

MAY 9

1 Samuel 5-7

It is interesting to note here that the Philistines could have and should have followed up this victory, but didn't. In this last battle with Israel, they slaughtered 30,000 men. We can't even grasp that kind of loss of life in a battle. Yet God had now accomplished His task and had no desire for the Philistines to go further, and He had no need of an army to stop them. As disciples, we need to develop a mature perspective of God's work in the world among nations: He allows and disallows. The real issues in play on this planet are above politics and human rights.

1 Samuel 5

Vs. 1-5 I don't think Dagon fell down before the ark as in worship. I think if it was next to the ark, the image just fell down away from the ark. If the hands and head were over the threshold of the entrance of the temple, the statue couldn't have been facing the ark. Some preachers would have the statue bowing before the ark.

This little tradition of jumping over the threshold is interesting; because surprisingly, when you read through Malachi, years ahead in Israel's history and months ahead in your reading, you'll find it there too. Not many people link that reference back to this, only because they don't read their Bibles through like you are doing.

Vs. 6-12 Just as God had used Samson to terrify the Philistines into inactivity, God was now doing the same thing through the ark. Everywhere the ark was sent, men were dying and all the people were afflicted by tumors and by a massive mouse outbreak. This last thing was anything but "Disney." It would have been horrific, from devastating their food supply to keeping them awake at night, to keeping them on edge every minute of every day. What an ingenious thing for God to do.

On a funny note, for us, not for the Philistines, according to the [Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT \(BKC-OT\)](#), p. 437, the Hebrew indicates that the tumors were predominately in the rectal area. That would take the fight out of anyone.

1 Samuel 6

Vs. 1-12 Notice in 6:6 how the Philistines believe in, and take to heart, what God did in Egypt 350 years earlier. They actually had some of the information correct too, knowing that Pharaoh had hardened his heart. Too bad Israel didn't have this kind of faith. But actually, this wasn't real faith. True faith would have led the Philistines and Israel to reject all impostors and worship and follow the only true God. This culture was very eclectic religiously.

Vs. 7-12 Using the two "milk" cows was a test to make sure that the Lord was behind this whole thing. The likelihood of them wandering away from their calves was not good. So in all of this, it was a mini-miracle because God was in it, and therefore, proof to the Philistines that they had done the right thing.

Vs. 13-21 Notice that there were Levites present, living among the people. Apparently the ark still had the carrying poles. I wonder about the sacrifice they sacrificed there. Why didn't they take the ark back to Shiloh and sacrifice there? It should have been forbidden to offer sacrifices any place other than the tabernacle.

Vs. 19-21 Joy turned to sadness. Finally, people could sneak a peek into the ark, forgetting of course that God was present and watching. That is the sadness in all of this. The personal love for God and understanding of His presence was gone. They didn't really respect or fear Him. Now they really feared God, but at the price of 70 men.

1 Samuel 7

V. 1 This will probably blow your mind. The ark will never return to Shiloh. According to the BKC-OT, p. 438, Shiloh was overrun sometime after the battle and the tabernacle was destroyed. The tabernacle "concept" must have fallen into disuse. The ark stayed at Kiriath-jearim (KJ) for 20 years, but this time is just a designation for how long it took the people to come to the place of wanting to worship and serve the Lord alone. It took 20 years of the ark being separated from the tabernacle, and 20 years of Samuel teaching, to make the people understand they needed to reunite under the Lord. According to the BKC-OT, p. 438, the ark was at KJ about 100 years, until David brought it to Jerusalem.

Vs. 2-4 Here is another shock. *Twenty years* pass between v. 1 and v. 2. We haven't yet heard of the ministry of Samuel, going from town to town in a circuit, teaching the people and leading them in worship. Apparently that was what Samuel had been doing in Israel, and it was probably one of the factors that finally brought the people to the place of returning to God.

Vs. 5-17 During this period of time the Philistines ruled, but they were afraid of the Lord and kept their distance. Finally, when it seemed to them that there was an "unlawful assembly" that could unite Israel, the Philistines decided to crush it and keep Israel docile.

Vs. 8-11 This shows that Samuel was no military strategist. This assembly was true in heart and the people confessed their sin, repented and pleaded with Samuel to intercede for them. During this assembly the Philistines must have suddenly appeared as an army and the people only had one place to turn, to God. So what does Samuel do? He sacrifices to the Lord. That isn't something they teach at West Point. And then God turned up the surround sound and blasted the Philistines away.

Vs. 12-14 Samuel set up a monument to commemorate this victory, and from this point on, Israel was never ruled by the Philistines again. During the judgeship of Samuel, they stayed out of Israel, and it says that God afflicted them.

Vs. 15-17 Samuel visited and offered sacrifices in these towns as main centers where he taught the people. Samuel took a sacrifice to Bethlehem when he anointed David. Ramah had been Samuel's family's hometown and now it became the center of worship for Israel, and he built this altar in Ramah. The tabernacle and everything in it had been destroyed. According to the way God set everything up, Israel could not be Israel without the tabernacle. It was the center point for the nation and their unity in Yahweh. Yet, through this kind of traveling ministry, the people in each region could be brought together in worship and God allowed it.

Looking at this last battle, it is interesting that when Israel was worshiping God, God did amazing things to confirm their faith and protect them. More of this would have happened if they would have worshiped God in spirit and in truth. For us in the harvest, we have some promises that we never take advantage of because we are busy. I was reading today where Jesus said, "If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him." That is a real time promise, but it only holds for those who are actively following the Lord in the harvest. In the harvest we are with our Lord and He builds our faith by letting us see blessings that are only found in the harvest.

John 6:1-21

Time-wise, if the event at the beginning of John 5 is a Passover, then a year has gone by. Verse 4 says that the Passover (another Passover) was at hand. This then would be the third Passover during Jesus' ministry, and so, about a year before he died and was raised.

During this year Jesus has healed the man with the withered right hand, chosen His disciples, given the Sermon on the Mount, healed the centurion's slave and raised the widow's son, been questioned by John the Baptist, been anointed by a sinful woman, freed Mary of Magdalene of seven spirits, been accused of being possessed of Satan, taught many parables, stilled the sea, freed the man with the Legion, healed the woman with the hemorrhage, raised Jairus' daughter, healed two blind men, cast out a dumb demon, been rejected a second time in Nazareth, and sent

out his Twelve to preach and heal. While the disciples were gone, John the Baptist was killed by Herod. Now the disciples have returned to Jesus, and have tried to go to a lonely place; but the crowds have pursued them. The disciples are emotionally exhausted and need rest, but they won't get it today.

Jesus will not be in Jerusalem for this Passover, that we know of. The multitudes are mobilized to go to Jerusalem, but this is the pinnacle of Jesus' popularity. Knowing what Jesus could do for the sick and needy, the crowd will make a detour on their way to Jerusalem.

Vs. 1-4 This is leading up to the only event that is in all four Gospels, the feeding of the 5000.

Vs. 5-9 Notice that it is Andrew who came with the boy and his lunch.

Vs. 10-14 This was actually training for the disciples for the future. Based on what Jesus was doing here, they would know what to do in Acts 2 when 3000 people would give their lives to Christ. This crowd, with women and children, numbered near 15,000. Along with what Jesus did here is the lesson to the disciples that they gathered up 12 baskets of fragments. They ended with more than they began. God's ability is unmatched and so our trust in Him should be very generous, even when He doesn't meet our expectations.

V. 15 Jesus is in "stealth" mode, avoiding the people. He sends the disciples out on the sea and goes back up on the mountain, so the people see they are separated.

Vs. 16-21 The people wait for Jesus; but at night, He walks down to the sea, slipping in and out of shadows and begins walking across the sea to meet up with the disciples. If you put all of the Gospels together you get a little more detail, including Peter walking on the water. This will be a very important event. None of the other writers tells us what happened immediately after this. The people were fooled, but not for long. When they catch up to Jesus, instead of making Him their king, they will begin to leave Him.

As disciples, we learn to serve God but not to trust ourselves, or to understand our service according to the praise of people. Sin is powerful, and even the people we serve and help can become indifferent or turn away. Our strength is in following our Lord and knowing His love. He is the One who gives us our direction and focus. Because of Him we can serve and love without needing the praise and acceptance of people.

Psalm 106:13-31

Reading this makes me think of the faulty reasoning of "seeing is believing." It didn't work for Israel. There has to be the need for deliverance, repentance and believing and doing the Word.

Vs. 13-23 In spite of the great signs God did to show the people they could depend on Him and to show them He was to be awed, they still rebelled. Sin is powerful. Verse 21 seems to be the point in this section. The result was that Moses had to plead with God not to destroy them. How would you like to sing this in a worship service?

Vs. 24-27 Verse 24 of the song tells how they despised God's plan and the land He had promised Abraham.

Vs. 28-29 And as if that weren't enough, although they saw the daily death toll because of the rebellion at Kadesh-barnea, they still decided to rebel at Baal-peor.

Vs. 30-31 This is the only bright spot in this part of the song. Phinehas intervened and his faith *was counted to him as righteousness*.

I think the point of singing this psalm was to make the people humble and repentant. We are all capable of the same things.

Proverbs 14:32-33

I think the refuge that is found in the death of the wicked is "justice," knowing that God is just and that righteousness will win.

I like the idea of wisdom resting in the heart of a person. Wisdom is so much a part of a person that it naturally comes out in all situations.