

## **The Ark Returned**

1 Samuel 5:1 – 7:2

by Don Falkos

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The Philistines put the Ark of God in the temple of their god, Dagon. The next morning, the idol of Dagon had fallen face down in front of the Ark. They set it back in its place. But the next morning, the idol of Dagon had once again fallen face down in front of the Ark. This time its head and hands had broken off.

Then the city was overrun by rats, and the people developed tumors. As soon as they moved the Ark to a different city, the rats came, and the people developed tumors. After seven months of moving the Ark from place to place, the Philistine leaders sent the Ark back to Israel.

They built a cart and put the Ark on it. Beside the Ark they placed a chest containing votive offerings – gold images of rats and gold images of the tumors that had plagued them – five of each, to represent the five Philistine kings and their territories. They took two cows that had never been yoked and hitched them to the cart. The cows pulled the cart straight along the road out of Philistine territory and onto Israelite land. They stopped in a field beside a large rock.

The people of Beth Shemesh saw the Ark and were overjoyed. Some Levites placed the Ark and the chest of gold images on the large rock. They used the wood from the cart to build a fire and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord. But the Lord killed seventy men from Beth Shemesh because they had looked into the Ark.

The Ark of the Lord was moved to Kiriath Jearim to the hillside home of Abinadab, where it stayed for twenty years.