

I SAMUEL 6-7

REVIEW...

- **CHAPTER 4 – THE CAPTURE OF THE ARK OF GOD...**

- Israel was at war with the Philistines – their arch rival...
 - They were defeated in Battle – lost 4000 men - and did not know why...
 - They came up with the idea – lets take the Ark into battle with us!
- When it arrived in the camp – the men of Israel cheered so loud the ground shook...
 - When they Philistines found out there were terrified – fought for their lives...
 - 40,000 Israelis were killed – Hophni and Phinehas were killed – the Ark captured!
- Eli was waiting at the Tabernacle – worried for the Ark...
 - When the news came the Ark had been captured – he fell backwards and died...
 - The wife of Phinehas went into labor – died giving birth to Ichabod (*no more glory*)

- **CHAPTER 5 – ONLY ONE GOD...**

- The Philistines took the Ark and placed in the temple of their god Dagon...
- In the morning Dagon was face down before the Ark of God – so they set it back up...
- The next morning Dagon was face down with its head and hands cut off!
- God also sent a plague (*hemorrhoids*) on the city of Ashdod because of the Ark...
- The sent the Ark to Ekron – but the people cried out ‘they are trying to kill us too!’

SENDING THE ARK BACK TO ISRAEL... (4 THINGS)

- **1ST – TESTING THE PLAGUE... vs. 1-9** READ: I SAMUEL 6:1-9

- 1st - The Philistines were stubborn – they did not want to submit to God... vs. 1-6
 - God ruined their land with rats (*ate their crops*) / and their people with disease...
 - Even their god – Dagon – had been decapitated by the God of Israel...
 - Yet the Ark remained in Philistine for a total of seven months!
 - Finally the Philistines asked their priests how to send the Ark back to Israel...
 - The priests told the people to send the Ark back with a ‘peace offering’...
 - They were to make 5 golden tumors (*hemorrhoids*) – and 5 golden rats...
 - Representing the plague that was decimating their cities!
 - There were 5 of them because of the 5 rulers / cities of the Philistines...
 - It was not enough for them to just sent the Ark back – they had to show repentance!
 - When we sin we can say sorry – but if we go on sinning was their real repentance...
 - True repentance means admitting what we did was wrong – sin against God...
 - True repentance needs to come with a ‘peace offering’ – a changed heart!
 - Do not be stubborn – like Pharaoh of Egypt (*350 years later they still remembered*)...
 - The Egyptians did not let Israel go until their land was completely ruined...
 - Better to send the Ark back now – before it was too late...
 - Too often rather than repent – we stubbornly hold on to our sin...
 - The only question is how much trouble do we need to get into before we give up...
 - It is always wiser to turn back to God sooner than later – before its too late!

- o 2nd - Instructions for the offering... vs. 7-9
 - The priest told the people to put the Ark on a new cart pulled by two milk cows...
 - The cows were to have never pulled a cart – and they were to have young calves...
 - The young calves were to be kept pent up – the cows hitched to the cart...
 - They would then place the Ark – along with the offerings – on the cart...
 - If the cows did not leave – stayed with their young – the plague was not from God...
 - But if the cows headed straight for Israel – then God was behind the devastation...
 - It was a test to see if the plague was a coincidence – or the hand of God...
 - We often wonder why we are going through tough times – sin or just coincidence...
 - There are no coincidences with God – He uses all thing in our live – **Romans 8:28**
 - Our hardships might be a consequence / result of some sin in our life...
 - Or our hardships might be a trial God has allowed into our life – **I Peter 4:12**
 - But it does not matter the reason for the hardship – the important thing is why...
 - We try to label things in life – we call them either Good or Bad...
 - We might think that not being punished is good – but then we might never learn...
 - We might think going through a trial is bad – but in truth is shows our hearts...
 - The truth is – it is all about drawing us closer and closer to Jesus!
- o 3rd - Do not follow the example of the world...
 - King David wanted to move the Ark into Jerusalem...
 - His desire was good - he wanted bring God closer to the people...
 - But to do it he looked to the example of the world - rather than to the Lord...
 - In **II Samuel 6:1-7** - King David brought the Ark on a cart drawn by two cows...
 - He was following the example given here by the Philistines – pagan sinners!
 - At one point on the road - a cow stumbled - the Ark tipped and almost fell...
 - A man named Uzzah reached out to steady the Ark - God struck him dead!
 - Because according to the Word - the Ark was only to be carried by poles - priests...
 - Because King David followed the example of the world - it brought death...
 - Unfortunately today many people look to the World rather than the Word...
 - They think in order to be used by God you need a college degree...
 - In order for a church to grow in size you need to entertain the people...
 - To get money - hold fundraisers to raise money for the church...
 - All ideas that come from the world - nowhere to be found in God's Word...
 - As a result many churches are not looking to the Lord/Bible - spiritual death!
- 2ND – THE RETURN OF THE ARK... vs. 10-21 **READ: I SAMUEL 6:10-21**
 - o The moment the cows were set free – they headed straight for Israel... vs. 10-16
 - The cows were lowing – crying out for their calves – but they did not stop!
 - The leaders of the Philistines followed the Ark to the border of Beth-Shemesh...
 - They were looking for an answer – they wanted the plague to stop...
 - People will go to extreme lengths to try and find peace / forgiveness from God...
 - Hindus who pull heavy carts with hooks attached to your back...
 - 'Christian' who practice flagellation and crucifixion (*usually during Lent*)
 - But all of men's ideas - all their rules and religion - lead to destruction / hell!
 - Beth Shemesh (*house of the sun*) – was a city of the Levites in southern Israel...

- The Israelites were harvesting in the fields when they saw the Ark – and rejoiced!
 - The cows stopped by a large Rock in the field of a man named Joshua...
 - The Levites in the city took the Ark down – and put it on the stone...
 - The people broke apart the cart for wood – offered the cows as a burnt offering!
- Seeing this the leaders of the Philistines went back their cities...
 - Ultimately forgiveness only comes when we come to THE Rock / Jesus...
 - There is no other way to heaven – it is only through grace by faith in Jesus!
 - **I Timothy 2:5** - “For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus.”
 - The cross is the power of God to save sinners - the only way to be saved!
- Some of the men of Beth-Shemesh looked inside the Ark – so God killed them... vs. 19-21
 - There is some argument over just how many people died as a result...
 - The Hebrew text reads that God killed ‘70 men and 50,000 men’...
 - But it is unlikely that there were even 50,070 people in the small village!
 - Some suggest that it means God killed 50 out of every 1000 men (*or 20%*)...
 - If the village had 1,400 people – it means God killed 70 men...
 - Whatever the number – the point is simple – a lot of people died...
 - It was forbidden for anyone but the priests to touch or look in the Ark...
 - **Numbers 4:20** – “They must not approach the sanctuary and look at the sacred objects for even a moment, or they will die.”
 - The people of Beth-Shemesh asked – ‘who can stand before this Holy God’...
 - God is unapproachable by sinful men – we cannot look on a Holy God...
 - If we try to come to God on our own merit – our own good deeds – death...
 - **Galatians 2:21** – “I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the good works, then Christ died in vain.”
 - If we think that we can ‘see God’ / go to heaven because of our ‘Good’ works...
 - What we are saying is that Jesus did not need to die...
 - We do not need his righteousness (*white robes*) we can provide our own...
 - There are only 2 options as to what we can ‘wear’ as we stand before a Holy God...
 - We can stand in our own clothes – our own good deed – our righteousness...
 - And we will be judged by our works – standing speechless – condemned to death...
 - Or stand in the robes of righteousness given freely to those who believe in Jesus!
- **3RD – THE REPENTANCE OF A NATION... vs. 1-6** **READ: I SAMUEL 7:1-6**
 - The people of Kiriath Jearim (*Forest*) came and took the Ark... vs. 1-4
 - Kiriath Jearim was the closest city to Beth-Shemesh – up on a forested hillside...
 - The Ark would remain there for over 40 years – until it came to Jerusalem!
 - The Ark (*and Tabernacle*) had been in Shiloh since the days of Joshua – **Joshua 18:1**
 - But it was not returned to Shiloh – because Israel was not right with God...
 - The name Shiloh means peace – and without God there was no peace in Israel...
 - As long as our relationship with the Lord is not right – we will have no peace...
 - If we are experiencing turmoil in our lives – it means we are far from God!
 - Israel mourned because they felt like God had abandoned them...
 - They had been constantly defeated by the Philistines in battle – lost the Ark...

- And when the Ark finally came back – it caused death and destruction in Israel...
- So Samuel told the people to put away their idols – and only serve the Lord...
- God had not abandoned Israel – it was Israel who had abandoned God!
- If we feel like God is not longer there – God did not leave us / we left Him...
- The solution is to get rid of whatever is distracting us – and turn back to God!
- o Samuel called all of Israel together at Mizpah... vs. 5-6
 - He called on the people to draw water and pour it out before the Lord...
 - A symbolic act meant to reflect how they were to 'pout out their hearts to God'...
 - **Psalm 62:8** – "Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge."
 - If someone is not willing to be helped – there is not much you can do to help them...
 - But if someone is willing to open up and share their problems – now there is hope...
 - In order for God to help us – we have to be honest and open up our heart to God...
 - Samuel also called on the people to fast all day...
 - It was then that they admitted they had sinned before the Lord...
 - In order to be able to pour our heart out to God – we have to make time to share...
 - Too often we get so busy we never have the time to sit down and talk to Jesus...
 - Fasting in one way in which we can remove distractions - so we can hear the Lord...
 - Rather than rushing around to prepare a meal - we skip it to spend with Jesus...
 - Rather than staying up late watching TV - we get up early to talk to God!
- 4TH – DEFEAT OF THE PHILISTINES... vs. 7-17 **READ: I SAMUEL 7:7-17**
 - o The Philistines heard all of Israel was camped at Mizpah... vs. 7-11
 - They marched out to battle against Israel – and the people were terrified...
 - Israel asked Samuel to cry out to God for them – save them from the Philistines...
 - So Samuel offered a Lamb to the Lord – and God answered him...
 - While Samuel was still offering the Lamb the Philistines arrived...
 - God thundered from heaven with a loud voice – sent the Philistines into disarray...
 - Giving Israel victory over their enemies – chasing them back to Philistine!
 - o Samuel set up an Ebenezer (*help*) stone at Mizpah... vs. 12-17
 - It was to mark the place where God helped Israel defeat their enemy!
 - When God does something 'AMAZING' - it is easy for us to be excited...
 - But how long does that last - we tend to quickly forget about what God did...
 - When we have no money - and cry out to the Lord to provide - and He does...
 - The next time we have no money - are we confident in the Lord - or do we panic...
 - The next time a difficulty arises - we need to remember what God has done for us...
 - Write it down - take a picture - pick up a stone - anything to help you remember...
 - So the next time you are faced with a challenge - a raging river in front of you...
 - You will have the confidence God parted it once before - He can do it again!
 - Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life...
 - And for the rest of his life the Philistines were unable to come against Israel...
 - Because God was for Israel as long as Samuel was judging the nation!