

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, March 7, 2010

Passage: 1 Samuel 5

Memory Passage: Isaiah 44:9

TODAY: From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 5:1-5.** Here we have the Philistines bringing the Ark of the covenant back to their principal city of Ashdod. What we know about Dagon, their principal idol, is that he was probably considered a god of grain or of weather. What do you think the Philistines were hoping to prove by bringing the ark into the temple of Dagon?

(b) Why might the time of day be significant for when God chose to make the idol bow to the Ark (Exodus 29:39; Numbers 28:23; Psalm 5:3; 88:13)? What is the significance of Dagon falling on its face before the Ark (Genesis 24:25; Nehemiah 8:6)?

(c) The Philistines were probably thinking that by placing the Ark before their god that it showed how superior Dagon was. How does our world so often try to make God the subject of their own idols? What are some examples?

(d) What has God said he will do to all such things (Psalm 8:6; Mark 12:36; 1 Corinthians 15:2)? So it isn't a matter of if God will rule over everything but when. The Philistines expected the Ark to come into the center of their worship but expected to be able to go about their business. How is what the Philistines did not much different from how we can treat God? What warning does Christ give us in Luke 16:13?

(e) *Family:* Read 1 Samuel 5:1-5. What do you think the Philistines were hoping to prove by bringing the ark into the temple? How does God show that Dagon is in no way superior to Him? What does it mean to fall on one's face before someone? Why would it mean that? Why is humility essential for worship? Pray that the Lord would give you a heart to worship Him with all that you do.

READ THE PASSAGE



DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 5:1-5.** We left Dagon lying on the floor yesterday so to speak. What do you think is significant about how the Philistines respond to the first falling of Dagon? How would you have responded if your idol (not a small one either) was found face down on the ground one morning? How might this reflect Proverbs 26:11?

(b) How do the Philistines find Dagon on the next day? What is significant about the cutting off of Dagon's hands (Psalm 10:12; 18:0; 28:4-5)? What is significant about cutting off Dagon's head (what role does the head play in these passages: Psalm 3:3; 18:43; 27:6)? In what instances, did this sort of thing happen to people (1 Samuel 17:51; 2 Samuel 4:12)?

(c) There is an aside that is mentioned in this passage explaining why they jump over the threshold of the temple. How does this note give insight into what Zephaniah meant in Zephaniah 1:9? There is little to suggest why the writer would put such a note in, except as Zephaniah points out, that Israelites are adopting this pagan ritual which was founded on the basis of idolatry impotence compared with the Lord.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 5:6-9.** There is a question here to what actually afflicted the Philistines. Most translations have tumors and KJV has an older interpretation of hemorrhoids. The term is very unclear. It could have buboes (that is a real word) or sores that appeared on skin. Needless to say all of these things sound bad. How might have God spread this disease amongst the Philistines (1 Samuel 6:4)? This has led a few people to speculate that this is the first recorded occurrence of the bubonic plague.

(b) We are not given the reason why they decided to move the Ark to Gath, but how is their response similar to how many people treat conviction of sin or God's punishment (Isaiah 2:10; Jeremiah 23:24)?

(c) What is to be the proper response to God when we feel his discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11; Revelation 3:19)? What often keeps us from responding in this way to His correction? Is there anything that you are running from God in?

READ THE PASSAGE

(d) *Family*: Read 1 Samuel 5:6-12. What happened to the Philistines? How did they try to fix their problem? Why didn't it work? How are we to respond to God's discipline when we receive it (Revelation 3:19)? Is there anything that you need forgiveness for today? Pray that the Lord would give you a soft and ready heart to turn toward Him in repentance.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 5:10-12.** What is the response of the city of Ekron almost immediately? What is the outcome of the movement of the Ark to this third Philistine city?

(b) Think back: How did the Ark come to get captured in the first place (1 Samuel 4:1-12)? Why was it being used in such a way? What has God ended up doing in the end?

(c) What is another purpose God had besides the destruction of the Philistines in allowing the Israelites to be conquered and the Ark lost (Isaiah 48:10-11)? Would God have gotten the full glory if He had allowed the Ark to be used in such a way?

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Isaiah 44:9-18.** This is a famous section of scripture in which Isaiah mocks the fashioning of idols. What is his argument for the foolishness of worshipping idols? Which of his illustrations seems to be the most ridiculous to you?

(b) We might not fashion idols out of stone or wood anymore, but how do we fashion idols today? What would be some modern day equivalents to what Isaiah has said?

(c) How does Isaiah end this section? How is that true about us when we try to follow after our own desires? What things do you tend to make into idols (job, family, money, t.v, people, status, reputation)? How do these things become ridiculous when we think of them in light of God?

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. This passage should make us look and evaluate both our society and ourselves. Are we as blind as the Philistines were? What are the idols of our society? How have you seen God make fools of others idols or even your own idolatry? What can we do to be in right relationship with God?

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The Hand of God

“the cry of the city went up to heaven”