

# FIRST SAMUEL

## Lesson 10: Chapter 5, God's Enemies Wrestle with the Ark of God

26 August 2016

Psalms 78:60-64 contains God's commentary of the events that took place in First Samuel chapter four.

- God forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh (vs. 60).
- God delivered his strength and glory to the enemy (vs. 61).
- God's people died by the sword and experienced his wrath (vs. 62).
- The young men were burned by fire so that the young ladies had no one to marry (vs. 63).
- The priests were killed. Widows did not lament the death of their husbands (vs. 64).

### CHAPTER 5

**VSS. 1-3** The Ark of the Covenant of God was taken by the Philistines and put in the "house of Dagon" in the land of Ashdod.

D-A-G = fish (in Hebrew).

Dagan = grain.

Dagon is a fish-god worshipped by the Philistines (and others).

People believed Dagon watched over their grain harvests and assured them a good harvest.



Merman



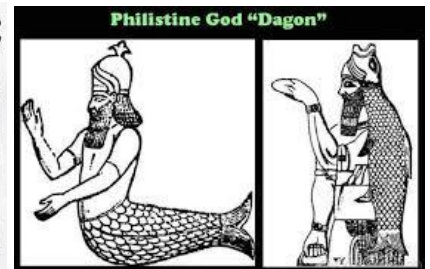
Fish Miter



Saint Ambrose



Dagon Bishop



**VS. 3** God knocked the idol of Dagon on its face. God demonstrated His power to show the Philistines how powerless Dagon was. God kicks our idols to try and get us to repent and turn to Him. Examples of modern day idols: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Philistines response:** They picked up Dagon and set him in his place, ignoring the true God.

**VS. 4** God knocked Dagon down and cut off his head and his hands.

**VS. 5** Instead of realizing Dagon was weak, feeble, and impotent, the Philistines began to worship the threshold where he "fell." They made it holy ground. (See Romans 1:28, Zephaniah 1:9).



**DON'T DISCOURAGE A NEW BELIEVER:** What if an idolater repents and turns to God? It will take them some time before they realize they need to shed their vain religious practices. Brethren need to be patient with new believers and give them time to learn the Bible and allow the Holy Spirit time to reveal the error of their ways. If you shame a person early in their conversion, you may do great harm and cause them to stumble.

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**VSS. 6-9** A lesson on the severity of God (Rom. 11:22). The gentle touch didn't work, so now God has to use more severe methods to try and get their attention.

He destroyed the people of Ashdod and gave them emerods (hemorrhoids; see vs. 9 and Psalm 78:66, "*secret parts*," "*hinder parts*"). God demonstrated their utter helplessness against Him. You can't fight God and win.

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**VSS. 10-12** The Philistines sent the ark of God to Ekron. When the Ekronites saw it, they feared and told them to send it away. The Ekronites had also suffered God's wrath and were smitten with emerods.

**Wrath: proof of God's love?** Yes! If a person keeps following a false religion, they'll go to hell. God, through love, takes actions, which are sometimes severe. He's trying to get people to turn from the paths of destruction and enter the narrow gate to life; to turn from idols and turn to Him.

**They dreaded the approach of the ark:** today people dread the approach of a Christian with a Bible. Satan's children cannot endure the presence of God.

**Why evangelism should be done outside the church:** if you stick to the Bible, unsaved people won't stay in church long enough to get saved. If you want them to stay, you'll have to compromise the truth and forsake Bible standards to make them comfortable. That's not an acceptable option. The church is primarily a place for saints to fellowship, not for the unsaved to get saved. The glory and power of God in the church house makes unsaved people nervous.

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**VS. 8** **Carry the ark to Gath:** "we don't want it (vs. 7), but we think you ought to bring it to our friends in Gath." This is a common occurrence when witnessing. People don't want to make a commitment to Christ, so they suggest you go visit their relative or someone they know.

Men started running from God in Genesis 3:8 and they haven't stopped running yet. Why not become a child of God and a friend of the Savior so that there's no reason to fear His wrath?

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