

1 Samuel 6:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: it was a chance that happened to us.

Analysis

And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: it was a chance that happened to us.

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 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

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

וּרְאִיתָם	אִם	דֶּרֶךְ	גְּבוּלֹו	יַעֲלֶה	בִּי	יֵת
And see	H518	by the way	of his own coast	if it goeth up	H0	
H7200		H1870	H1366	H5927		
שְׁמֶשׁ	וְאֵל	עָשָׂה	לֹו	אֶת	הַרָעָה	הַגְּדוֹלָה
to Bethshemesh	H1931	then he hath done	H0	H853	evil	us this great
H1053		H6213			H7451	H1419
אֶת	וְאֵל	לֹא	וְיָדְעוּ	כִּי	לֹא	
H2063	H518	H3808	but if not then we shall know	H3588	H3808	
			H3045			
יָדֹו	בְּ	גָעָה	בְּ	מִקֶּלְהָ	וְאֵל	
that it is not his hand	that smote	H0	us it was a chance	H1931		
H3027	H5060		H4745			
הָיָה	לָנוּ:					
that happened to us	H0					
H1961						

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 15:10 (Parallel theme): And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto mount Seir, and passed along unto the side of mount Jearim, which is Chesalon, on the north side, and went down to Beth-shemesh, and passed on to Timnah:

Ecclesiastes 9:11 (Parallel theme): I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Luke 10:31 (Parallel theme): And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

Joshua 21:16 (Parallel theme): And Ain with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, and Beth-shemesh with her suburbs; nine cities out of those two tribes.

1 Samuel 6:3 (Parallel theme): And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

2 Samuel 1:6 (Parallel theme): And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

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