

1 Samuel 6:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords.

Analysis

Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords.

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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

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.

וְאֵשֶׁר	בְּאַשְׁמָה	מִן הַיּוֹאָמֵר וְ	מִן הַיּוֹאָמֵר וְ
Then said	they What shall be the trespass offering	H4100	H834
H559		H817	
בְּשֶׁבֶת	מִסְפָּר	וְיִאָמֵר וְלֹא	וְלִסְרְגִּיכֶם:
which we shall return	according to the number	H0	of the lords
H7725	H4557	H559	H5633
זֶבֶב בְּעַכְבֵּר	זֶבֶב בְּעַכְבֵּר	זֶבֶב בְּעַכְבֵּר	זֶבֶב בְּעַכְבֵּר
of the Philistines	golden	Five	golden
H6430	H2091	H2568	H2091
וְלִסְרְגִּיכֶם:	golden	Five	mice
לְכַל מִן מִגְּפָה	golden	Five	golden
וְלִסְרְגִּיכֶם:	mice	Five	golden
וְאֵשֶׁר	golden	Five	golden
מִן הַיּוֹאָמֵר וְ	golden	Five	golden
מִן הַיּוֹאָמֵר וְ	golden	Five	golden

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 13:3 (References Lord): From Sihor, which is before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, which is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekonites; also the Avites:

Judges 3:3 (References Lord): Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath.

1 Samuel 5:9 (References Lord): And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.

1 Samuel 5:6 (References Lord): But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof.
