

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, March 14, 2010

Passage: 1 Samuel 6:1-7:2

Memory Passage: Psalm 24:3-4

TODAY: From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read 1 Samuel 6:1-3.** Sum up what had happened in 1 Samuel 4:1-11. How were the Israelites hoping to use the Ark? What was the result? What does this teach us about how they saw God?
- (b) Review chapter 5. How did the Philistines think about the God of Israel and the Ark? How did God respond now that He had shown Israel that He was not to be used? How does Philistine's response to the destruction of Dagon and the plagues teach us about the stubbornness of man's heart?
- (c) The Philistines are ready to rid themselves of the Ark. What do the Philistines feel is necessary to send with the Ark? How are the Philistines not totally wrong in knowing that they need this (Romans 2:14-16)?
- (d) Who else besides the Philistines did God need to show His power to? When we see things such as tsunamis, hurricanes, and earthquakes do you think about the possibility that it could be a message for you?
- (e) What could God be trying to remind you through power and destruction that nature can have? Do you see God as the one who is truly in control of all of these things?
- (f) *Family:* Read 1 Samuel 6:1-12. What did the Philistines do to rid themselves of the plague that afflicted them? Why did they get two cows to carry the Ark? Were they still unsure if God was really behind all of this? How did God affirm that He was really responsible for all of this? What do you think the Philistines thought about the God of Israel after this? What do you think about God after hearing this story?

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read 1 Samuel 6:4-9.** What kind of offering are the Philistines going to give? How might the mice and the plagues be connected? What else do their priests call them to do besides to make the images (v. 5)? How does this verse show that they still don't get the fact that God is really supreme?
- (b) What comparison is made in verse 7? How had the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? What was the purpose of this hardening (Exodus 14:17-18)? What was the result of this? How does God's purposes seem to be different with the Philistines?
- (c) What is the purpose behind using two milk cows that are untrained and still have calves? After all they have been through, what does this last act of testing show us about how they perceive their circumstances?
- (d) The Philistines were wanting to put God through one last test. How is this dangerous (Psalm 106:13-15)? What reasons do we have to want to test God? In what ways do we put God to the test?

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read 1 Samuel 6:10-18.** Here we have the result of the Philistines test. God answers their question of whether or not He was responsible with a resounding yes! Why is it that some Christians do not want to put such tragedies in the hand of God (Job 8:12; Romans 8:20-22)?
- (b) Why is it wise not to attribute every sort of event to the punishment of God (John 9:1-3)? How could this passage from John also be said about chapters 4-6?
- (c) How was the ark initially received by the Israelites? What impression did the Philistines leave with after seeing the ark arrive in Beth-shemesh?
- (d) We get a final explanation for why there were five golden mice and tumors. Why do we have five? Why does the writer make the last comment in verse 18? Why is it important for us to be able to have a physical reminder of what God has done (Joshua 4:20-24)? What are some reminders that you have of God's work in your life?
- (e) *Family:* Read 1 Samuel 6:13-18 and Joshua 4:20-24. Both in our passage in Samuel and in Joshua, we have these stones that serve as a reminder of what God had done. What kind of reminders does your family have of what God has done? Is there anything that God has done for your family that you need to set up a reminder for? Create your own reminder of what God has done in your home so that every time you see it you are reminded of God's gracious actions in your life.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 6:19-7:2.** We have an abrupt turn in the story here. What happens to some of the men of Beth-shemesh and why does it happen (Numbers 4:1-20)? Look up this same passage in NJB or NEB (go to www.biblegateway.com). What is the difference? According to this, why does God strike the men?

(b) This passage also has some number issues. Read this passage in the ESV or NIV and the NASB or NKJV. How do the numbers change from one to the other? The former two translations try to correct the text because 50,070 is too large of a number. Probably, the best way to understand these numbers is to read it as “70 men were killed, that is five of every 1,000”. The reason being, numbers in Hebrew can be tricky with how they relate to one another. The passage literally reads “seventy, five of/times/out of one thousand”.

(c) What does it say about the people of Beth-shemesh that they ask these two questions in response to God’s punishment for doing evil against Him and His ark? How is it that these Israelites show even less understanding than the Philistines?

(d) *Family:* Read 1 Samuel 6:19-7:2. Why is it that the Lord struck down those 70 men? What had the Lord said about looking at the Ark (Numbers 4:1-20)? How do the people respond? What should their response have been? What should our response be when we are punished for doing wrong? Pray that you can respond with repentance when you are found in the wrong.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read John 3:19-21.** Think about this passage in light of our passage this week in 1 Samuel. How does it connect with the Philistines and their experience with the Ark? What sort of evil had been exposed by God in chapters 5 and 6?

(b) How does this passage from John relate to the Israelites? How were they unwilling to let their own deeds be exposed? It is almost as if the Israelites are saying, “We could never be Holy enough for God. It is just too hard!” How does what God’s call require sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2)? Can you think of some passages that talk about this?

(c) How does God’s call, though, provide all that we need as well (Romans 5:6; Philippians 2:13)? What are some other ways in which scripture talks about God providing the very thing we need to follow Him? What makes it so difficult to take that first step of giving over to God that which we hold so dear?

(d) The men of Beth-shemesh were either completely apathetic in what they thought of God or completely unwilling to worship God the way that God had commanded them to. They wanted to have it all their own way. Is there anything that you are unwilling to follow God in? What is God calling you to change in your own life to better worship Him?

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. What attributes do you ascribe to God? Do you live in light of what you believe about God or do you find reasons for saying it is too hard or not important? Do you have an answer for the question, “who is able to stand before the Lord?”? What is it? Ask the Lord today to show you if there is anything that is keeping you from intimacy with Him.

DATE: March 14, 2010

PASSAGE: 1 Samuel 6:1-7:2

Standing Before the Lord
“Who is able to stand before the LORD?”