

1 Samuel 5-6

The Philistines and the Ark of God

1. 5:1-5 – God vs. Dagon

- a. Philistia – five major cities: Ashdod, Gaza, Askelon, Gath, Ekron.
- b. 1 - Ashdod: a strong city of giants - Num 13:33, De 1:28, 2:10,21, Josh 11:21-22
- c. 2 - Dagon – chief fish (Poseidon, Neptune, Aquaman, mermaid) or grain god?
 - i. Scholars argue intensely to properly describe false gods, but no fear of God
 - ii. Samson ground grain for Dagon, died at his feast – Jdg 15:4-5, 16:23-24
- d. 3 - “Dagon was fallen... before the ark” – An embarrassing sign of subjection.
- e. 4 - God fell Dagon again, this time cutting off the head of their god of prosperity.
- f. 5 - “to this day” – Samuel pointing out the humiliating origin of their sacred rituals.

2. 5:6-12 – The Sore Hand of God

- a. 6 - “destroyed them and” – The covenant also affected nations with curses - Gen 12:3
- b. Some died, some got ‘emerods in their secret parts’, all affected - 5:9,12, 6:5, De 28:27
- c. How to curse → fight against their God (4:2, 8-11), take what God gave them (4:11), speak evil against (Num 24:9-10), help them do wrong (Isa 30:7, 31:1-4)
 - i. The LORD dispensing grace to sinners today, not curses - Rom 5:20
- d. 7 - “his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon” - his hand too heavy for great Ashdod
- e. 8-12 - “send away the ark of God” – Passed to Gath, then Ekron, the curse followed it.
- f. God does what Israel could not do, destroys the Philistines in their own land.

3. 6:1-9 – A Golden Apology

- a. 1-2 – 7 months before they ask false priests and diviners “What shall we do?”
- b. 3 - “ye shall be healed” - These priests don’t speak for God but know he is offended.
- c. 4-5 - “five golden emerods...” - Five lords subject to the God of ‘emerods and mice’
- d. “ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel” – for his power of you, your gods, your land
- e. 6 - Man’s religion respects ‘might makes right’, but their hearts remain hard.
- f. 7-8 - “milch kine” (defined as cows in context) to see if they would turn back – 6:12
- g. 9 - “it was a chance” – Justifying Dagon, covering bases, paying him off – Rev 16:11

4. 6:10-16 – The Ark Returns

- a. 10-12 - “kine took the straight way” – The LORD can use cows to return the ark.
- b. “and turned not aside...” - God directed animals: Ge 6:20, Nu 22:23, 1 Kings 17:4
- c. 13 - “Beth-Shemesh” a Levitical city down in the valley - (shemesh, a false sun god)
- d. “they rejoiced to see it” – The LORD had brought it back without their help.
- e. 14-15 - “burnt offerings” giving all the animal (and glory) to God.
- f. “Levites took down” – The news had spread, and ordained priests took it.
- g. 16 - “the five lords... returned” – In humble defeat at the hand of God (and cows)

5. 6:17-21 - No Respector of Persons

- a. 17 - One gold emerod for each lord: Ashdod, Gaza, Askelon, Gath, Ekron.
- b. 18 - *"the number of all the cities"* in Philistia unto this stone in the field of Joshua.
- c. 19 - The LORD who curses the nations, curses Israel when they disobey -Num 4:20
- d. *"fifty thousand..."*- 50,070. When doubted changed to 70, 75, 5070, 50 oxen.
- e. *"LORD had smitten many...a great slaughter"* - from which we learn:
 - i. There was more than a few (i.e. >70)
 - ii. When 'great slaughter' shows up in the Bible it is in the thousands 4:10
 - iii. God is no respector of persons in judgment (Philistines/Israelites, weak/strong, high/low - Deu 10:17, Matt 22:16, Acts 10:34, James 2:9)
- f. 20 - *"Who is able to stand?"* - Neither wicked Philistines nor Beth-Shemites. Rom 3:10
- g. 21 - *"The Philistines have brought..."* ← Why God did not leave his ark there.