

**The Ark and the Philistines (c. 1104 – c. 1103 BC)**

1 Samuel 5:1–7:2

**Ashdod**

5:1 Now the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

2 Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it to the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon.

3 When the Ashdodites arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set him in his place again.

4 But when they arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. And the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *were* cut off on the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left to him.

5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor all who enter Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

6 Now the hand of the LORD was heavy on the Ashdodites, and He ravaged them and smote them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territories.

7 When the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is severe on us and on Dagon our god."

**Gath**

8 So they sent and gathered all the lords of the Philistines to them and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" And they said, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." And they brought the ark of the God of Israel *around*.

9 After they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city with very great confusion; and He smote the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them.

**Ekron**

10 So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And as the ark of God came to Ekron the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel around to us, to kill us and our people."

11 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, so that it will not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly confusion throughout the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

12 And the men who did not die were smitten with tumors and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

**The Ark is Returned**

6:1 Now the ark of the LORD had been in the country of the Philistines seven months.

2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we shall send it to its place."

3 They said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but you shall surely return to Him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you."

4 Then they said, "What shall be the guilt offering which we shall return to Him?" And they said, "Five golden tumors and five golden mice *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines, for one plague was on all of you and on your lords.

5 So you shall make likenesses of your tumors and likenesses of your mice that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will ease His hand from you, your gods, and your land.

6 Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had severely dealt with them, did they not allow the people to go, and they departed?

7 Now therefore, take and prepare a new cart and two milch cows on which there has never been a yoke; and hitch the cows to the cart and take their calves home, away from them.

8 Take the ark of the LORD and place it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you return to Him as a guilt offering in a box by its side. Then send it away that it may go.

9 Watch, if it goes up by the way of its own territory to Beth-shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we will know that it was not His hand that struck us; it happened to us by chance."

10 Then the men did so, and took two milch cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home.

11 They put the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the box with the golden mice and the likenesses of their tumors.

12 And the cows took the straight way in the direction of Beth-shemesh; they went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right or to the left. And the lords of the Philistines followed them to the border of Beth-shemesh.

**Beth-shemesh**

13 Now *the people of* Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they raised their eyes and saw the ark and were glad to see it.

14 The cart came into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite and stood there where there *was* a large stone; and they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD.

15 The Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the box that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the

large stone; and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices that day to the LORD.

16 When the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned to Ekron that day.

17 These are the golden tumors which the Philistines returned for a guilt offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron;

18 and the golden mice, *according* to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fortified cities and of country villages. The large stone on which they set the ark of the LORD *is a witness* to this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite.

19 He struck down some of the men of Beth-shemesh because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck down of all the people, 50,070 men, and the people mourned because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter.

20 The men of Beth-shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall He go up from us?"

21 So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD; come down and take it up to you."

#### **Kiriath-jearim**

7:1 And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took the ark of the LORD and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

2 From the day that the ark remained at Kiriath-jearim, the time was long, for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

## Judgeship of Samson (c. 1104 – c. 1084 BC)

### Judges 14–15

#### **Seeking for an Opportunity Against the Philistines**

14:1 Then Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah, *one* of the daughters of the Philistines.

2 So he came back and told his father and mother, "I saw a woman in Timnah, *one* of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife."

3 Then his father and his mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she looks good to me."

4 However, his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD, for He was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. Now at that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel.

#### **Samson's Riddle**

5 Then Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came as far as the vineyards of Timnah; and behold, a young lion *came* roaring toward him.

6 The Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, so that he tore him as one tears a young goat though he had nothing in his hand; but he did not tell his father or mother what he had done.

7 So he went down and talked to the woman; and she looked good to Samson.

8 When he returned later to take her, he turned aside to look at the carcass of the lion; and behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the body of the lion.

9 So he scraped the honey into his hands and went on, eating as he went. When he came to his father and mother, he gave *some* to them and they ate *it*; but he did not tell them that he had scraped the honey out of the body of the lion.

10 Then his father went down to the woman; and Samson made a feast there, for the young men customarily did this.

11 When they saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him.

12 Then Samson said to them, "Let me now propound a riddle to you; if you will indeed tell it to me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen wraps and thirty changes of clothes.

13 But if you are unable to tell me, then you shall give me thirty linen wraps and thirty changes of clothes." And they said to him, "Propound your riddle, that we may hear it."

14 So he said to them,

"Out of the eater came something to eat,  
And out of the strong came something sweet."

But they could not tell the riddle in three days.

#### **The Philistines Force Samson's Wife to Reveal the Answer**

15 Then it came about on the fourth day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, so that he will tell us the riddle, or we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us to impoverish us? Is this not so?"

16 Samson's wife wept before him and said, "You only hate me, and you do not love me; you have propounded a riddle to the sons of my people, and have not told *it* to me." And he said to her, "Behold, I have not told *it* to my father or mother; so should I tell you?"

17 However she wept before him seven days while their feast lasted. And on the seventh day he told her because she pressed him so hard. She then told the riddle to the sons of her people.

18a So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

"What is sweeter than honey?  
And what is stronger than a lion?"

#### **Samson Feels Justified in Attacking the Philistines**

18b And he said to them,

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,  
You would not have found out my riddle."

19 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of them and took their spoil and gave the changes of *clothes* to those who told the riddle. And his anger burned, and he went up to his father's house.

#### **The Philistine Father Gives Samson's Wife to Another Man**

20 But Samson's wife was *given* to his companion who had been his friend.

15:1 But after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a young goat, and said, "I will go in to my wife in *her* room." But her father did not let him enter.

2 Her father said, "I really thought that you hated her intensely; so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister more beautiful than she? Please let her be yours instead."

#### **Samson Again Feels Justified in Taking Revenge**

3 Samson then said to them, "This time I shall be blameless in regard to the Philistines when I do them harm."

4 Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took torches, and turned *the foxes* tail to tail and put one torch in the middle between two tails.

5 When he had set fire to the torches, he released the foxes into the standing grain of the Philistines, thus burning up both the shocks and the standing grain, along with the vineyards *and* groves.

#### **The Philistines Retaliate**

6 Then the Philistines said, "Who did this?" And they said, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he took his wife and gave her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

#### **Samson Takes Revenge Once Again**

7 Samson said to them, "Since you act like this, I will surely take revenge on you, but after that I will quit."

8 He struck them ruthlessly with a great slaughter; and he went down and lived in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

#### **The Philistines Decide to Eliminate Samson Permanently**

9 Then the Philistines went up and camped in Judah, and spread out in Lehi.

10 The men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" And they said, "We have come up to bind Samson in order to do to him as he did to us."

11 Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them."

12 They said to him, "We have come down to bind you so that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines." And Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me."

13 So they said to him, "No, but we will bind you fast and give you into their hands; yet surely we will not kill you." Then they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

#### **Samson Kills an Entire Philistine Battalion**

14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him. And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily so that the ropes that were on his arms were as flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds dropped from his hands.

15 He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, so he reached out and took it and killed a thousand men with it.

16 Then Samson said,

“With the jawbone of a donkey,  
Heaps upon heaps,  
With the jawbone of a donkey  
I have killed a thousand men.”

- 17 When he had finished speaking, he threw the jawbone from his hand; and he named that place Ramath-lehi.  
18 Then he became very thirsty, and he called to the LORD and said, “You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant, and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?”  
19 But God split the hollow place that is in Lehi so that water came out of it. When he drank, his strength returned and he revived. Therefore he named it En-hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day.  
20 So he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

### Judgeship of Ibzan (c. 1100 – c. 1093 BC)

Judges 12:8–10

- 8 Now Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel after him [Jephthah].  
9 He had thirty sons, and thirty daughters *whom* he gave in marriage outside *the family*, and he brought in thirty daughters from outside for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years.  
10 Then Ibzan died and was buried in Bethlehem.

### Judgeship of Elon (c. 1093 – c. 1083 BC)

Judges 12:11–12

- 11 Now Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel after him [Ibzan]; and he judged Israel ten years.  
12 Then Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried at Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.

### The Death of Samson (c. 1084 BC)

Judges 16

#### Samson Carries the Gaza City Gates 38 Miles Uphill to Hebron

- 1 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.  
2 *When it was told* to the Gazites, saying, “Samson has come here,” they surrounded *the place* and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. And they kept silent all night, saying, “*Let us wait* until the morning light, then we will kill him.”  
3 Now Samson lay until midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts and pulled them up along with the bars; then he put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain which is opposite Hebron.

#### Samson and Delilah

- 4 After this it came about that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.  
5 The lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “Entice him, and see where his great strength *lies* and how we may overpower him that we may bind him to afflict him. Then we will each give you eleven hundred *pieces* of silver.”  
6 So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound to afflict you.”  
7 Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then I will become weak and be like any *other* man.”  
8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh cords that had not been dried, and she bound him with them.  
9 Now she had *men* lying in wait in an inner room. And she said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he snapped the cords as a string of tow snaps when it touches fire. So his strength was not discovered.  
10 Then Delilah said to Samson, “Behold, you have deceived me and told me lies; now please tell me how you may be bound.”  
11 He said to her, “If they bind me tightly with new ropes which have not been used, then I will become weak and be like any *other* man.”  
12 So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” For the *men* were lying in wait in the inner room. But he snapped the ropes from his arms like a thread.  
13 Then Delilah said to Samson, “Up to now you have deceived me and told me lies; tell me how you may be bound.” And he said to her, “If you weave the seven locks of my hair with the web *and fasten it with a pin*, then I will become weak and be like any *other* man.”  
14 So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his hair and wove them into the web. And she fastened *it* with the pin and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he awoke from his sleep and pulled out the pin of the loom and the web.

15 Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength is."

16 It came about when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death.

17 So he told her all *that was* in his heart and said to her, "A razor has never come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me and I will become weak and be like any *other* man."

18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all *that was* in his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all *that is* in his heart." Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands.

19 She made him sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair. Then she began to afflict him, and his strength left him.

20 She said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free." But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.

21 Then the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains, and he was a grinder in the prison.

22 However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it was shaved off.

### **Samson's Final Act of Faith**

23 Now the lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice, for they said,

"Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hands."

24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, for they said,

"Our god has given our enemy into our hands,  
Even the destroyer of our country,  
Who has slain many of us."

25 It so happened when they were in high spirits, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may amuse us." So they called for Samson from the prison, and he entertained them. And they made him stand between the pillars.

26 Then Samson said to the boy who was holding his hand, "Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them."

27 Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there. And about 3,000 men and women were on the roof looking on while Samson was amusing *them*.

28 Then Samson called to the LORD and said, "O Lord GOD, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes."

29 Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and braced himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left.

30 And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life. [\[Heb 11:32\]](#)

31 Then his brothers and all his father's household came down, took him, brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. Thus he had judged Israel twenty years.

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