

Week 2: The Philistines and the Ark

Title: The Philistines and the Ark

Objective:

- The consequence of sin and corruption
- The Philistines suffer from the presence of the Ark among them
 - There is no mingling between light and darkness
- The Holy thing of the Lord should not be taken lightly

Resources:

- Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty Commentary
- Catena Bible Commentary
- Fr Dadoud Lamie's Bible study
 - Chapters 3, 4, & 5
 - Chapters 6, & 7

Reading:

- General
 - 1 Samuel 4-6
- Specific
 - Review last week's events briefly
 - Read and summarize 1 Samuel 4:1-11 (Israel fights the Philistines and loses, Eli's sons die, and the Ark of the covenant is captured)
 - Read and summarize 1 Samuel 4:12-18 (The death of Eli when he hears the news)
 - Read and summarize 1 Samuel 5:1-12 (The Philistines suffer from the presence of the Ark among them)
 - Read and summarize 1 Samuel 6:1-12 (The Philistines decide to return the Ark with a trespass offering)
 - Read and summarize 1 Samuel 6:13-18 (The Israelites rejoiced and offered to the Lord)
 - Conclude with what happened in 1 Samuel 6:19 & 1 Samuel 7:1 (We should not take dealing with the Holy things lightly)

Key verse(s):

"But the hand of the Lord was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them" 1 Samuel 5:6

Comments:

- In the book of Judges 13: 1, it was said that God delivered the children of Israel into the hand of the Philistines for 40 years; The events mentioned here probably happened during that period.
- Bringing the ark of the covenant did not imply a return to God in repentance, but a leaning on the outer formalities of worship. (We do not use the Bible, the Cross, icons, etc. as items to bring luck.
- God allowed the Philistines to capture the ark of the covenant, to chastise His people to make them realize that through corruption, they lost the dwelling of God in their midst.
- 'Dagon' is a name derived from the Hebrew word 'Dag,' namely (a fish) a Philistine god, with human-like head and hands; while the torso is that of a fish. It was considered to be a god of fertility.
- The ark of God remained in the midst of the pagans for seven months to confirm to all, that what happened to the idol Dagon, and to the people (the tumors and the destructive rats), was not a mere coincidence, but was actually a sign of God's wrath on the pagans.
- The Philistines, despite their ignorance, had honored the ark of God, more so than the people to whom clear statutes have been given concerning it.
- God used even the pagan priests and the diviners to testify to Him
- God led the two milk cows, against their natural tendency to join their calves, to go straight toward the people of God. How amazing is God's mercy toward us; He yearns to forget our iniquity, to rest and dwell in us!
- The stone on which the ark of the covenant was set in the field of Joshua, remained as a testimonial for the future generations, to God's work with His people and His care for them.

Review questions:

1. What happened to the Ark of God after the Israelites were defeated? And what did this mean to them?
2. What happened to Eli the priest when he heard about the results of the war between the Israelites and the Philistines? And how old was he at that time?
3. How did God punish the people of Ashdod? And what did they do?
4. What did the people Ekron do when the Philistines decided to move the Ark of the LORD to their city?
5. How can you conclude that the Philistines had a belief in the God of the Israelites?
6. What did God do to the people of Beth Shemesh? Why?
7. Did the Philistines believe in the God of Israel? Explain.
8. What did the wife of Phinehas named her boy? And why did she give him this name?
9. What happened to Dagon when they put the Ark of the LORD by it? What happened to the people in Gath when the Ark of the LORD was moved to their city? And what did they do?
10. The Philistines kept the Ark in their holiest place. Why would God punish them?

11. Were the Philistines sure that the God of Israel intentionally brought the plague upon them? Give proof.
12. What did God do to the people of Beth Shemesh? Why?

Homework:

1. How old was Eli when he died?
2. Where did the Philistines put the Ark of the LORD first?
a) Gath b) Dagon's temple in Ashdod c) Ekron
3. The Ekronites cried out, saying, “ _____ our people”.
4. The Ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines for:
a) 40 years b) 7 years c) 7 months
5. The LORD struck the men of Bethshemesh because _____.
6. What happened to the Ark of God?
7. What happened to the sons of Eli the priest?
8. What happened to Dagon when they put the Ark of the LORD by it?
9. What happened to the people in Gath when the Ark of the LORD was moved to their city?
And what did they
do?
10. What did the Philistines present as a Trespass Offering?
11. Who were the first people from Israel who saw the Ark of the LORD coming back?

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