

The Ark of God

1 Samuel 5-6

Introduction: The Ark of the Covenant is God's. It was not special to anyone but the Israelites and the Philistines simply thought of it as the 'god of Israel' that they had defeated.

Three causes of Trouble: First, sin and we must conclude that that is an issue here. Second, God's glory is on display. Third, it is time to die and many do die in this event (5:12).

"The Heavy Hand of God"

Three times in this chapter we read these words, "the hand of the Lord"; God took up wrath against these two cities and when the Ark came to Ekron they knew trouble was present and insisted that it be sent away (5:10-11). This phrase reflects the idea that plagues are the effect of the "hand" of a god; and Dagon was unable to stop it.

Summary: The hand of God is always involved in the things of God; but it appears that the heavy hand of God was so great that it compelled the Philistines to do the right thing. The hand of God is always present in a believer's life and it is exerted by the Holy Spirit.

1 Samuel 6:1-12 - The return the Ark of the Covenant.

1 Samuel 6:13-21 - The Things of God

Concept: God graciously gave the Philistine individuals a pass when they stole the Ark and set it up beside Dagon in their temple. But when God's people, who should have known better, simply looked at it, 70 of them were killed by God. The difference should not be overlooked. For whom much is known, of them more is required.

Conclusion: The worldview of the Philistines needed to be corrected and what God did in their midst addressed that problem.

The glory of God is on display and everyone comes to that realization in time. This story is the reversal of 1 Samuel 4 and the departed Glory of God; it has returned but people are still irreverent and 70 men are killed because of their curiosity about the Ark. It is interesting that this chapter begins with "What shall we do with the ark of the Lord?" (2) and ends with "Who is able to stand before the Lord, this holy God." (20) It will take a few Godly men to lead Israel to the one true God.

The sons of Eli were evil and disregarded the holiness of God and the people of Beth-Shemesh were little different and God breaks out in judgment against them all. Along the way God's people suffer.

Spiritual leadership always matters!