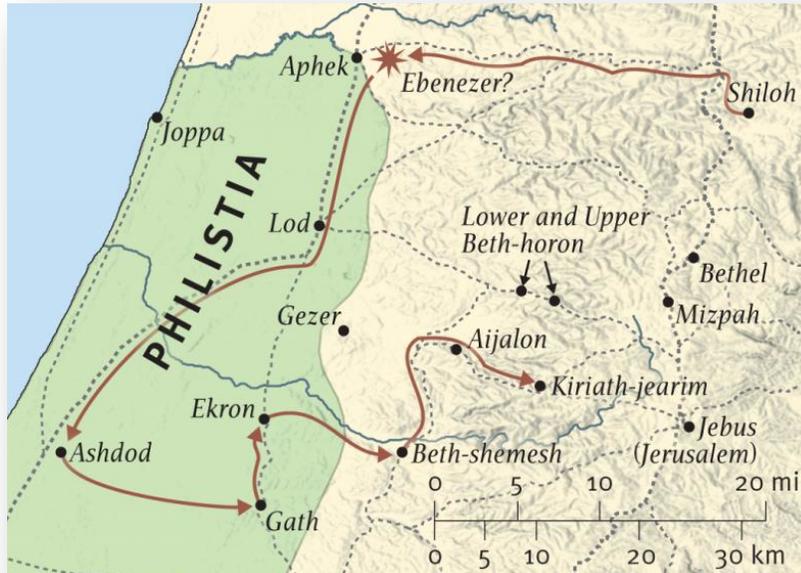


1 Samuel 5-6

April 19, 2012

God shows Himself (His Glory) to the Philistines

God shows Himself (His Grace and Glory) to the Israelites



I. God shows Himself (His Glory) to the Philistines (1 Samuel 5)

A. The Ark in Ashdod (5:1-8)

The Ark was brought from Ebenezer to Ashdod (80 miles?); they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

Dagon was the principal god for the Philistines. In ancient literature he was known to be the father of Baal, another idol we often meet in Scripture. Some say he was half fish, half man – a god of fertility, and others believe him to be the god of grain.

They brought the Ark of the LORD, representative of His very presence, into the house of Dagon.

The following morning, however, there was Dagon, fallen on its face before the Ark of the LORD (representing the LORD and His special presence).

So they took Dagon and propped it up, back in its place.

When they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon again, prostrate before the Ark of the LORD, but this time his head and arms had broken off and were lying on the threshold – symbolic of the fact that this statue was utterly mindless and powerless.

But, in contrast, the LORD was mindful and powerful; it's interesting that we read about the LORD's hand being "heavy" upon the people of Ashdod (v. 6); and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors, both Ashdod and it's territory.

The Hebrew word translated "ravage" means to make desolate, to devastate;

The people of Ashdod needed to know that their so-called God Dagon had not given them the victory over the LORD, that the LORD was the one God, the only God mindful and powerful.

And the people of Ashdod **were** beginning to see God's glory, they attributed the events properly to the LORD, but rather than worshipping the true God, they said, we better get rid of this Ark of the LORD.

B. The Ark in Gath (5:9)

They send the Ark 13 miles east to the city of Gath.

The same thing happened in Gath that happened in Ashdod...it may have even been worse, we read of "a very great destruction." God struck the men of the city, both small and great, the leaders and the laborers, the president and the pawns...and once again tumors broke out on them.

Many Bible scholars believe these tumors to be the equivalent of the Bubonic Plague.

The Latin vulgate adds, "And in the midst of their land rats sprang up, and there was a great death panic in the city."

(See articles on Bubonic Plague)

C. The Ark in Ekron (5:10-12)

This time the Ark goes close to 10 miles north...and even through the people of Ekron knew the horror in advance, the devastation still took place, nonetheless.

They call the 5 leaders of the Philistines – they say to them, send it away!

We read in v. 11, that the hand of God was very heavy there.

We read in v. 12 that the cry of the city went up to heaven.

This is now the 3rd time, the 3-fold witness, God's glory is established, but they're still not 100% convinced.

It's interesting to me that the name of the city Ashdod, means **power**, but God showed His **power** over them and their God.

The city of Gath happens to be the city where Goliath was from; maybe David took this into consideration, how God had thoroughly defeated Gath, and that helped him defeat Goliath, cause David knew, he had the **living** God on his side.

The name of this city Ekron means "torn up by the roots," which is exactly what God was doing to the Philistines.

The Ark in Ashdod, the Ark in Gath, the Ark in Ekron, led to:

D. The Ark in Route (6:1-11, 16-18)

1. How? (v. 2) (v. 1-5)

Do not send it empty, let there be trespass offerings for all of us!

Give glory to God (v. 5), we acknowledge that all this is Your hand.

2. Why? (v. 6)

Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians did?

If you read Exodus 7-14, you see the hardness and hardening of the heart of Pharaoh. These priest, these diviners, these foreigners knew all about it, the destruction and devastation that a hard heart brings...and so should we!

Job 9:4 "God *is* wise in heart and mighty in strength. Who has hardened *himself* against Him and prospered?"

Psalm 95:8 "Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, As *in* the day of trial in the wilderness,"

Romans 2:5 "But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,"

Hebrews 3:13 "but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

3. Watch (v. 9) (v. 6-12, 16-18)

They didn't need further confirmation, but God made it even clearer.

They would put the Ark on a cart, pulled by cows that have never been yoked, take away their calves from them, and just set em on the road, let's watch and see if they go the right way.

If the LORD wasn't in it, this would have never worked; animals need to be trained to pull; and cows would instinctively, stubbornly want to go and find their calves that they might feed them.

But they actually, successfully trudged uphill, close to 10 miles to Beth-Shemesh; we even remarkably read in v. 12, that they "did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left."

II. God shows Himself (His Grace and Glory) to the Israelites (1 Samuel 6:12-15)

A. Grace (6:13-15)

Imagine that, it's been 7 months, they lift their eyes; they can't ***believe*** their eyes, they see the Ark returning to them.

Zechariah 1:3; Malachi 3:7, God says, if you return to me, I will return to you.

Even though they had sinned greatly, they had pretty much driven God away, last week we read that word "Ichabod" the glory had departed.

But we will see as we continue to read 1 and 2 Samuel - that the glory would return!

It's not a coincidence that the Ark, returns to a city of priests, and within that city, to a man named Joshua! His name means "Jehovah is salvation", it's the Hebrew version of the name of Jesus.

So much grace! You would figure that He would give up on us, that we blew our chance, we had our chance, that He'd never come back to us, that He'd never revive us - but the God that we serve is the God of the 2nd chance!

(Peter:

Mark 16:7 "But go, tell His disciples--***and Peter***--that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."

John 21:1 "After these things Jesus showed Himself ***again*** to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed *Himself*:")

B. Glory (6:19-7:2)

God help us to know the full counsel of God, to know His grace and to know His glory!

Exodus 34:5 -8 "Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, "keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped."

Romans 11:22 "Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off."

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