then prayed God, remember me and strengthen me just once more, let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes
He was placed between the support pillars and he said: Let me die with the Philistines! Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived
Judges 16:27 tells us there were around 3,000 men and women watching
- III) This would be their way of avenging the death of the 3,000 Samson slew
- IV) V3 When the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning there was Dagon fallen
God forced the image of Dagon to appear to be giving homage to Him
- V) This is because there is only One God, and He alone is to be worshiped
Is 44:6 Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.
Is 44:8 Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.
- VI) The priests came in early to worship and found the image on the ground
Thinking it accidentally fell, they set it up once again
- VII) This is the reality of idol worship: the idol is powerless
Jer 10:1-6 Hear what the Lord says to you, people of Israel. This is what the Lord says: "Do not learn the ways of the nations or be terrified by signs in the heavens, though the nations are terrified by them. For the practices of the peoples are worthless; they cut a tree out of the forest, and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel. They adorn it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nail so it will not totter. Like a scarecrow in a cucumber field, their idols cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them; they can do no harm nor can they do any good." No one is like you, Lord; You are great, and Your name is great and powerful

- I) V4 When they arose early the next morning there was Dagon fallen on its face
They returned and once again found the idol on the ground
This time its head and hands were broken off, symbolizing God had judged the idol
- II) Enemies would have their heads and hands removed, showing that they were dead
2 Sa 4:12 David commanded his young men and they executed them, cut off their hands and feet, and hanged them by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner in Hebron.
- III) V5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor any who come into Dagon's house
Because its hands and feet were on the threshold, people thought it was cursed, so the pagan priests began jumping over the threshold when they came to it
This they did, instead of repenting and turning to the God of Israel
- IV) V6-10 The **hand of the Lord** was heavy on the people of Ashdod and He ravaged Dagon's hands were cut off, but God's hand moved in judgment against them
They were struck with tumors, and rats (6:4-5), possibly bubonic plague
- V) They were unwilling to release the ark because it symbolized their victory
Instead of sending it back, they began moving it around (revealing hardness)
Everywhere the ark went, God's judgment followed
- VI) They are hardened against God and do not see why this happened
Instead of seeking an answer, they simply moved the ark from place to place
Their hearts were hard and they resisted the obvious message
- VII) From Ashdod, it went to Gath, then Ekron, and finally through the 5 major cities
- VIII) V10-12 They sent the ark of God to Ekron. So it was as the ark of God came to
In Ekron God's hand was **the most severe**, as His judgment escalates
Job 31:3 Is it not ruin for the wicked, disaster for those who do wrong?

APPLICATION

- IX) It is interesting how the Lord repeated the process five times
Everywhere the ark went, plague and pain broke out, but they wouldn't send it back
They could have sent it back when they first found their idol on its face, **two times!**
- X) When the first city was hit by plague, they could have sent it back, **but would not**

- I) V11 They had to wait until the council was convened, and they were in a panic
They gathered the council, and begged them to send the ark away
CH 6
- II) Ch 6:1 The ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines **seven months**
God gave them seven months and several location changes
This reveals His willingness to give them an opportunity to get the message
APPLICATION
- III) God does not ignore sin but in fact, moves to deal with it
Sometimes sinners refuse to repent and lengthen the time of their misery
- IV) Some people realize it is the Lord and repent, and are restored
This is what happened when David sinned with Bathsheba
Ps 32:3-5 When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night **Your hand was heavy upon** me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the LORD and **You forgave** the iniquity of my sin. Selah
- V) V2-6 The Philistines called for **the priests** and the **diviners** saying What shall we do
What did they do? They looked for spiritual direction, as is still common today
They went to their pagan priests and asked for help
- VI) The priests and diviners were the religious leaders of the Philistines
Priests were responsible to keep the temple maintained, performed rituals and sacrifices, and shaped society by leading in worship and devotion to Dagon
Diviners were consulted in all important matters, and used witchcraft, astrology, sorcery, necromancy, spells, dreams, soothsaying, and omens to deceive the people
- VII) These things were strictly forbidden to Israel
Dt 18:10-12 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.
- VIII) These priests understood God had been offended and wanted to satisfy Him

- I) They proposed a **trespass offering**, because they dishonored the God of Israel
The fashioning of tumors and rats showed they recognized **why He was angry**
- II) V5 **Give glory** to the God of Israel perhaps He will **lighten His hand** from you
Acknowledge His power and authority because He has conquered your gods
- III) Not just Dagon, but all other gods you worship are powerless
Is 44:9-11 All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame. Who shapes a god and casts an idol, which can profit nothing? People who do that will be put to shame; such craftsmen are only human beings. Let them all come together and take their stand; they will be brought down to terror and shame.
- IV) V6 Why then do you **harden your hearts** as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened
They knew what God had **done in Egypt**, and reminded them of His past deeds
THEIR WARNING
- V) Do not harden your hearts in pride and reap even worse consequences
Harden: to make unfeeling; dull
Job 9:4 God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?
Heb 3:13 Exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through **the deceitfulness of sin.**
- VI) V7-9 Make a **new** cart take two milk cows, which have never been yoked, and hitch
This will prove beyond a **shadow of a doubt** that it is God bringing judgment
WHY
- VII) Untrained cows would not pull the cart but would reject the yoke and stand still
Second: They would never abandon their nursing calves
Third: They would go to their calves before wandering towards Beth Shemesh, a city located 15 miles west of Jerusalem inhabited by priests
- VIII) V10-12 The men did so they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart and
Resistant to leave their calves, they moaned but went straight to Beth Shemesh
- IX) Even the animals obeyed God
The great fish was directed by God to go and swallow Jonah
Jonah 2:10 The Lord spoke to the fish and it vomited Jonah out onto dry land

- I) Undoubtedly it was God who directed the animals to enter the Ark, two by two
- II) In 1 Ki 17:3-4, God commanded ravens to bring food to Elijah
In Mt 17:27 Jesus told the disciples to catch a fish because it would have a coin in its mouth so they could use the coin to pay the temple tax
APPLICATION
- III) It's interesting how creation obeys God
D.L. Moody pointed out that creation obeys God
God said, 'let there be light' and there was light,' 'Let the waters bring forth...' and the water brought forth abundantly. Jesus spoke to the sea and the sea obeyed; He spoke to a fig tree and it withered and died. He spoke to devils and they fled. He spoke to the dead and they rose.
Did you ever notice **how all** but the heart of man obeys God. Look through history and you will find this true: all creation obeys God, but when God speaks to man, man will not obey. Man is out of harmony with God.
- IV) V13-18 The people of Beth Shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley
This tells us the season: it was probably early summer
- V) V14 Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh and stood there
The furthest point of Philistine territory
- VI) Israel had 48 Levitical cities that were given to the priests (Nu 35; Josh 21:4)
Beth Shemesh (15 mi. west of Jerusalem) (House of the Sun) was one of them
- VII) The ark was in Shiloh, was taken 20 mi. NW to Ebenezer, and then 20 mi. SW to Ashdod
- VIII) The cows were used for a holy purpose, so they were to be offered to God
The Philistine noblemen witnessed this, and returned to Ekron
- IX) V18 the large stone of Abel on which they set the ark of the Lord
This is a geographical reference revealing the border of Philistine influence
The stone was still in existence during the time of the writing
HAPPY TIMES ARE HERE AGAIN! Or are they?
- X) V19 He struck the men of Beth Shemesh because they had looked into the ark of

- I) Beth Shemesh was a priests' city: the people knew about God's holiness
They had been commanded not to do this kind of thing
Nu 4:15 When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy things and the camp is ready to move, the Kohathites will come to carry all the holy articles. They must never touch the holy things, or they will die. The Kohathites will carry all the things from the tent of meeting.
- II) Instead of obedience, they showed disrespect to God by not valuing the ark
As a result, He judged their impiety
- III) God dealt with the Philistines, but He also dealt with His own people
APPLICATION
- IV) The Philistines did not know any better, but His people did
Because they knew what they were to do and did not do it, they were judged
Lu 12:48 He who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.
- V) God did not ignore the sin of his people
1 Pe 4:17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?
- VI) V20 the men of Beth Shemesh said Who is able to stand before this Holy Lord God
When this happened, the fear of God came over them
We can't stand before Him, so we need to remove Him from our presence!
- VII) V21 So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim saying The
This city was 10 miles northeast of Beth Shemesh
- VIII) It is possible Shiloh had been destroyed, and so they sent the ark to another city
Jer 7:12 But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel.