

Intro

- ~ The ark of God is referenced 12 times in this chapter (it was also referenced 12 times in chapter 4)
- ~ The hand of God is referenced 4 times in this chapter (this hand of God cut off the hands of Dagon)
 - 1) V6 – heavy
 - 2) v7 – sore
 - 3) v9 – against
 - 4) V11 – very heavy
- ~ 1 Samuel 4:19-22 tells us what we need to know about the ark of God = glory
- ~ Through the Mercy Seat God would commune and show man his glory
- ~ Here in this chapter we see the ark has been captured and while it may have seemed like a victory to the Philistines they're going to see that glory of God that was dismissed by Israel is also going to be against them
- ~ While God's glory was against Israel it will also be against the Philistines
- ~ God used the capture of the ark as an opportunity to reveal his glory to the Philistines
- ~ His hand is heavy - Over his children, his enemies, over idols, over creation
- ~ His hand will always be heavy and he reveals it so at different times in human history
- ~ The lamb pours out his wrath to reveal his glory (Rev 6:12-17) *And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*
- ~ 7 times total Revelation speaks of the glory of God
- ~ Here in 1 Samuel 4 and 6 – God's hand was heavy against:
 - 1 Israel (1 Samuel 4)
 - 2 Dagon (v2-5)
 - 3 the people of Ashdod (v6)
 - 4 the men of gath (v9)
 - 5 the people of Ekron (v10-12)

Body**The heavy hand of God against:**

V1 = Israel

- ~ 1 Sam 5:1 picks up where chapter 4 left off, with the many references to the ark of God
- ~ Since the ark was brought to Ashdod and this is where Dagon was perhaps this was the religious capital
- ~ This would seem to have been a great accomplishment for the Philistines – to have captured the ark of the God of the Israelites so they're going to put the ark in their religious temple
- ~ Constable - Having captured the ark, the Philistines brought it from Ebenezer to their main city, Ashdod, which stood about 30 miles to the southwest and three miles from the Mediterranean coast. Archaeologists have excavated Ashdod more extensively than any of the five major Philistine cities.

V2-5 = Dagon

- ~ They stick into their God "museum" along with Dagon
- ~ The ark was placed in the temple where Dagon was
- ~ The hand of God was against this god the Philistines worshiped called Dagon
- ~ Who is Dagon? Dagon was the principle deity of the Philistines. The popular teaching that the Philistines pictured him as being part man and part fish finds support in 1Sam 5:4. Dag in Hebrew means fishy part. Dagon (cf. Heb. dagan, grain) was a grain god whom the Philistines worshipped as the source of bountiful harvests (fertility). Worship of him began about 2500 B.C. in Mesopotamia, especially in the Middle-Euphrates region. [Note: *The New Bible Dictionary, 1962 ed., s.v. "Dagon," by Kenneth A. Kitchen.*]

~ Dagon falling on the ground to the ark was the Lord making Dagon show obeisance to the God of the ark
 ~ When that wasn't enough to get the Philistine priests asking the important question as to why this happened, the Lord then decapitated Dagon and cut off Dagon's hands and cut him off from the fish stump
 ~ What the Lord is trying to communicate to the Philistines is:

- Ps 115:1-9
- Men ought to worship the creator instead of the creature (Rom 1:25)

~ God is giving the Philistines the opportunity to see his glory and that he's the ruler and sovereign
 ~ Tom Constable "This time Dagon's head, suggestive of his sovereign control, and his palms, suggesting his power, broke off (1Sam 5:4). In the ancient Near East, warring armies cut off and collected the heads and hands of their enemies to count accurately the number of their slain (cf. 1Sam 29:4; Judg 8:6). [Note: Antony F. Campbell, The Ark Narrative, p. 86, n. 1.] Earlier Samson's defeat had involved the cutting of the hair of his head and the weakening of his hands (Judg 16:18-21). Later David would cut off Goliath's head (1Sam 17:51), and the Philistines would cut off King Saul's head (1Chr 10:10)."
 ~ "The breaking of Dagon's head and hands on the threshold of his temple rendered the threshold especially sacred. From then on the pagan priests superstitiously regarded the threshold as holy (cf. Zep 1:9). The ancients commonly treated sanctuary thresholds with respect because they marked the boundary that divided the sacred from the profane. [Note: Gordon, p. 99.] This incident involving Dagon made the threshold to his sanctuary even more sacred. This is another ironical testimony to the utter folly of idolatry and to Yahweh's sovereignty (cf. Exo_20:3)."

V6 = The people of Ashdod

~ The hand of God was against the people of Ashdod
 ~ Heavy = to be heavy, that is, in a bad sense (burdensome, severe, dull) or in a good sense (numerous, rich, honorable); causatively to make weighty (in the same two senses)
 ~ This hand of God is demonstrating that the God of the ark of Israel is the Only and True God – not Dagon
 ~ The God of Israel demonstrated his power by destroying and inflicting on the people tumors
 ~ This punishment reached even to the borders of Ashdod
 ~ The Lord demonstrated his power by forsaking Israel, manifesting his power over Dagon (their God) and them

V7,8 = Hot potato

~ Now the ark becomes a hot potato and is passed between 3 different Philistine cities
 ~ The ark goes from Ashdod to Gath and finally to Ekron
 ~ The people realize the hand of God was sore upon their god and them
 ~ They carried the ark
 ~ There is a council and it's decided at that council to send it to Gath

V9 = The men of Gath

~ Here the hand of God was heavy against the city with a very great destruction
 ~ The hand of the Lord was very great and smote the men of the city and inflicted tumors (hemorrhoids) on them

V10-12 = The people of Ekron

~ Word has spread about the power of the ark of the covenant of the Lord so that when the Ekronites see it coming to them they cried out and said the ark of God has come to us to kill us and our people
 ~ The Philistine Lords are gathered together and they determine it should be sent back to Israel because there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city
 ~ Even those who didn't die were inflicted with tumors
 ~ Their cry was so great it reached to heaven
 ~ While their cry reached to heaven it wasn't a cry for deliverance
 ~ This reminds us of the Lord punishing the earth in Revelation and people cry out to the lamb to kill them and fall on them. They know it's the wrath of the lamb

Miscellaneous Thoughts

~ A defeated Israel isn't a defeated God

~ The glory of the Lord leaves Shiloh but shows up somewhere else

~ The hand of God that disciplines Israel still showed itself powerful in Philistia

~ What the Philistines thought would bring them blessing became a curse to the museum of their gods

~ Though the Philistines saw the power of the God of the ark of Israel and its power over their god, instead of submitting to the God of Israel they decided to get rid of the God of Israel

- Instead of submitting they sent him away

~ This occasion of the heavy hand of God gives opportunity for the people to see and witness that the God of Israel is the true God – yet they don't desire to know this God so they can't come to the right conclusion about God

Things we see

1 God's sovereignty – He allowed the ark to be captured by the Philistines

2 Power of God – Toppled Dagon and inflicts the people

3 Mercy of God – This awesome show of strength, discipline and glory gave opportunity to show his mercy in drawing men to himself

Conclusion

In Ezra and Nehemiah the hand of God was upon Ezra and Nehemiah

- Ezra (he was a ready scribe in the law) led the 2nd return from captivity
- Nehemiah (cupbearer for the king) led a 3rd return from captivity and led the rebuilding project of building the wall

*Ezra 8:21-23 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. 22 For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way; because we had spoken unto the king, saying, **The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.** 23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.*

~ This verse sums up 1 Samuel 4-6 = the hand of God was against those who forsook him – they forsook fellowship

~ There's two people contrasted here – those that seek him and those that forsake him

~ Where are we at? Seeking or forsaking him

~ Let's be those who seek him for good and have his good on our lives

~ In Ezra and Nehemiah the hand of God is described as good and was upon those who seek him and give them

1) Prosperous 2) Power 3) Protection 4) Provision 5) Providence

~ Israel was in this predicament because of a fellowship failure – formal, forsake and forget

~ We have a clear picture of ark and the heavy hand of God – will we seek or forsake fellowship with God?