

## BRIBES AND PERVERTED JUDGMENT

### 1 SAMUEL 6:1 – 8:22

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~ Our Spiritual Safari concluded our previous report with the Philistines having captured the Ark of the Covenant. Israel had foolishly taken the Ark into battle expecting there was some supernatural power in having this golden box by their side. We saw how the value wasn't in the box, but in the Person and presence of the True and Living God. Even though Israel had maintained a holy place, it wasn't recognized by the Lord; it was only holy when the glory of God made His presence there. Unfortunately, God wasn't meeting them in the tabernacle at this time because they had totally polluted and perverted the Mosaic Law. If you have not read our previous report, I suggest you go back and do so now. Well, the Philistines were eager to get possession of the Ark but, once they had it, they found out quickly they had something they didn't want. That's when they decided the best thing to do was to get rid of it as quickly as possible. Remember, the Philistine idol Dagon fell over and broke when they put the Ark near it, and only a stump remained; so, the Philistines moved the Ark from place to place until they just couldn't handle it any more....

## VI

***1 And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months.***

***2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.***

***3 And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.***

***4 Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords.***

~ This speaks of the filth and vileness of worship by these people. Today, many people wonder why God put the Philistines out of the land – well, it's God's land to begin with – but, after reading this, it's no big surprise. That tiny piece of real estate is the cross-roads of the world, and the people there influence all nations tremendously. The Philistines were and are despicable people who do not regard the True and Living God, so He drove them out. They had an opportunity to turn to God, but they rejected Him.

So, the Philistine's sent back five golden emerods – and that means hemorrhoids, by the way. They were truly disgusting people. The five mice speak of total depravity in the land; the emerods reveal their ordure minds. Now, I'm not going into detail on all of this, but it would make a good study for the serious student of Scripture to undertake....

***5 Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.***

***6 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?***

***7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:***

***8 And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.***

**9 And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: it was a chance that happened to us.**

**10 And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home:**

**11 And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.**

**12 And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh.**

**13 And they of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.**

**14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD.**

**15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD.**

**16 And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.**

~ One positive thing the children of Israel did was refuse to receive anything from the Philistines, as they chopped up the wood from the cart and killed the cow. The Philistines were just happy to see the Ark go back, and they went home. However, the subsequent actions of Israel reveal they are still very far from God. This is when God places a judgment on the men of Bethshemesh....

**17 And these are the golden emerods which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;**

**18 And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great stone of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: which stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite.**

**19 And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter.**

**20 And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?**

**21 And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.**

~ So, when the Ark returns to Israel, they begin having their own problems with it. See, they are doing the thing which God had strictly forbidden. When the Ark was moved on the wilderness march, it was completely covered. The Ark was only to be touched by the Levites and only to be seen by the high priest; and that was only once each year, you will recall. What we have here is blatant and definite disobedience to God. The fact that they looked into the Ark and saw something is beside the point. Well, they're superstitious themselves about the judgment of God so, to get rid of the Ark, they tell other tribes to come get it. What this all means is that Israel is just not ready to properly handle the Ark. They want to send the Ark to Kirjathjearim because they are not ready to turn back to God and worship Him the way He had instructed them to. This is critical to note and understand....

## VII

***1 And the men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.***

***2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.***

~ It was a full twenty years after this incident that the children of Israel began to turn away from Ashteroth and Baalim to serve the True and Living God. They were in complete and total idolatry during those years. Two full decades elapsed before they came to the place where they desired the Lord again. They were being defeated in one battle after another during this time and they were very much discouraged. This marks the beginning of Samuel's great ministry; and if he was twenty to twenty-five years old in our last report, then that means he is forty - or almost fifty – now. We need to get back to the Lord today, friends. Well, if we want to get in the door of the Father's house we MUST come in through the Word of God! I think there is a heart hunger for God today as people are tired of eating the husk the pigs eat in the far country and not the corn. I believe that is a true statement about God's people today....

***3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.***

***4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.***

***5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.***

***6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have***

***sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.***

~ Here we see Samuel as prophet and judge of the nation Israel. We're seeing Israel turning back to God at this time that we are studying, and we see Samuel praying for them. They are confessing their sins. Confessing our sins is the only way back to God for His people today, friends. There is simply no other way back. I hear about all the methods and how there are many paths to the Father – well, no, there's only one way – the Lord Jesus Christ – and He is our Holy High Priest. That means God's people need to go to Him and begin in confession. Until we see ourselves in the light of the Word of God, there is not going to be fellowship with the Father. You can just write that down. When we do realize our utter failure and how short we come of the glory of God THEN we can realize the Blood of Christ continually cleanses us from all sins and unrighteousness; and THAT is when we can bow and confess. Again, there's just no other way....

***7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.***

***8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.***

***9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.***

***10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.***

***11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar.***

**12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.**

**13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.**

**14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.**

~ God gave Israel this victory, and it was the first victory they have had in a very long time. The Philistines will never again be as dominant as they were before this battle, either. This is a significant and truly great work God did for His people at this particular time. They had been in rebellion and abject idolatry; but the moment they made an attempt to turn back to God by confessing they had sinned, God was right there for them. The "stone of Ebenezer" in verse twelve means 'a stone of help.' I look at this stone as a stone of remembrance as it looked to the past. It was also a stone of recognition for the present; and a stone of revelation that looked to the future.

I can see how God has helped me in my own life right up to this present moment. I think we can all look back over the past and see how God has begun a good work in us; well, this passage tells us that He will continue to perform that good work until the day of the Lord Jesus Christ! Has God brought you up to this point? Is God leading you and guiding your life right now? Can you recognize His work in your life today? If He has, then you can also say "... *hitherto hath the Lord helped me.*" Memories are played on the keyboard of the past. David said, "... *give thanks unto the Lord for He is good; let the redeemed of the Lord say so!*" Personally, I want to say so right now in my report.

A businessman long ago said the use of time can be likened to the banking industries terminology; yesterday is a cancelled check; tomorrow is a promissory note; today is cash on the barrel head – so spend it wisely! The

future should be very interesting to us as Christian's because we will spend the rest of our lives there. I, personally, want to be sure of what kind of future it's going to be for me. The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. See, all things work together for good to those who are in Christ Jesus and love God. Dr. Torrey said Romans eight verse twenty-eight is a soft pillow for a tired heart. It is, likewise, a stone of revelation for us. We all need an Ebenezer stone placed down in our lives today. I have one in my life; do you....

***15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.***

***16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.***

***17 And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.***

## **VIII**

***1 And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.***

***2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba.***

***3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.***

~ This brings us to a new section of the Scriptures concerning Samuel. God will say later through Hosea, "I gave thee a king in mine anger and took him away in my wrath." Remember, Samuel was a great man of God, brought up in the tabernacle where he witnessed firsthand the foolishness of the sons of Eli. Samuel also saw God absolutely cut them off. When Samuel made his sons judges over Israel, he made his first big mistake. These boys were dishonest, wholly unworthy and completely incompetent to be judges. What emerges is a picture of Samuels household; he was a great man, yes – but – he was a complete failure as a father. Eli had been a



complete failure as a father, too – as was David. That’s always been very strange to me as far as Scripture is concerned. Let’s move on....

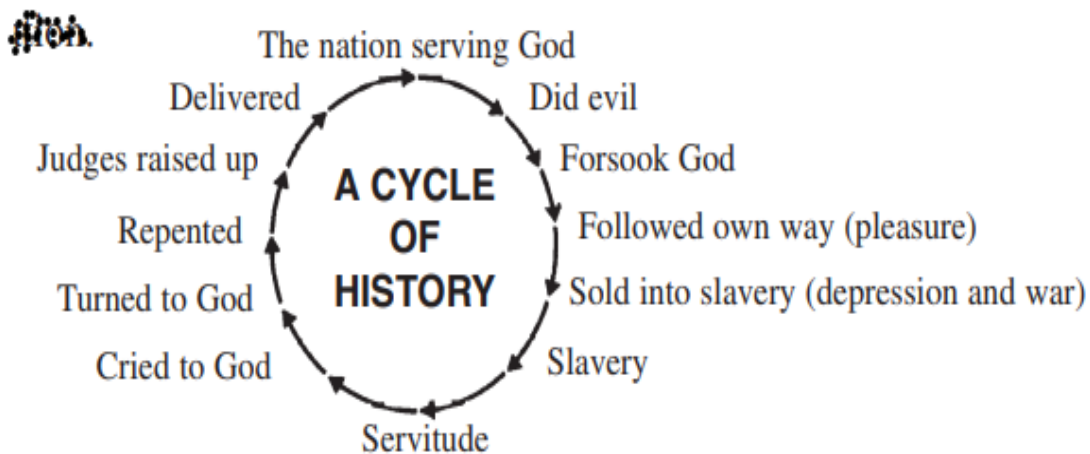
**4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,**

**5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.**

**6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.**

**7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.**

~ If you were with us on safari in our consideration of the Book of Judges, you’ll remember our philosophy of history. If not, the chart is below. Well, Israel is still on that wheel; here, they had confessed their sins and had gotten a great victory, but they are right back to square one rejecting Him now! Round and round they go. Of course, Samuel, having made his sons judges, gave them their excuse to rebel; but it was not a legitimate excuse to turn away from God again – God tells Samuel they aren’t rejecting Samuel – they are rejecting Him....



**8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.**

**9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.**

**10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king.**

**11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.**

**12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.**

**13 And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.**

**14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.**

**15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.**

**16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.**

**17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.**

**18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.**

**19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;**

**20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.**

**21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD.**

**22 And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.**

~ Our safari closes out this leg of our expedition with Israel wanting a king – and a king they are going to get! Just as in the days of Moses, with the manna; the children of Israel had their request granted by God when they asked for meat. God gave them meat - but sent leanness to their souls. That's a powerful lesson to learn. I don't want to be that person. How often do we ask God for things that we think are a blessing, but He has something better for us? If we would only submit our wills to Him we wouldn't experience leanness of our souls. Are you experiencing leanness of your soul today? The Psalmist said, *"my soul clings to the dust; revive me according to Thy Word, oh, Lord!"* If leanness has come to your soul your response needs to be to seek forgiveness through confession of sins in prayer. That is where you'll find life, strength and satisfaction, my beloved – in the Word of God! Nowhere else. The Bible provides everything we need to know for living a victorious Christian life. Alright, we're going to leave off here; but, in our next report, we're going to see Saul made King of Israel ~