

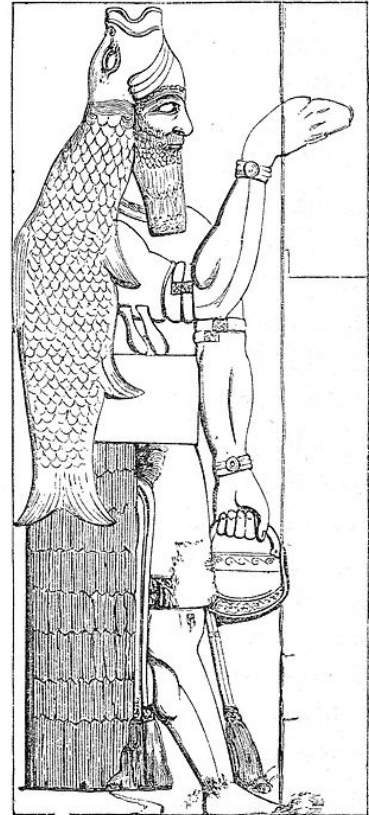
The Jewish Kingdom - Lesson 6

The Ark in Philistia

Last week we saw the fall of Eli's house and the loss of the Ark of the Covenant to the Philistines. Today we will see what happens with the Ark in the hands of the Philistines and its eventual return to Israel.

12. The Ark held by the Philistines - I Samuel 5:1-12

- Ashdod - one of the five chief cities of the Philistines.
- Dagon - a popular ancient Mesopotamian deity. Usually represented as part fish, like the image here or as more of a merman. His worship probably revolved around grain and fertility.
- vs. 4 - John Gill says "...he fell with such force, that the threshold cut off his head, and both his hands; which signified he had neither wisdom to contrive for his own safety, nor strength and power to defend himself; and therefore of what advantage could he be to his votaries?"
- vs. 5 - I guess since Dagon had been shamed in such a manner that no one bothered to worship him any more!
- emerods - literally "mound, hill, or fort". Probably some sort of tumor or boil. The association with rats (6:5) and the details given lead some to think this is bubonic plague.
- Gath and Ekron - more of the five principal cities. They were on the border of Philistia and Judah.



13. The Ark returned to Israel - I Samuel 6:1-18

- Seven months! They endured all that for seven months!
- vs. 2 - sounds like an ecumenical council...
- vs. 3-9 - They were more careful dealing with God than many Christians!
- milch kine = milk cows
- Bethshemesh - literally, house of the sun. Given to Dan in Joshua 15:19, it was set aside for priests in Joshua 21:16. Really cool archaeological stuff here, too.
- The wheat harvest is around Pentecost, so May-June.

14. Sin at Bethshemesh and the Ark's move to Kirjathjearim - I Samuel 6:19-7:1

- "looking into the ark of the Lord" - perhaps their zeal got away from them, they got curious, or they were checking to make sure the Philistines hadn't messed with the Ark. Regardless, they violated the sacred (Numbers 4:20)
- 50,070 men are said to have been slain. That number must stretch beyond Bethshemesh into all Israel. I kind of want to think it was among the Levites.

- Kirjathjearim - literally “city of woods”, about halfway between Bethshemesh and Jerusalem. Was originally called Kirjathbaal. Mentioned in Joshua 15:9,60 and 18:12-15.
- So, why not take it back to Shiloh? It had probably been destroyed by the Philistines after they took the Ark.
- Abinidab sanctifies his son Eleazar to “keep the ark of the Lord”. Note that he is not being set aside as a high priest, but simply as a steward.
- It appears that the Ark did not return to Moses’ Tabernacle. When David retrieves the Ark, 90 years after is taken to Kirjathjearim, he keeps it at Jerusalem, while the Tabernacle would move to Nob and Gibeon (2 Chronicles 1:3-6).

15. Twenty Years Pass... - I Samuel 7:2

- There is so much sadness in this verse. Israel has the Ark but is not following the God who had them build it. Twenty years. Twenty years before Samuel brings the people back to their God, as we’ll see next week.

