



THE ARK IS

1 Samuel 5:1-2, *When the Philistines captured the ark of God, they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and set it up beside Dagon.*

- * **Captured, brought, took, brought, set:** the repetition of the verbs is meant to drive a message home... the Philistines believe they have conquered the people of God, and even God Himself.
- * **Ashdod:** One of the five main cities of Philistia at that time, along with Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron, and Gath.
- * **Dagon:** The principle deity of the Philistines. Thought to be a god they worshipped for maritime, fertility, or harvest blessing.
- * **Brought it into the house of Dagon:** Possibly to include the ark as one of their gods, or to display it as a way to highlight their victory.

Judges 16:23-24, *Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to rejoice, and they said, "Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hand." And when the people saw him, they praised their god. For they said, "Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country, who has killed many of us."*

- * In Judges we see that the Philistines are worshipping Dagon and praising him for providing victory over their enemy...but there was a complete reversal of victory.

DAGON IS BROUGHT

1 Samuel 5:3-4, *And when the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place. But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold. Only the trunk of Dagon was left to him.*

- * **Face downward on the ground before the ark:** This is a position of reverence and worship.
- * **So they took Dagon:** Notice the that Dagon is a god that needs to propped up by his own worshippers!
- * **Head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off:** Cutting off heads and hands was a sign of conquering an enemy and represented utter defeat (see story of David and Goliath). But there is another message that God is sending to the Philistines:

Psalms 115:4-7, *Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat.*

- * From this story in chapter 5, they have heads but can't think; hands but can't do anything!
- * Not only is Dagon unable to do anything to protect himself, he is powerless to do anything to protect his worshippers.

HEAVY _____ OF GOD

1 Samuel 5:6-11, *The hand of the LORD was heavy against the people of Ashdod, and he terrified and afflicted them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory. And when the men of Ashdod saw how things were, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for his hand is hard against us and against Dagon our god." So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" They answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." So they brought the ark of the God of Israel there. But after they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city, causing a very great panic, and he afflicted the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them. So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. But as soon as the ark of God came to Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, "They have brought around to us the ark of the God of Israel to kill us and our people." They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not kill us and our people." For there was a deathly panic throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there.*

- ✳ **The hand of the LORD:** Dagon is handless, but the hand of the Lord was heavy. God's hand becomes the focal point for the rest of the chapter: See verse 7, His hand is hard against us...verse 9, the hand of the Lord was against the city...verse 11, the hand of God was very heavy there.
- ✳ **Tumors:** Hebrew word means either mound or fortress depending on how it's used. The association with mice or rats (see chapter 6) leads most scholars to believe it was something like the Bubonic Plague.
- ✳ **Heavy:** In Hebrew this word is *kabod*: it can be translated either as "heavy" or "glory".
- ✳ Unstoppable hand of God to accomplish His good purposes; to display His glory, reveal His character, and to communicate clearly that He is the only God.

Deuteronomy 4:39, *Know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.*

Isaiah 45:5-6, *I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other.*

Isaiah 46:5-8a, *To whom will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be alike? Those who lavish gold from the purse, and weigh out silver in the scales, hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god; then they fall down and worship! They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there; it cannot move from its place. If one cries to it, it does not answer or save him from his trouble. Remember this and stand firm...*

A Preview of Gospel Victory!

Philippians 2:9-11, *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

1 Corinthians 15:55-58, *"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*

- ✳ Every knee will bow and all tongues confess that Jesus is Lord—and there is no other!
- ✳ Remember that His victory is our victory, His life is our life; so stand firm and let nothing move you.
- ✳ Let nothing creep in to redirect your love and worship away from the only God.