

God Shows His Glory to the Philistines and Israelites

MEMORY VERSE: Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this Holy God?

1 Samuel 6:20

SCRIPTURE: I Samuel 4-7

AIM: To teach

The Israelites went out to battle against the Philistines and they were beaten. You see, the Israelites had chosen to worship false gods, instead of the one true God. Rather than turning back to God in repentance and humility, they tried to fight the battle on their own.

“Let’s bring the Ark here,” someone suggested. “If we carry it into battle, the Lord will be with us.” They thought it would be like a magic charm. Eli’s sons (who had been leading the Israelites astray) picked up the Ark and carried it into battle.

The Israelites took the Ark right into the midst of the Philistine army, but it did them no good. When God is not in the hearts of men, He is against them, not for them. So the Israelites were beaten again, worse than before. Then, the message that God had given to Samuel came true; Eli’s sons were killed in the battle. And, the Philistines stole the Ark.

When Eli heard the news that the Ark of God had been taken, he fainted and fell off his seat backward and died.

Meanwhile the Philistines shouted and sang for joy. “We have taken the god of Israel.” (The thought God was just one of many gods). They took the Ark and put it in the house of Dagon in the city of Ashdod. They set it right before the image of their false god, which was made like a fish but with the head and the hands of a man.

However when they came in the morning and opened the doors, Dagon had fallen flat on His face before the Ark of God. They were shocked, but they set Dagon back up in its place. The next morning when they opened the doors, Dagon had not only fallen down again, but its head and hands were broken off.

Then a terrible plague broke out in the city. When the people realized what was happening they exclaimed, “We can’t keep the Ark here any longer.” We have to send it back to Israel.

So the Philistines put the Ark on a cart fastened to two milk cows, and do you know that the cows brought the Ark right back to Israel?! So the Ark was back in Israel, yet the Israelites didn’t fear God. Because when they got it back, some people looked inside, and died.

Samuel told Israel, “If you want to return to the Lord with all your hearts, get rid of the false gods, and serve Him only.” The Israelites confessed. “We have sinned against the Lord.” They repented and turned back to Him.

The Israelites learned a valuable lesson that because God is a glorious, and perfect God, His presence is a frightful thing for all who oppose Him. And anyone who has sin in their heart is opposed to God (Matthew 12:30). God sent Samuel to the Israelites to help them repent and turn away from their sin. But He also had a larger plan in mind to send a Savior, Jesus who would defeat Satan sin and death once and for all, and allow anyone who would repent of their sin and put their faith in Him to enter the holy presence of God!