

In this chapter we see the return of the Ark back to Israel after 7 months of Philistine captivity, causing them great hurt & witness, yet w/o response.

*1 Now the ark of the LORD had been 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 shall send it to its place."*

For 7 months they made it hard on themselves because they didn't want to let go. And Israel doesn't try to recover Ark—**It a novelty**--sell tickets but w/ it disease & destruction but they didn't get it...pound a fool...folly remains. Sinners hold onto sin and at same time destroying them.

*3 And they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but you shall surely return to Him a guilt offering. Then you shall be healed and it shall be known to you why His hand is not removed from you." 4 Then they said, "What shall be the guilt offering which we shall return to Him?" And they said, "Five golden tumors and five golden mice according to the number of the lords of the Philistines, for one plague was on all of you and on your lords. 5 "So you shall make likenesses of your tumors and likenesses of your mice that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will ease His hand from you, your gods, and your land. 6 "Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had severely dealt with them, did they not allow the people to go, and they departed? 7 "Now therefore take and prepare a new cart and two milch cows on which there has never been a yoke; and hitch the cows to the cart and take their calves home, away from them. 8 "And take the ark of the LORD and place it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you return to Him as a guilt offering in a box by its side. Then send it away that it may go. 9 "And watch, if it goes up by the way of its own territory to Beth-shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that it was not His hand that struck us; it happened to us by chance."*

Finally gave up & willing to send Ark back after consultation w/ pagan diviners '**what are we to do?**' Counsel is get rid of Ark **not** get rid of idolatry. Unbelievers look at natural circumstances instead of living God so make offering out of your shame & put in Ark. Seek to appease & compensate for abuse of Ark. People, out of obligation & guilt offer what they think will appease. Feel I've done my duty. **Mom now I'm even w/ God-allowance even son**

God requires blood not gold mice & Hemorrhoids. Carnal minds misread God's disciplinary action as accidents in life & respond like Philistines. They knew of Jehovah from what He did to Egyptians but because Israel was so inconsistent in their walk & witness Philistines looked at God of Israel, as not much different than other pagan gods. Our god Dagon conquered. The inconsistent life of a Christian can turn unbelievers away from God's power to change lives. So w/ Philistines there was no repentance only appeasement

*10 Then the men did so, and took two milch cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. 11 And they put the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the box with the golden mice and the likenesses of their tumors. 12 And the cows took the straight way in the direction of Beth-shemesh; they went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right or to the left. And the lords of the Philistines followed them to the border of Beth-shemesh.*

Never before were *hitched*—taken from calves—w/o a driver---anxious lowing or contentment---divine instinct---God directed where He wanted them to go. What seems contrary to nature yet obeying inherent impulse from God

**Homing pigeon fly 1000 miles** In one noted experiment, German scientist Hans Wallraff transported homing pigeons to a very distant location. To ensure that the birds did not receive any external navigational information, they were transferred under stringent conditions. The pigeons were transported in closed, airtight cylinders and provided bottled air. Light was turned on and off at random times and loud white noise was played. The cylinders were enclosed in magnetic coils that provided a changing magnetic field. Finally, the cylinders were mounted on a tilting turntable connected to a computer that varied both the rotation and tilt of the cylinders. After release at the distant and completely unknown area, the birds were able to fly home to their roost, apparently without trouble (other than an initial case of nausea).

God accommodated pagans presumption to prove His power. It appears demons & the animal world are more responsive to God than most humans. Demoniac 'son of the Most High God' *Mk 1:24 saying, "What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"* **What an indictment on judgment day.**

**Is 1:3** *“An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master’s manger, But Israel does not know, My people do not understand.”*

God was able to talk thru & direct Balaam’s donkey but not Balaam himself.

**Nu 22:22-30** What seemed a victory over the Ark now has these seasoned soldiers running after the Ark like school children running after the ice cream truck. *God will make even the wrath of man to praise Him.*

*13 Now the people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they raised their eyes and saw the ark and were glad to see it. 14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite and stood there where there was a large stone; and they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. 15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the box that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone; and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices that day to the LORD.*

People left the harvest & ran to the Ark. Joy of God’s presence is greater than the harvest of grain or any material thing.

Ox did the will of God & was sacrificed for it. We are to present ourselves as living sacrifices holy acceptable to God. Natural response to God’s presence is dedication **Gen 28** Jacob wrestling w/ Angel of Lord. Surely God is in this place & I knew it not. After encountering God he dedicates whatever it is of time, talent & treasure to God

*16 And when the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned to Ekron that day. 17 And these are the golden tumors which the Philistines returned for a guilt offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron; 18 and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fortified cities and of country villages. The large stone on which they set the ark of the LORD is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite.*

Giving worthless offerings to appease the conscience is excuse for disobedience **1Sam 15:22** *And Samuel said, “Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 “For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.*

Philistines tested God to see if it was Him or accidental circumstances. Fact is we always the ones tested not God & they failed the test as they saw divine GPS directing the oxen heading to place they'd never been before---like us being drawn to Lord, a place we've never been before God's positioning system.

*19 And He struck down some of the men of Beth-shemesh because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck down of all the people, 50,070 men, and the people mourned because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter. 20 And the men of Beth-shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall He go up from us?" 21 So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD; come down and take it up to you."*

A Levitical city should have known better-*to whom much is given, much is required*. Carnal curiosity treating the Ark as common--shows their low view of God. Prying into, wanting to see what God chose to keep hidden.

Ark brought by cows not priests, on cart not poles, all the doings of natural mind in disregard of greatness of God & His holiness. *Bad company corrupts good morals* so sinful curiosity disregarded law of God *To whom much is given much is required*. Many writers feel that the 50,070 was a transmission error by a scribe and it may have been more like 70 with the 50,000 representing the scribal error

### Josephus & Keil-Delitzsch

Judgment got their attention that He is a Holy God set apart, not to be treated as common, anything goes, irreverent attitude, yet they didn't repent but wanted it to be taken away. It is and is a blessing to house of Abinadab. *James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

