

Thursday, May 9

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1 Samuel 5:1 - 7:17

5 **1** After the Philistines captured the Ark of God, they took it from the battleground at Ebenezer to the town of Ashdod. **2** They carried the Ark of God into the temple of Dagon and placed it beside an idol of Dagon. **3** But when the citizens of Ashdod went to see it the next morning, Dagon had fallen with his face to the ground in front of the Ark of the LORD ! So they took Dagon and put him in his place again. **4** But the next morning the same thing happened — Dagon had fallen face down before the Ark of the LORD again. This time his head and hands had broken off and were lying in the doorway. Only the trunk of his body was left intact. **5** That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor anyone who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod will step on its threshold. **6** Then the LORD 's heavy hand struck the people of Ashdod and the nearby villages with a plague of tumors. **7** When the people realized what was happening, they cried out, "We can't keep the Ark of the God of Israel here any longer! He is against us! We will all be destroyed along with Dagon, our god." **8** So they called together the rulers of the Philistine towns and asked, "What should we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?" The rulers discussed it and replied, "Move it to the town of Gath." So they moved the Ark of the God of Israel to Gath. **9** But when the Ark arrived at Gath, the LORD 's heavy hand fell on its men, young and old; he struck them with a plague of tumors, and there was a great panic. **10** So they sent the Ark of God to the town of Ekron, but when the people of Ekron saw it coming they cried out, "They are bringing the Ark of the God of Israel here to kill us, too!" **11** The people summoned the Philistine rulers again and begged them, "Please send the Ark of the God of Israel back to its own country, or it will kill us all." For the deadly plague from God had already begun, and great fear was sweeping across the town. **12** Those who didn't die were afflicted with tumors; and the cry from the town rose to heaven.

6 **1** The Ark of the LORD remained in Philistine territory seven months in all. **2** Then the Philistines called in their priests and diviners and asked them, "What should we do about the Ark of the LORD ? Tell us how to return it to its own country." **3** "Send the Ark of the God of Israel back with a gift," they were told. "Send a guilt offering so the plague will stop. Then, if you are healed, you will know it was his hand that caused the plague." **4** "What sort of guilt offering should we send?" they asked. And they were told, "Since the plague has struck both you and your five rulers, make five gold tumors and five gold rats, just like those that have ravaged your

land. **5** Make these things to show honor to the God of Israel. Perhaps then he will stop afflicting you, your gods, and your land. **6** Don't be stubborn and rebellious as Pharaoh and the Egyptians were. By the time God was finished with them, they were eager to let Israel go. **7** "Now build a new cart, and find two cows that have just given birth to calves. Make sure the cows have never been yoked to a cart. Hitch the cows to the cart, but shut their calves away from them in a pen. **8** Put the Ark of the LORD on the cart, and beside it place a chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors you are sending as a guilt offering. Then let the cows go wherever they want. **9** If they cross the border of our land and go to Beth-shemesh, we will know it was the LORD who brought this great disaster upon us. If they don't, we will know it was not his hand that caused the plague. It came simply by chance." **10** So these instructions were carried out. Two cows were hitched to the cart, and their newborn calves were shut up in a pen. **11** Then the Ark of the LORD and the chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors were placed on the cart. **12** And sure enough, without veering off in other directions, the cows went straight along the road toward Beth-shemesh, lowing as they went. The Philistine rulers followed them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh. **13** The people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting wheat in the valley, and when they saw the Ark, they were overjoyed! **14** The cart came into the field of a man named Joshua and stopped beside a large rock. So the people broke up the wood of the cart for a fire and killed the cows and sacrificed them to the LORD as a burnt offering. **15** Several men of the tribe of Levi lifted the Ark of the LORD and the chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors from the cart and placed them on the large rock. Many sacrifices and burnt offerings were offered to the LORD that day by the people of Beth-shemesh. **16** The five Philistine rulers watched all this and then returned to Ekron that same day. **17** The five gold tumors sent by the Philistines as a guilt offering to the LORD were gifts from the rulers of Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. **18** The five gold rats represented the five Philistine towns and their surrounding villages, which were controlled by the five rulers. The large rock at Beth-shemesh, where they set the Ark of the LORD, still stands in the field of Joshua as a witness to what happened there. **19** But the LORD killed seventy men from Beth-shemesh because they looked into the Ark of the LORD. And the people mourned greatly because of what the LORD had done. **20** "Who is able to stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God?" they cried out. "Where can we send the Ark from here?" **21** So they sent messengers to the people at Kiriath-jearim and told them, "The Philistines have returned the Ark of the LORD. Come here and get it!"

7 1 So the men of Kiriath-jearim came to get the Ark of the LORD. They took it to the hillside home of Abinadab and ordained Eleazar, his son, to be in charge of it. **2** The Ark remained in Kiriath-jearim for a long time—twenty years in all. During that time all Israel mourned because it

seemed the LORD had abandoned them. **3** Then Samuel said to all the people of Israel, “If you want to return to the LORD with all your hearts, get rid of your foreign gods and your images of Ashtoreth. Turn your hearts to the LORD and obey him alone; then he will rescue you from the Philistines.” **4** So the Israelites got rid of their images of Baal and Ashtoreth and worshiped only the LORD. **5** Then Samuel told them, “Gather all of Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you.” **6** So they gathered at Mizpah and, in a great ceremony, drew water from a well and poured it out before the LORD. They also went without food all day and confessed that they had sinned against the LORD. (It was at Mizpah that Samuel became Israel’s judge.) **7** When the Philistine rulers heard that Israel had gathered at Mizpah, they mobilized their army and advanced. The Israelites were badly frightened when they learned that the Philistines were approaching. **8** “Don’t stop pleading with the LORD our God to save us from the Philistines!” they begged Samuel. **9** So Samuel took a young lamb and offered it to the LORD as a whole burnt offering. He pleaded with the LORD to help Israel, and the LORD answered him. **10** Just as Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines arrived to attack Israel. But the LORD spoke with a mighty voice of thunder from heaven that day, and the Philistines were thrown into such confusion that the Israelites defeated them. **11** The men of Israel chased them from Mizpah to a place below Beth-car, slaughtering them all along the way. **12** Samuel then took a large stone and placed it between the towns of Mizpah and Jeshanah. He named it Ebenezer (which means “the stone of help”), for he said, “Up to this point the LORD has helped us!” **13** So the Philistines were subdued and didn’t invade Israel again for some time. And throughout Samuel’s lifetime, the LORD’s powerful hand was raised against the Philistines. **14** The Israelite villages near Ekron and Gath that the Philistines had captured were restored to Israel, along with the rest of the territory that the Philistines had taken. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites in those days. **15** Samuel continued as Israel’s judge for the rest of his life. **16** Each year he traveled around, setting up his court first at Bethel, then at Gilgal, and then at Mizpah. He judged the people of Israel at each of these places. **17** Then he would return to his home at Ramah, and he would hear cases there, too. And Samuel built an altar to the LORD at Ramah.

John 6:1 - 21

6 1 After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. **2** A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. **3** Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. **4** (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) **5** Jesus soon

saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" **6** He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do. **7** Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money to feed them!" **8** Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. **9** "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?" **10** "Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) **11** Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. **12** After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted." **13** So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves. **14** When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!" **15** When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself. **16** That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him. **17** But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn't come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. **18** Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough. **19** They had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, **20** but he called out to them, "Don't be afraid. I am here!" **21** Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!

Psalms 106:13 - 31

106 13 Yet how quickly they forgot what he had done! They wouldn't wait for his counsel! **14** In the wilderness their desires ran wild, testing God's patience in that dry wasteland. **15** So he gave them what they asked for, but he sent a plague along with it. **16** The people in the camp were jealous of Moses and envious of Aaron, the LORD's holy priest. **17** Because of this, the earth opened up; it swallowed Dathan and buried Abiram and the other rebels. **18** Fire fell upon their followers; a flame consumed the wicked. **19** The people made a calf at Mount Sinai; they bowed before an image made of gold. **20** They traded their glorious God for a statue of a grass-eating bull. **21** They forgot God, their savior, who had done such great things in Egypt— **22** such wonderful things in the land of Ham, such awesome deeds at the Red Sea. **23** So he declared he would destroy them. But Moses, his chosen one, stepped between the LORD and the people. He begged him to turn from his anger and not destroy them. **24** The people refused to enter the pleasant land, for they wouldn't believe his promise to care for them. **25** Instead, they

grumbled in their tents and refused to obey the LORD . **26** Therefore, he solemnly swore that he would kill them in the wilderness, **27** that he would scatter their descendants among the nations, exiling them to distant lands. **28** Then our ancestors joined in the worship of Baal at Peor; they even ate sacrifices offered to the dead! **29** They angered the LORD with all these things, so a plague broke out among them. **30** But Phinehas had the courage to intervene, and the plague was stopped. **31** So he has been regarded as a righteous man ever since that time.

Proverbs 14:32 - 33

14 32 The wicked are crushed by disaster, but the godly have a refuge when they die. **33** Wisdom is enshrined in an understanding heart; wisdom is not found among fools.