

## 1 Samuel Lesson 7 The Heavy Hand of the Lord on Idols and Idolaters

### Key Themes in 1 Samuel :

- The connection between our obedience and our relationship to God
- God opposes the proud and exalts the humble
- Despite human evil, God is working out His purposes in history
- Kingship in Israel and God's plan to one day raise up an anointed divine king

### Background:

**Ashdod, Gath and Ekron:** Three of the 5 principal cities of the Philistines.

**Dagon:** The chief deity of the Philistines, often associated with Baal, the Canaanite God.

**Holy Wars:** In the ancient near east most wars were considered "holy wars". Standards or statues of the deity whom the people worshiped were usually carried by the various armies to symbolize their deity's presence. The Philistines viewed their military victory over Israel as a victory of their god, Dagon, over Israel's God, Yahweh.

**Heads and Hands:** The head of a conquered foe was typically cut off and displayed as evidence of his death. The cutting off of the hands of a conquered foe, demonstrated that foe's powerlessness.

**Threshold of a Pagan Temple:** It was generally made of a single stone and considered holy. Superstitious belief held that stepping on the threshold would allow demons that haunted the doorway to gain admission.

### Key Words:

**hand: Strong's H3027 "yad"** literally the word means a hand. However, the word is often used in reference to God's hand and symbolizes His power, authority and strength.

### Read 1 Samuel 5:1-12

1. According to 1 Samuel 5:1-2 what did the Philistines do with the ark of the covenant after they captured it? What would have been the significance of this to the pagan Philistines?

**Application:** The god Dagon was on the main altar, most likely elevated. The ark was placed in a lesser position beside Dagon. We often do the same to Yahweh, putting him in a lesser place than the idols in our lives. What are some idols we often "worship" that can easily take Yahweh's place on the thrones of our lives?

2. How did Yahweh show his power and authority over the idol, Dagon, in 5:3-5? What was God trying to communicate to the Philistines?

3. Beginning with 5:6 and continuing through 5:12, how did the "hand of the Lord" deal with the idolaters in each of the three cities Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron? What do you notice about the progression of the judgment?

4. How did the Philistines respond to God's "heavy hand" on them and how should they have responded? How should we respond as Christians when God disciplines us.

5. What does 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Revelation 21:8, 22:15 have to say about idolaters and God's judgment?

**Application:** As Christians what should we do if we find ourselves engaged in idolatry? What are some possible consequences of continuing in this sin?

6. Overall what do you learn about God in this chapter?

