

Day 271 - THURSDAY: October 26th

1 Samuel 6

1 Samuel 6:1-21 NKJV

Now the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. 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 should send it to its place." So they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but by all means return it to Him with a trespass offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you." Then they said, "What is the trespass offering which we shall return to Him?" They answered, "Five golden tumors and five golden rats, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines. For the same plague was on all of you and on your lords. Therefore you shall make images of your tumors and images of your rats that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will lighten His hand from you, from your gods, and from your land. Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He did mighty things among them, did they not let the people go, that they might depart? Now therefore, make a new cart, take two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them. Then take the ark of the LORD and set it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you are returning to Him as a trespass offering in a chest by its side. Then send it away, and let it go. And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that it is not His hand that struck us—it happened to us by chance." Then the men did so; they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves

at home. And they set the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the chest with the golden tumors and the images of their tumors. Then the cows headed straight for the road to Beth Shemesh, and went along the highway, plowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth Shemesh. Now the people of Beth Shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley; and they lifted their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there; a large stone was there. So they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. The Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the chest that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the LORD. So when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day. These are the golden tumors which the Philistines returned as a trespass offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron; and the golden rats, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both fortified cities and country villages, even as far as the large stone of Abel on which they set the ark of the LORD, which stone remains to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh. Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people, and the people lamented because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? And to whom shall it go up from us?" So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD; come down and take it up with you."

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “When the Philistines decide the ark is most likely the cause of their problems, and agree to send it back, they devise a test to try to determine for sure whether the God of Israel is behind all of this. They find two cows that have never pulled a cart and that have recently given birth, and they take their calves from them. If the cows are willing to be harnessed to a cart for the first time and cooperate together to pull it without balking, without any guidance, and in the correct direction away from their own calves, then, the Philistines reason, God would have to be involved. The lords of the Philistines follow the cart in astonishment as the cows pull the ark directly back to the land of Israel. For some reason, the ark is never returned to the tabernacle. It remains in the house of Abinadab for 70 years or more until David brings it to Jerusalem when he pitches a new tent for it (1 Chronicles 15:1; 16:1)” [END]

Verse 13 – This would be around the Feast of Pentecost when the wheat was harvested.

Verse 19 – John Gill’s commentary states: “which was forbidden the Levites, Num_4:20 out of curiosity these men opened the ark, to see whether the Philistines had taken anything out of it, or put anything into it; and this, when in the tabernacle, being only to be seen by the high priest; and supposing they should never have the like opportunity again, to look upon the tables of the law which were in it, took it; and the rather they might be emboldened to this action, since it had been in the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines, who had profaned it; and as yet not restored to its pristine purity, holiness, and place:” [END]