

1 Samuel 5:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

The Philistine lords gather to decide the Ark's fate. Their question 'What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?' acknowledges inability to simply return or destroy it. The decision to move it to Gath suggests hope that local factors caused Ashdod's problems. The phrase 'they carried the ark...about' (Hebrew: sabab, to go around, transfer) pictures the Ark making a circuit of Philistine cities, bringing judgment to each. The Ark becomes an instrument of comprehensive Philistine affliction.

Historical Context

The Philistine pentapolis (five cities) was governed by lords (seranim) who functioned as a council. Their collective decision-making explains why the Ark visited multiple cities. Gath was another major Philistine city, located inland from Ashdod.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why might the Philistines have thought moving the Ark would solve their problem?
2. What does the collective decision-making of Philistine lords suggest about their political structure?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׁלַח	אֶת	יְאָסְפוּ	כָּל	אֶת	סְרִינִי	יְמִינֵיכֶם	פְּלִשְׁתִּים
They sent	therefore and gathered		H853	H3605	all the lords	of the Philistines	
H7971		H622			H5633		H6430
אֶלָּיָהּ מֶלֶךְ	מִן	וַיֹּאמֶר	מָה	בְּעֵשׂ	הָעֵשׂ	אֶלְהָיְךְ	אֶלְהָיְךְ
H413		And they answered	H4100	H6213	What shall we do	Let the ark	of the God
		H559				H727	H430
יִשְׁרָאֵל:	וְ	וַיֹּאמֶר	גַּת	וְ	וְ	אֶלְהָיְךְ	אֶלְהָיְךְ
of Israel	And they answered		H1661		And they carried	Let the ark	of the God
H3478		H559			H5437		H430
יִשְׁרָאֵל:	וְ	אֶלְהָיְךְ	אֶלְהָיְךְ	וְ	אֶלְהָיְךְ	וְ	יִשְׁרָאֵל:
of Israel	And they carried	H853	Let the ark	of the God	of Israel		
H3478		H5437	H727	H430			H3478