

1 Samuel 6:1-21 **Ark of God returned to Israel**

Philistines return the Ark of the God of Israel with Peace offerings

1 Now the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? Tell us how we should send it to its place."

3 So they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but by all means return it to Him with a trespass offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you."

4 Then they said, "What is the trespass offering which we shall return to Him?"

They answered, "Five golden tumors and five golden rats, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines. For the same plague was on all of you and on your lords. **5** Therefore you shall make images of your tumors and images of your rats that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will lighten His hand from you, from your gods, and from your land. **6** Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He did mighty things among them, did they not let the people go, that they might depart?"

7 Now therefore, make a new cart, take two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them. **8** Then take the ark of the Lord and set it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you are returning to Him as a trespass offering in a chest by its side. Then send it away, and let it go. **9** And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that it is not His hand that struck us — it happened to us by chance."

10 Then the men did so; they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. **11** And they set the ark of the Lord on the cart, and the chest with the gold rats and the images of their tumors. **12** Then the cows headed straight for the road to Beth Shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth Shemesh.

13 Now the people of Beth Shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley; and they lifted their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. **14** Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there; a large stone was there. So they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord.

15 The Levites took down the ark of the Lord and the chest that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the Lord.

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

17 These are the golden tumors which the Philistines returned as a trespass offering to the Lord: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron; **18** and the golden rats, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both fortified

cities and country villages, even as far as the large stone of Abel on which they set the ark of the Lord, which stone remains to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.

19 Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people, and the people lamented because the Lord had struck the people with a great slaughter.

The Ark at Kirjath Jearim

20 And the men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? And to whom shall it go up from us?" 21 So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the Lord; come down and take it up with you." NKJV

Facts Revealed:

Philistines return the Ark of the God of Israel with Peace offerings [1 Samuel 6:1-12]

✧ Now the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? Tell us how we should send it to its place."

So they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but by all means return it to Him with a trespass offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you." [1 Samuel 6:1-3]

✧ It only took the Philistines seven months to realize that they could not stand against the God of Israel, even though they had captured His Ark.

✧ The death, destruction, and mayhem the Philistines experienced in their royal cities of **Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron**, when the Ark of the God of Israel was in their possession caused them to fear the God of Israel and decide to return the Ark to its proper people. [1 Samuel 5:1-12, 6:1-3]

✧ Their hope was that they could then be healed if they returned it with a trespass offering.

✧ They remembered the plagues the Egyptians had suffered at the hands of the God of Israel. [1 Samuel 4:6-8, 6:6]

✧ The Ark of God had been in three cities of the Philistines, but they decided to return it with offerings from each of the five lords of the Philistines from the five major cities of their nation.

✧ The offerings were golden images of the two major plagues they had suffered, rats and tumors.

✧ To confirm that the plagues were indeed from the God of Israel and not by mere chance, they made a new cart on which they loaded the Ark and the trespass offerings, pulled by two cows that had never been yoked, and took away their calves, allowing the cows to go any direction they would.

✧ Lowing for their calves, the cows went against their nature directly down the highway to Beth Shemesh of Israel and stopped in a field of Israel proving to the Philistines who followed, that it certainly had been of God, and not by chance.

✧ God gained glory in the eyes of the Philistines just as He had done with the Egyptians. [1 Samuel 6:12, 16]

Israel brought destruction on their own people by disobeying the commandment of God regarding the Ark of the Covenant [1 Samuel 6:13-19]

- ✧ Now the people of Beth Shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley; and they lifted their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there; a large stone was there. So they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord. [1 Samuel 6:13-14]
- ✧ The Levites took down the ark of the Lord and the chest that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the Lord. [1 Samuel 6:15]
 - ✧ There was rejoicing and sacrifice in Israel because of the return of the Ark of the Testimony and the trespass offerings accompanying it. [1 Samuel 6:13-18]
 - ✧ However the Children of Israel did not show respect toward the Commandment of God concerning the Ark of the Testimony and suffered the death of 50,070 men who looked into the Ark. [1 Samuel 6:19]
- ✧ And the men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? And to whom shall it go up from us?" [1 Samuel 6:20]
 - ✧ God gained glory in Israel at Beth Shemesh, as they learned the importance of obeying the commandments of God.

The Ark at Kirjath Jearim [1 Samuel 6:20-21]

- ✧ So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the Lord; come down and take it up with you."
 - ✧ When disaster happens connected to the Sacred Ark, even the Children of Israel are filled with fear and learn respect toward things of God.
 - ✧ Their first thought is to remove the threat from their midst and give it to someone who might be immune to the power of God associated with the Ark.
 - ✧ Only the High Priests were authorized to serve at the Ark of the Covenant from which the Lord God spoke to Moses from between the Cherubim on the Mercy Seat, and only once a year the High Priest was to approach it to offer the Blood of Atonement for himself and for the Children of Israel. [Leviticus 16:1-34]
 - ✧ No one but the Priests was even to touch the Ark of the Testimony, much less to look inside it lest they die. [Numbers 4:5-15]
 - ✧ The Ark was to be carried in travel by the sons of Kohath of the tribe of Levi. [Numbers 4:15, 2 Samuel 15:25, 1 Chronicles 15:2]
 - ✧ The Priests bore the Ark when they crossed the Jordan into the promised land under Joshua. [Joshua 3:13, 15, 4:9, 18]