

August 31, 2025 continued

All verses are copied from <https://biblehub.com/> in King James

1 Samuel 6

The Ark Returned to Israel

1And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

Personally, I'd count that in the category of a slow learner. Seven months of pain and suffering all based on a captured vessel, the Arc of the Living God of Israel.

It would be contrary to common sense that they were able to defeat their enemy even after their enemy brought into the camp of the Israeli Army the Arc of God. The stories that had been told of the God of Israel and what He did to the Egyptians just didn't square with the Philistines being able to capture it showing their god was superior to the God of Israel. Things went horribly wrong as they mistook God's punishment of His own chosen people by the Philistines. God will not be mocked, and the Philistines found that out the hard way.

2And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

So, let's calculate what has happened so far. Israel against the Law removed the Arc of the Covenant from the Tabernacle taking it to the battle field and the High Priest Eli, and his two sons Phineas and Hophni died for that breach of God's Law.

Israel loses the battle to the Philistines and in doing so lose thousands of men. Then they lose the Arc of the Covenant to their enemy who takes it back to their home in Ashdod. To declare victory over the God of Israel, they put the Arc in with their god Dagon. Dagon gets destroyed in two days and the people of Ashdod get infested with tumors.

Wanting to rid themselves of the potential source or to see if the source was the Arc they take it to their cousins in Gath with similar but more severe results. They then send it to Ekron only to cast that city into chaos bring death and more pain to the Philistines.

Finally, after 7 months of torture they come to the conclusion that the God of Israel is unhappy with them and they should send the Arc home.

3And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

The priests that served Dagon were quick to recognize the folly of their tribal leadership and tell them to not only send it back but pay a tribute in what they called a “trespass offering” to the God of Israel for what they had done.

4Then said they, What *shall be* the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords.

The Philistines had five major cities, and each had a prince ruling over them. They were Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. It was decided that each held responsibility for the calamity that they brought into their country so five emblems of apology due to the tumors that all received regardless of station. Additionally, the mice were a sign of the famine that followed when people plagued were unable to work the fields over the seven months or torture.

5Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten

his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.

We are not told where these priests got their wisdom from, but it was sound. Don't mess with the God of Israel. You might mess with the Israelites but DO NOT MESS WITH THE GOD of Abraham, Issac and Jacob.

They added a caution that represents the stories of what the God of Israel did to the Egyptians and to Pharaoh for not listening to Moses God's spokesman. God simply said, "Let my people go". Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he refused at great peril. The Philistine Priests were warning these 5 princes, don't be foolish. Humble yourselves lest you be devoured by the God of Israel.

6Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

They all knew the story of the Egyptians and did not want to repeat it. Don't be halfway about this, go beyond the pale and do all you can to receive forgiveness from this God of Israel.

The Philistines were a test sort of folks like those from Missouri the "show me state". They didn't want to just send the Arc back,

but they wanted to test God in a way that they would know it was the God of Israel not just some quirk of nature.

7Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:

The test was to involve two milk cows that have never been yoked and that had just each had a calf. They were to put yokes on the cows and take their calves from them. They knew that no cow would leave her new born calf, so if they did leave it was clear that the God of Israel could even direct a dumb cow to carry out a mission against all natural instincts of a new mother.

8And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him *for* a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. 9And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, *then* he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that *it is* not his hand *that* smote us; it *was* a chance *that* happened to us.

Bethshemesh according to Strong's Concordance in the Greek means "house of the sun". It was found along the Philistine border. If the cows took the Arc up that way to the Levite cities, then the Philistines would know if it was their God that did this

calamity. If they went some other place or way, then the Philistines would conclude the pain they suffered was just a fluke

10And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: 11And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.

The apology bounty loaded on the cart with the Arc the cows were set free to see what they would do.

12And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh.

Consider what these men that followed these cows must be thinking as they watched the cows totally out of character take the Arc of God in a straight line to the Levite city of Bethshemesh. They figured out they messed with the wrong God and suffered for it. Can you imagine the stories that were told of all that happened to the Philistines after capturing a Israeli God?

God deals differently with His chosen that He does the heathen.

1 Peter 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

13And *they* of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*. 14And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, and stood there, where *there* was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD.

These poor dumb cows did as God directed them in however, He did it. Once the mission was complete, they were then used as a sacrifice of Thanksgiving to God for returning the Arc.

This city was that of the Levitical Priesthood and by Law they could touch the Arc, but they were not allowed to go beyond lifting the Arc and placing it on the land of Israel.

15And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great stone: and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD.

As was said Bethshemesh was not far from the border with the Philistines so likely they could see from the safety of their own land and watch what happened with the Arc. They would also see the sacrificing of the cows to God and offering a burnt offering.

16And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day.

They had seen enough; this was indeed the God of Israel that brought plague and pain to them for their impertinence toward Him.

17And these *are* the golden emerods which the Philistines returned *for* a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one; 18And the golden mice, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging to* the five lords, *both* of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great *stone of* Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: *which stone remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite.

There are archeological findings that many believe is the stone that the Bethshemite Levit's placed the Arc of the Covenant on while in their custody.

<https://dannythedigger.com/12-2019-the-location-of-placing-the-ark-of-the-covenant-in-beth-shemesh-discovered/>

One would think that getting the Arc back was sufficient for Israel. But to violate the Law of contact and viewing was something God would not tolerate.

19And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of

**the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men:
and the people lamented, because the LORD had
smitten *many* of the people with a great slaughter.**

The contention by many Bible Scholars is that the translation of letters to numbers is in error. The biggest reason for their concern is that the population of this city never reached that number. So, as they examined the original text, they believe the number is “70”, not 50,070.

Numbers 4:20 But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.

20And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

One would think that being of the Priestly Tribe of Levi that knowledge of the Arc and the do's and don'ts would be well understood. Some speculate that the elation of having the Arc back and in their town perhaps they though gave them special privilege. What we can learn here is that God is not respecter of persons or position, in other words don't try to take advantage of your Salvation and push God's ordinances. Just walk in obedience. Because God says:

Hebrews 10: 30For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," [q]says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." 31It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Revelation 1: 17When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

21And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, *and* fetch it up to you.

Kirjathjearim means "city of trees"

Pronunciation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OSB1TPe9M8>

From Strong's Concordance: Berean Study Bible:

"Come down and take it up with you."

The invitation to "come down" suggests a descent from a higher elevation, as Kiriath-jearim is situated in the hill country. The phrase "take it up with you" implies a reverent and careful handling of the Ark, recognizing its sacredness. This action foreshadows the later transport of the Ark to Jerusalem by King David (2 Samuel 6), which is a type of Christ's ascension and the establishment of His kingdom. The Ark's movement symbolizes God's guidance and presence with His people, a theme echoed throughout Scripture."

Jewish history says that the Arc stayed with the Kiriath-jearim

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