

- I) V1-12 INTRO: Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod
  - a) As we recently saw, the ark of God was taken by force by the Philistines
    - 1) The army of Israel had foolishly removed it from Shiloh, and took it to the battlefield
    - 2) 30,000 soldiers died, the ark was captured, and Hophni and Phinehas were killed
  
- II) THIS EVENT: Was forever etched in the memory of the nation of Israel
  - a) 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. (627 BC-580 BC)
  - b) Ps 78:58-64 They provoked Him to anger with their high places, And moved Him to jealousy with their carved images. When God heard *this*, He was furious, And greatly abhorred Israel, So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, The tent He had placed among men, And delivered His strength into captivity, And His glory into the enemy's hand. He also gave His people over to the sword, And was furious with His inheritance. The fire consumed their young men, And their maidens were not given in marriage. Their priests fell by the sword, And their widows made no lamentation.
  
- III) WHEN THIS HAPPENED: A messenger brought the news to Eli, the Priest
  - a) He took the news of his sons deaths calmly, but died when told of the ark's capture
    - 1) His daughter in law died giving birth, naming her son Ichabod: the glory has departed
  
- IV) V1 THEN: The Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod
  - a) After capturing the ark, they took it 35 miles south to one of their 5 main cities
  
- V) V2-7 WHEN: The Philistines took the ark of God they brought it into the house of Dagon
  - a) All scholars agree that the name and worship of *Dagon* originated in ancient Babylon
    - 1) DAGON: Little fish: he is represented as human as to the upper part, fish-like as to the lower
    - 2) Dagon was the chief deity of the Philistines, believed to be the father of Baal, the nature god
  
- VI) V2 THEY BROUGHT: The ark into the temple of their fish god
  - a) They set it next to their idol, a statue of Dagon to symbolize God being subject to their false god
    - 1) This was not a good idea
  
- VII) V3-5 AND: When the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning there was Dagon fallen on its face
  - a) God Himself overturned Dagon by forcing the image to appear to be giving homage to Him
    - 1) 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.
    - 2) 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.
  
- VIII) THE NEXT DAY: They returned and once again found the idol on the ground
  - a) This time its head and both hands were broken off, symbolizing *God had judged the idol*
    - 1) Enemies would have their heads and hands removed, symbolizing that they were dead
    - 2) 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.
    - 3) 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 (instead of repenting)
  
- I) V6-12 BUT: The *hand of the Lord* was heavy on the people of Ashdod and He ravaged them

- a) Dagon's hands were cut off, but *God's hand* moved in judgment against the Philistines
  - 1) They were struck with tumors, and rats (6:4-5), possibly bubonic plague that spread
- II) THEY WERE UNWILLING: To release the ark because it symbolized their victory
  - a) Instead of sending it back to Israel, they began moving it around (revealing hardness of heart)
    - 1) From Ashdod, it went to Gath, then Ekron, and eventually through all five major cities
- III) V10-12 THEREFORE: They sent the ark of God to Ekron. So it was as the ark of God came to Ekron
  - a) In Ekron God's hand was *the most severe*, as His judgment escalates
    - 1) Job 31:3 Is it not ruin for the wicked, disaster for those who do wrong?
- IV) APPLICATION: It is interesting how the Lord had to repeat the process *five times*
  - a) Everywhere the ark went, plague and pain broke out, but they would not send it back
    - 1) They could have sent it back when they first found their idol on its face, TWICE!
    - 2) When the first city was hit by plague, they could have sent it back, *but would not*
- V) KEY: They could not get rid of it until their council was convened, and they were in a panic
  - a) They gathered the council, and begged them to send the ark away
- VI) CH 6:1 NOW: The ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines *seven months*
  - a) INTERESTINGLY: God actually gave them seven months and several location changes
    - 1) This reveals His patience and willingness to give them an opportunity to get the message
- VII) THE FACT IS: God does not ignore sin but actually moves to deal with it
  - a) He gives people time to come to their senses, and this can take time
    - 1) Sometimes, people realize it is the Lord and repent, and are restored
    - 2) Ps 32:1-5 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. 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
- VIII) V2-6 AND: The Philistines called for *the priests* and the *diviners* saying What shall we do with the ark
  - a) PRIESTS AND DIVINERS: The religious leaders of the Philistines
    - 1) DIVINERS: Were consulted in all important matters, and used witchcraft, astrology, sorcery, necromancy, spells, dreams, soothsaying, and omens to deceive the people
    - 2) 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.
- IX) KEY: They understood that Israel's God had been somehow offended and wanted to satisfy Him
  - a) They propose a trespass offering, because they dishonored the God of Israel
    - 1) The fashioning of their tumors and rats was to show they recognized *why He was angry*
    - 2) V5 GIVE GLORY: To the God of Israel perhaps He will *lighten His hand* from you
- I) V6 WHY THEN: Do you *harden your hearts* as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts

- a) They had heard of what God had done in Egypt, and they remind them of His past deeds
  - 1) **THEIR WARNING:** Do not harden your hearts in pride and reap even worse consequences
  - 2) Job 9:4 God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?
  - 3) Heb 3:13 Exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through *the deceitfulness of sin*.
  
- II) V7-9 NOW THEREFORE: Make a new cart take two milk cows, which have never been yoked, and hitch
  - a) This will prove beyond a *shadow of a doubt* that it is God bringing judgment
    - 1) **FIRST:** Untrained cows would not pull the cart but would reject the yoke and stand still
    - 2) **SECOND:** They would never abandon their nursing calves
    - 3) **THIRD:** They would go to their calves before wandering towards Beth Shemesh, a city located 15 miles west of Jerusalem inhabited by priests
  
- III) V10-12 THEN: The men did so they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart and shut up their
  - a) Obviously resistant to leave their calves behind, they moaned but went straight to Beth Shemesh
  
- IV) V13-18 NOW: The people of Beth Shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley and they
  - a) This tells us the season: it was probably early summer
  
- V) **FACT:** The cows were used for a holy purpose, and could not be used for common purposes
  - a) The Philistine noblemen witnessed this, and returned to Ekron
    - 1) V18 The stone was still in existence during the time of the writing
    - 2) **HAPPY TIMES ARE HERE AGAIN!** Or are they?
  
- VI) V19-20 THEN: He struck the men of Beth Shemesh because they had looked into the ark of the LORD
  - a) Beth Shemesh was a priests' city: the people knew about God's holiness
    - 1) Instead of reverence, they showed disrespect to God by not valuing the ark
    - 2) As a result, He judged their impiety
  
- VII) **THE FACT IS:** God dealt with the Philistines, but He also dealt with His own people
  - a) **APPLICATION:** The Philistines did not know any better, but His people did
    - 1) 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.
    - 2) Jas 4:17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.
    - 3) 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?
  
- VIII) V21 SO: They sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim saying The Philistines have
  - a) This city was 10 miles northeast of Beth Shemesh
    - 1) It is possible Shiloh had been destroyed, and so they sent the ark to another city
    - 2) 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.