

1 Samuel 6:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.

Analysis

And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.

The wheat harvest setting provides both temporal marker and theological significance. The Hebrew verb *samach* (rejoiced) describes their spontaneous delight at seeing the Ark return. Beth-shemesh, meaning 'house of the sun,' was a Levitical city in Judah's territory, making it an appropriate first stop for the Ark's return. The agricultural scene of harvest contrasts with the spiritual barrenness Israel had experienced during the Ark's absence. Just as the wheat harvest represented God's material provision, the Ark's return signified the restoration of His covenantal presence. The workers' immediate recognition of the Ark demonstrates that despite Israel's spiritual decline, some retained awareness of sacred things. Their joy, however, would soon prove premature, as proximity to the holy without proper reverence brings judgment rather than blessing.

Historical Context

Beth-shemesh (modern Tell er-Rumeileh) sat on the northern border of Judah, approximately fifteen miles west of Jerusalem. As a Levitical city assigned to the Kohathites (Joshua 21:16), it should have had proper understanding of Ark protocols. The wheat harvest occurred in late May to early June, dating this event to approximately that season.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does the contrast between agricultural abundance and spiritual return teach about God's comprehensive blessing?
2. How might initial joy at encountering sacred things give way to improper familiarity?

Interlinear Text

וְיִשָּׂא ו	שֵׁשׁ מֵשׁ	קִצְרֵי יָם	קִצִּיר	חֹטְתֵי יָם	בְּעֵמֶק מֶלֶךְ
H0	And they of Bethshemesh	were reaping	harvest	their wheat	in the valley
	H1053	H7114	H7105	H2406	H6010
וַיִּשָּׂא ו	אֶת עֵינֵיהֶם	לִרְאוֹת:	אֶת	הָאֹרֶן וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ
and they lifted up	their eyes	and saw		the ark	and rejoiced
H5375	H853	H7200	H853	H727	H8055

לִרְאוֹת:

and saw
H7200