

1 Samuel 6:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

Analysis

And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

The Ark narrative reveals that God's presence cannot be manipulated through religious symbols or ritualistic practices. Israel's superstitious use of the Ark as a magical talisman demonstrated fundamental misunderstanding of covenant relationship. The Ark's capture and Israel's defeat prove that external religious forms without heart transformation provide no protection from judgment. Yet even in captivity, the Ark demonstrates Yahweh's supremacy—Dagon falls, plagues strike, and the Philistines recognize a power they cannot control or domesticate.

Historical Context

The Philistines, part of the 'Sea Peoples' who settled the coastal plain around 1200 BCE, possessed superior iron technology and organized military forces. Their pentapolis (five major cities: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath) controlled coastal trade routes and threatened Israelite settlements in the hill country. The Philistine threat created the political pressure that would eventually lead to Israel's demand for centralized monarchy.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does this passage deepen our understanding of God's character, purposes, and ways of working in human history?
2. What specific heart attitudes, thought patterns, or life practices does this passage call you to examine or change?
3. How does this passage connect to the larger biblical narrative of redemption and point toward Christ and the gospel?

Interlinear Text

מָה	לְאָמֵר	וּלְקַסְמִים	לְקַבֵּן יִם	פָּלָשָׁת יִם	תִּקְרָא וְ	
called	And the Philistines	for the priests	and the diviners	saying		H4100
H7121	H6430	H3548	H7080	H559		
בְּמַה	הַקֹּדֶשׁ	נִזְבְּנָה	יְהִי הַ	לְאָרֶן	בְּמַה	
What shall we do	to the ark	of the LORD	tell		H4100	
H6213	H727	H3068	H3045			
לְמִקְומָה	נִשְׁלַחַ	כִּי				
us wherewith we shall send	it to his place					
H7971	H4725					

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 7:11 (Parallel theme): Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

Genesis 41:8 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

Daniel 5:7 (Parallel theme): The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Daniel 2:2 (Parallel theme): Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

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