

I. Introduction and review.

II. The hands of Dagon and the hand of the LORD. 5:1-12

- A. The Philistines put the ark of God in the temple of their god Dagon. 5:1-2**
1. Who is Dagon?
 2. Why would the Philistines do this? Judg. 16:23-25 I Chr. 10:10
 3. They think the LORD has fallen into their hands, but the reality is that they have fallen into His. Ex. 14:4,17 Isa. 42:13 Heb. 10:31
- B. The hand of the LORD turns Dagon into Humpty Dumpty. 5:3-5**
1. Dagon has fallen down and he can't get up! 5:3a Phil. 2:8-9
 2. The fact that Dagon had to be propped back up shows that he is no god at all! 5:3b Isa. 41:7 44:9ff Ps. 115:2ff
 3. Dagon then loses his head and his hands. 5:4 17:54 31:9 Micah 1:7
 4. Yet the Philistines remain devoted to their impotent idol. 5:5
- C. The hand of the LORD is heavy upon the Philistines as He ravages them with tumors. 5:6 Ps. 78:66ff 145:20**
1. He is the one with strong hands. 5:4,6-7,9,11 12:15 Ex. 9:3
 2. The Philistines are as powerless as their idol against the LORD. 5:7 Ex. 3:20
 3. With what were they afflicted? 6:4
- D. When the ark is moved, the LORD's hand is against the other Philistine cities. v. 7-12**
1. Gad and Ekron also suffer when the ark comes to them. v. 7-10
 2. The land is thrown into utter confusion as the people cry out - *operation chaos*. v. 11b-12 Ex. 10:7 11:6 12:30ff Dt. 7:23 28:20 Isa. 22:5 15:3
 3. The Philistines determine to get rid of the ark. v. 11a
- E. The ark of the covenant may have been captured, but the LORD's glory and power are undiminished. Ex. 18:11 Ezek. 6:4-6**
1. He shows the worthlessness of all idols. Isa. 44:9-17 46:3-11
 2. The LORD alone is sovereign and free. Isa. 46:8ff
 3. What may seem at first to be a terrible defeat is God working out His perfect plan to glorify Himself and to help His people. Ro. 8:28 Gen. 50:20
 4. While God may choose to use us, He does not need us! Isa. 46:3-11
- F. Are you relying upon idols instead of the LORD?**
1. Where do we see idolatry in its literal sense today? Ex. 20:3-6
 2. What other idols do people worship? Col. 3:5 Phil. 3:19
 3. These idols will let you down as much as Dagon did. Pr. 11:4 Isa. 55:1-2
 4. How many people today, when their idols fail them, try to prop them up again rather than chopping them into pieces!
 5. Don't be hard hearted and cling to your idols, or God's hand of judgment will fall upon you. Isa. 46:12 Ps. 115:1
 6. Could your present suffering be because God's hand is heavy upon you? Ps. 32:3-4 139:23-24 Js. 5:13ff
- G. Application: There is no God but the LORD! Dt. 6:1ff John 14:6**

III. The ark of the covenant is returned to Israel. 6:1-7:2

- A. The Philistine holy men devise a plan to get rid of the ark and the plague. 6:1-9
 - 1. After being plagued for seven months, the Philistines are ready to give up. 6:1-2
 - 2. Their priests and diviners have no true validity. 6:2 Deut. 18:10ff Isa. 2:6
 - 3. They aim to propitiate the God of Israel with a guilt offering of gold tumors. 6:3-5 Lev. 5:14ff 7:1ff Ex. 3:21-22 11:2-3 12:35-36
 - 4. The priests plead with the leaders not to harden their hearts. v. 6 Ex. 8:15,32
 - 5. They test the LORD by sending the ark back on a new cart drawn by two cows.

- B. The LORD returns the ark to Israel. 6:10-18
 - 1. Why is the return of the ark a miracle? v. 10-12 Isa. 40:3-5
 - 2. The people of Israel rejoice and worship God. 6:13-15
 - 3. The Philistine lords return home, only a little bit wiser. 6:16 Mark 5:15ff
 - 4. The glory is back! 4:22

- C. Those who don't respect the holiness of the ark die. 6:19-20 Num. 4:20 II Sam. 6:6-7

- D. The ark is moved to to Kiriath-jearim. 6:21-7:2 II Sam. 6:1-19

- E. Application: Treat God's holy things as holy. Ex. 20:7

- F. Application: Don't be stubborn in your unbelief.
 - 1. Even after they have seen the glory of God, the Philistines keep propping up and gluing back together their failed idol. Rom. 1:18ff
 - 2. People today keep propping up their failed idolatrous worldview. Rom. 1:22-25

IV. Conclusion. Phil. 2:5-11 Isa. 53:10

Discussion questions

1. Why did the Philistines put the ark of God into Dagon's temple?
2. How does this passage resemble the events which led up to the Exodus from Egypt?
3. How does this passage disprove pluralism?
4. Where do we see literal idols today?
5. What other idols do people worship? What are your idols?
6. Why did the LORD cooperate with the plan of the Philistine priests?
7. Why did the people who looked into the ark die? Was this punishment too harsh?
8. In what ways do people today disrespect the holiness of God?
9. Why did the Philistines continue in their false religion, even after seeing the glory of God's holiness and the impotence of their idols? How are people today guilty of the same folly?
10. How can you reconcile God's self-sufficiency and His using us for His purposes?