



The Inscrutable Question: Ichabod! The Glory is Gone; Bubonic Plague Strikes Philistines for Taking Arc; National Revival under Samuel; 1 Sam 6:1-5; 7:3-4, 14

- 51- It was a vivid testimony even to such reversionists as Eli and Phinehas's wife that the glory was gone from Israel. And with the departing of the presence of the Shekinah Glory the Lord provided a window of opportunity for Israel.
- 52- For seven months the Philistines retained the ark. But its presence brought upon them the bubonic plague as can be deduced by the information provided in:

1 Samuel 6:1 - Now the ark of the Lord had been in the country of the Philistines seven months.

v. 2 - And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? Tell us how we shall send it to its place."

v. 3 - And they said, "If you send away the ark to the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but you shall surely return to Him a guilt offering. Then you shall be healed and it shall be known to you why His hand is not removed from you."

v. 4 - Then they said, "What shall be the guilt offering which we shall return to Him?" And they said, "Five golden tumors and five golden mice according to the number of the lords of the Philistines, for one plague [**bubonic**] was on all of you and your lords.

v. 5 - "So you shall make likenesses of your tumors and likenesses of your mice that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will ease His hand from you, your gods [**Dagon, Baal, & Ashtoroth**], and your land."

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. "plague":

Plague is a term now confined to a specific infectious fever caused by the bacillus transmitted by the rat flea. It is primarily a disease of rodents, and epidemics in human beings originate in contact with the fleas of infected rodents. Bubonic (plague) is characterized by swelling of the lymph nodes (buboes). The plague as spread from rats to man in crowded urban areas is sometimes called urban plague; plague in desert or rural areas where the human population is sparse but the wild rodent population large and infected may be called woodland or field (plague).

In the 14th century, when this disease was known as the Black Death, some plague infections were bubonic and some were pneumonic. The number of deaths was enormous, reaching in various parts of Europe two-thirds or three-fourths of the population in the first pestilence. It has been calculated that one-fourth of the population of Europe, or 25,000,000 persons, died from plague during the great epidemic.

The Great Plague of London in 1664-65 resulted in more than 70,000 deaths in a population estimated at 460,000. An outbreak in Canton and Hong Kong in 1894 left 80,000 to 100,000 dead, and within 20 years the disease spread from the southern Chinese ports throughout the whole world, resulting in more than 10,000,000 deaths.

Plague is primarily a disease of rodents and man enters only accidentally into the usual cycle. Under certain environmental conditions it reaches epizootic proportions (affecting many animals in any region at the same time). In some areas plague-infected rats from ships spread the infection in ports, where it became epizootic.

Spread of the infection among domestic rodents in the vicinity of human habitations creates conditions favorable for outbreaks of human plague, for when an epizootic outbreak reduces the rodent population, fleas from the dead animals fail to find another rodent host and thus begin to infest man. At first the cases are sporadic, but under suitable conditions large numbers of persons may be included.



Bubonic plague constitutes about three-fourths of plague cases. Most characteristic is the early appearance of buboes, which are usually distributed in the groin and armpits.

- 53- The bubonic plague had ravaged every location the Philistines took the ark: Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron—five cities and five “lords” or “mayors” along with their citizens.
- 54- The leaders hurriedly complied with the suggestion of their priests and sent the ark back to Israel on a cart drawn by two cows and accompanied by a box containing the golden tumors and mice.
- 55- When the cart arrived at the village of Beth-shemesh / Beth-SHE-mesh / the cows entered the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite and came to a stop by a large stone.
- 56- Joshua and his neighbors split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord. The Levites then came and took the ark and placed it on the stone where the citizens of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the Lord.
- 57- The ark was later taken to a location north of Beth-shemesh called Kiriath-jearim / KER-i-ath-JEE-a-rim / where it was placed in the house of Abinodab and his son Eleazar was commissioned to keep it. It remained there for twenty years.
- 58- Once Samson achieved the proper age he became the last judge of Israel and led them in a revival that motivated the restoration of the ritual plan of God to the land.

1 Samuel 7:3 - Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, “If you return to the Lord with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your hearts to the Lord and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.

v. 4 - So the sons of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtaroth and served the Lord alone.

- 58- The glory had returned to Israel. She was given a costly warning about her spiritual decline and after 20 years of testing recovered under the ministry of Samson.
- 59- Israel’s Ichabod is a warning to us today. The United States could be experiencing its own Ichabod: the glory of God is not yet gone but the glory of client nation America is certainly on the wane.
- 60- There was apparently a big enough Pivot in Israel to sustain it during the twenty years of testing from the Philistines. They ultimately were given victory over them at the Battle of Mizpah, the account given in 1 Samuel 7:5-14. The results of that victory shed light on current events:

1 Samuel 7:14 - And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even to Gath; and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines.

- 61- Israel still struggles today over the same land taken from them by the Philistines, a land called by them Palestine, a title given it on another occasion by the Romans in the time of our Lord, and a name misappropriated by the current terrorists who badger Israel for a land that was never theirs.
- 62- The glory will continue to be gone from Israel until the Lord restores it at the Second Advent. But the Ichabod of America need not be terminal. We can join its Pivot since we still have the freedom to continue our advance. So do many others throughout the land.
- 63- We can assist our nation’s recovery and prevent an Ichabod from occurring in our generation. The solution is found in our continued intake and application of the Word of God taught in this place.