

1Sa 5:1 ¶ "And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. 2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. 3 And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. 4 And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him. 5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day."

This whole scene of Israel going to war with the Philistines and losing the ark of God, is a reminder to us of what scripture testifies of the temperament of Israel at this time, seen in:

- **Jg 17:6** *"In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."*
- **Jg 21:25** *"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."*

Had Israel gotten rid of their idols and returned to God in a true spirit of worship, this would be a very different scene. However, we see the lesson: man, men, or nations, left to their own devices will just get themselves in trouble, doing everything except giving due reverence to God.

The Philistines believe their god, Dagon, has given them the victory over the God of Israel, because they have captured the ark of God, which they believe is the God of Israel. They bring the ark to the temple of their god, Dagon, and they place it beside Dagon's statue. The next morning: their god, Dagon, was fallen on its face before the ark of God.

Understand, **"and set it by Dagon"** as I understand it, means the ark of God is beside Dagon their god. For Dagon to be on his face before the ark of God, means that Dagon was removed from his usual place, and moved around to where he is in a prostrate position before the ark of God. This was a most remarkable event when you consider all the implications.

They returned Dagon to his normal place and the next morning: Dagon is broken and is fallen on its face before the ark of God. Dagon's hands were cut off and lay upon the threshold of the entrance. Wherefore, in reverence to their god Dagon, they do not walk on thresholds any longer.

A reminder here for us: Dagon is a god, but the Philistines recognize that the God of Israel is represented by the ark of God. The god they worship falls before the true God's representation. This would have alerted the Philistines to the fact: their god, Dagon, did not give them power over Israel. Their capture of the ark of God is only testifying that God was not with Israel when they went to war. The God, represented by the ark of the Lord, is alive and in control with obvious power since he has destroyed their Dagon god. God will convince the Philistines to send the ark of God back to Israel.

Thus, we see the true God, who has unlimited power, making the gods, which have no power of their own, fall before him in the proper worship stance. We are reminded of this in scripture in:

- **Isa 45:23** *I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.*" God demanded total reverence, to himself, in the Old Testament, and declared it would come to pass.
- **Ro 14:11** *"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."* God says: every person is to bow to me in total reverence. Since God lives in the eternal heaven, and we know from scripture that there is no death there, then we know that God has never died, nor never will die. Wherefore, all people should worship him. All people will confess to him. If we make our confessions to him now in time, we will not be judged with the lost in the eternal judgment. What a glorious blessing to receive the new birth and confess Christ now!
- **Php 2:10-11; 10** *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* God still demands total reverence to himself in the New Testament. This

text tells us; at the end of time, every human, that has ever existed, will bow before Christ Jesus and acknowledge that he is King and Lord over all things.

The end of time is coming, and then these scriptures will come to final fulfillment. This should cause us to willingly bow and worship God, in the here and now. This should encourage us to turn from idolatry to God. Remember, God is giving us a vivid demonstration, which shows that false gods and idols have no power.

6 ¶ "But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof. 7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god. 8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither."

The hand of God moves upon the Philistines of Ashdod. God is destroying them with emerods. Emerods is defined as: *from an unused root meaning to burn; a boil or ulcer (from the inflammation), especially a tumor in the anus or pudenda (pudenda is the sexual organs), the piles, hemorrhoids*. Ashdod calls the Philistine lords for council of what to do with the ark of the Lord, because God is killing them. They decide to send it to Gath.

The Philistines are not as stubborn as the Egyptians were, because as soon as they begin to see God's hand of power moving against them, overpowering their false god, and killing the people; they send the ark of the Lord away. They do not need ten plaques to acknowledge that God is on the scene, alive, and all powerful. However, in their defense, God did start with afflictions of death.

9 "And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts. 10 Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people."

They take the ark of God to Gath. God immediately begins to move against them, and they begin dying with the emerods also. Therefore, they send the ark of God to Ekron. Again, the Philistines recognize this is the hand of God against them.

The Ekronites, seeing the ark of the Lord coming to their city, and knowing what God has done in Ashdod, and Gath, they cry out in distress, knowing; where the ark goes, there goes the wrath of God. They accuse their brethren of trying to slay them.

11 "So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. 12 And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven."

The Ekronites send, and gather the lords of the Philistines, to take council of what to do with the ark of God. They do not want to be destroyed by the hand of God, which is already moving quickly against them. It seems; every time they move the ark of God, the hand of God moves more heavily against them. **1Sa 5:12 "And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods:"** The men that died were killed outright by the hand of God. Those left alive were smitten with emerods. This is a picture of why the unregenerate want nothing to do with God and his people. They are thereby reminded that God to them is death.

As the ark of God evokes these unregenerate to believe in the power of God: so, our Christian life should evoke the unregenerate to believe that we are inhabited by the power of God. We are reminded: just as the ark could not deliver Israel; so, we understand that our bodies, which are the vessel representation of the ark, can never save us by its own power. We understand; the power we have is Christ in us, and that power is not our own fleshly power.

There are a couple of lessons for us to learn from this chapter:

- When the unregenerate move against the express representation, the church of Salvation by Grace, of the true and living God, God may move upon them with swift destruction. Whether it be swift or slow in coming, it will surely come.
- When afflictions come in our lives, the very first thing we need to do is examine our lives, for any defiance against God that would bring his hand of judicial judgment upon us. Verify that we are living by "**thus saith the Lord**" rather than by our own wills. This will tell us if we need to correct some wrong in our life, or if we our trials and tribulations are to strengthen our faith and trust in God.

Lord, God of heaven and earth: we pray that you will guide us to live godly lives, so that we fall not into the hands of the wicked. We pray that we are not carried away into captivity, therein needing you to deliver us from captivity. Help us, Lord, to always remember exactly who you are, and let us not turn you into some kind of idol who has no power. Help us to always recognize that you are God, and you are all powerful. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen!