

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

וַיֹּאמֶר ו	הָאֵשֶׁם	אֲשֶׁר			
Then said	they	What shall be the trespass offering			
H4100	H817	H834			
H559					
וְנָשׂ יָב	וַיֹּאמֶר ו	מִסְפָּר	וּלְסִרְיָיִךְ:		
which we shall return	Then said	according to the number	of the lords		
H7725	H559	H4557	H5633		
	H0				
זָה בַּעֲבֹדֵי יְ	וְחִמְשָׁה	זָה בַּעֲבֹדֵי יְ	וְחִמְשָׁה	זָה בַּעֲבֹדֵי יְ	זָה בַּעֲבֹדֵי יְ
of the Philistines	Five	golden	Five	mice	golden
H6430	H2568	H2091	H2568	H5909	H2091
	H6076				
וּלְסִרְיָיִךְ:	לְכָל	אֶחָד	מִגִּפָּה	כִּי	
of the lords	for one		plague		
H5633	H3605	H259	H4046	H3588	

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 Ekronites; 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.