

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 וְ	וְאִסְפוּ	אֶת	כָּל	סֵרְנֵי י	פְּלִשְׁתִּים
They sent	therefore and gathered	H853	H3605	all the lords	of the Philistines
H7971	H622			H5633	H6430
אֵלֶיהֶם	וַיֹּאמְרוּ	מָה	נַעֲשֶׂה	אֲרֹן	אֵלֶי י
H413	And they answered	H4100	What shall we do	Let the ark	of the God
	H559		H6213	H727	H430
יִשְׂרָאֵל:	וַיֹּאמְרוּ	גַּת	וַיִּטּוּ	אֲרֹן	אֵלֶי י
of Israel	And they answered	unto Gath	And they carried	Let the ark	of the God
H3478	H559	H1661	H5437	H727	H430
יִשְׂרָאֵל:	וַיִּטּוּ	אֶת	אֲרֹן	אֵלֶי י	יִשְׂרָאֵל:
of Israel	And they carried	H853	Let the ark	of the God	of Israel
H3478	H5437		H727	H430	H3478