

撒母耳記上 6:1-21

約櫃運回以色列地

1. 非利士人送禮賠罪運回約櫃 (1-18)

6:1 耶和華的約櫃在非利士人之地七個月。

6:2 非利士人將祭司和占卜的聚了來，問他們說：「我們向耶和華的約櫃應當怎樣行？請指示我們用何法將約櫃送回原處。」

6:3 他們說：「若要將以色列神的約櫃送回去，不可空空地送去，必要給他獻賠罪的禮物，然後你們可得痊癒，並知道他的手為何不離開你們。」

6:4 非利士人說：「應當用甚麼獻為賠罪的禮物呢？」他們回答說：「當照非利士首領的數目，用五個金痔瘡，五個金老鼠，因為在你們眾人和你們首領的身上都是一樣的災。」

6:5 所以當製造你們痔瘡的像和毀壞你們田地老鼠的像，並要歸榮耀給以色列的神，或者他向你們和你們的神，並你們的田地，把手放輕些。

6:6 你們為何硬著心像埃及人和法老一樣呢？神在埃及人中間行奇事，埃及人豈不釋放以色列人，他們就去了嗎？

6:7 現在你們應當造一輛新車，將兩隻未曾負軛有乳的母牛套在車上，使牛犢回家去，離開母牛。

6:8 把耶和華的約櫃放在車上，將所獻賠罪的金物裝在匣子裏，放在櫃旁，將櫃送去。

6:9 你們要看看：車若直行以色列的境界到伯示麥去，這大災就是耶和華降在我們身上的；若不然，便可以知道不是他的手擊打我們，是我們偶然遇見的。」

6:10 非利士人就這樣行：將兩隻有乳的母牛套在車上，將牛犢關在家裏，

6:11 把耶和華的約櫃和裝金老鼠並金痔瘡像的匣子都放在車上。

6:12 牛直行大道，往伯示麥去，一面走一面叫，不偏左右。非利士的首領跟在後面，直到伯示麥的境界。

6:13 伯示麥人正在平原收割麥子，舉目看見約櫃，就歡喜了。

6:14 車到了伯示麥人約書亞的田間，就站住了。在那裏有一塊大磐石，他們把車劈了，將兩隻母牛獻給耶和華為燔祭。

6:15 利未人將耶和華的約櫃和裝金物的匣子拿下來，放在大磐石上。當日伯示麥人將燔祭和平安祭獻給耶和華。

6:16 非利士人的五個首領看見，當日就回以革倫去了。

6:17 非利士人獻給耶和華作賠罪的金痔瘡像，就是這些：一個是為亞實突，一個是為迦薩，一個是為亞實基倫，一個是為迦特，一個是為以革倫。

6:18 金老鼠的數目是照非利士五個首領的城邑，就是堅固的城邑和鄉村，以及大磐石。這磐石是放耶和華約櫃的，到今日還在伯示麥人約書亞的田間。

1『在非利士人之地』

這裡非利士人之地應該是指著以革倫。當時約櫃由亞實突運到迦特，再運到以革倫。參 5:10, 6:16。凡約櫃所到之地，神的懲罰也隨之臨到。除了生痔瘡之外，還有老鼠破壞非利士地。參 6:5。甚至城中的人有因驚慌而死的 (5:11)。

非利士另外兩座大城，迦薩和亞實基倫，雖然約櫃沒有運到那裡（至少聖經沒有記載），但也不能倖免於難。參 6:4 當照非利士首領的數目，用五個金痔瘡，五個金老鼠，因為在你們眾人和你們首領的身上都是一樣的災。

『七個月』

我們可以想像這段時間當中他們的境況如何。他們的神不能庇護他們，因為連他們所祭拜的大衞神都斷手折頸撲倒在約櫃前面；他們的身體生瘡；他們的土地被老鼠破壞；他們的精神受折磨（5:12 合城呼號，聲音上達於天）。當一個人、一個社會、一個國家得罪神，被神懲罰的時候，結局是非常可怕又可悲的。我們的神是恆久忍耐的神，但他也是公義的審判者。當人硬著心不悔改，招惹神憤怒降罰的時候，也許就沒有機會迴轉了。

約櫃在非利士地從哪裡遷到哪裡？總共待了多久的時間？

這段時間當中發生了哪些事情？影響到哪些人？

我如果是非利士人，我的感覺是什麼？跟現代可以連在一起嗎？

2『將祭司和占卜的聚了來』

這些祭司乃是非利士人所拜的偶像廟裡的祭司，而這些占卜的自然就是那些所謂算命先生，或是觀兆通靈的人士，如同台灣廟宇裡面的乩童一樣。全世界所有民族都有類似的情形。當人碰到超出自己能力所能及的事情的時候，很自然的就會去向神明求助。別人是尋求假神，我們卻是來到永生的父神面前得安慰，得幫助。聖經明文禁止占卜的事，參申 18:9-14。

『請指示我們用何法將約櫃送回原處』

非利士人很清楚知道他們的災殃從何而來——他們擄掠了以色列神的約櫃。當初戰勝仇敵的興奮之情早就被內外交加的禍患所取代。經過七個月後，他們終於忍無可忍，決定將約櫃送回以色列。他們有心送回約櫃，卻不知道該如何送，因此就教於這些祭司和占卜者。

3『不可空空地送去，必要給他獻賠罪的禮物』

我們不知道這些人根據什麼決定這個做法。也許是出於人之常情，因為你得罪一個人，向他賠罪的時候，經常是伴隨著禮物的，何況是得罪神呢？也許是神特別啟示他們，讓他們知道如何送還神的約櫃。參約 11:49-52 內中有一個人，名叫該亞法，本年作大祭司，對他們說：「你們不知道甚麼。獨不想一個人替百姓死，免得通國滅亡，就是你們的益處。」他這話不是出於自己，是因他本年作大祭司，所以預言耶穌將要替這一國死；不但替這一國死，並要將上帝四散的子民都聚集歸一。這個該亞法乃是處死耶穌的主謀之一（參約 18:24, 28），雖然不好，但神仍然透過他發出預言。因此神也有可能透過這些祭司告訴非利士人如何送還約櫃。

『賠罪的禮物』其實就是贖愆祭（guilt offering）。根據利未記，一個人若是冒犯了聖物，就要獻上贖愆祭來贖罪，同時還要獻上五分之一的賠償費。（利 5:14-16）非利士人應該不了解律法的規定，但他們知道必須要獻贖愆祭補償他們冒犯約櫃的罪，就是獻金痔瘡和金老鼠。

『並知道祂的手為何不離開你們』在七十士譯本中是『你們就得贖』。

不論如何，非利士人知道自己得罪神，願意向神賠罪，等於承認自己的罪。反觀今天的美國，在許多方面得罪神，卻不自知，甚至沾沾自喜，變本加厲。當神討罪的時候，有誰當得起呢？因此基督徒應該更多的為這個國家人民禱告，求神感動他們能夠回歸真神。

非利士人為什麼會去尋求祭司和占卜的？他們能夠提供什麼幫助？

聖經對占卜的看法如何？基督徒能夠去算命、看風水嗎？

掃羅王在這事上犯了什麼錯誤？他的結局是什麼？

當你遭遇困境、苦難、懼怕時，你會怎麼做？有沒有什麼親身的經歷？

4『照非利士首領的數目』

非利士有五大城：亞實突，迦薩，亞實基倫，迦特，和以革倫（6:17），其餘的城鎮都附屬於這五城之下。因此他們準備了『五個金痔瘡，五個金老鼠』當作賠罪的禮物。這五個非利士城市，是以色列人始終沒有攻取的沿海城邑，要到大衛王時才收入版圖。

5『你們痔瘡的像』

痔瘡英文版翻譯為 tumor。可能是皮膚上的腫瘤，或是膿包，不一定是痔瘡。這是身體上的病痛。有人認為這是鼠疫造成的，所以他們要製造金老鼠賠罪。但與下面所說的『毀壞你們田地的老鼠』似乎不太符合。

『毀壞你們田地老鼠的像』

田地這字通常翻為土地（land）。換句話說，這些老鼠不止是毀壞了田地，還可能毀壞了其他的土地，使得他們農產欠收，甚至生活起居都受到影響。這是環境上的災難。以金瘡代表痔瘡，以金鼠代表老鼠，作為賠罪禮，這是古代求神赦免的習俗。我們今天所面臨的瘟疫以及酷暑、洪災是否也是神對我們的警示呢？

『歸榮耀給以色列的神』

這些祭司是外邦人，敬拜外邦神祇，卻看到了真神的偉大，以致於不能不說出『歸榮耀給以色列的神』。我們身為神的兒女，每天經歷神的恩典，是否也歸榮耀給以色列的神呢？還是將這些恩典視為理所當然，認為這都是靠自己的能力得來的，並歸榮耀給自己呢？

『他向你們和你們的神，並你們的田地，把手放輕些』

從這句話可以看出，他們很清楚耶和華神乃是遠超乎他們所拜之神。神的懲罰也臨到這些假神身上，所以他們盼望藉著這次的賠罪，可以讓神的手從他們神的身上離開。很可惜的是，他們雖然知道耶和華神的偉大，卻仍然停留在他們的偶像崇拜中，不願意悔改歸向真神。他們仍然是罪的奴僕，不能享受屬天的福氣。今天在那惡者的誘惑影響之下，人們只看撒但要他們去看的，只聽撒但要他們去聽的，即使曾經經歷過那位萬神之神的能力，仍然拒絕他的呼召——他乃是樂於解開捆綁著他們鐐銬的主。

同樣的，今天很多基督徒，雖然知道神是一切恩典福氣的源頭，卻仍然將許多事物擺在神以上，如金錢、事業、名聲，兒女等，成為他們無形的偶像，以致於無法享受真正的平安與喜樂。

6『為何硬著心像埃及人和法老一樣呢？』

從以色列人出埃及到撒母耳的時候約有 450 年（參徒 13:20）。經過了這麼長的時間，在迦南地的非利士人居然仍然記得當初神在埃及地所行的大奇事（參 4:8），可見這事曾經廣為流傳，而且令人記憶深刻。祭司們要首領不要硬著心，就是不要和以色列的神作對。既然冒犯了他，就要向他獻上賠罪的禮物。『行奇事』原文乃是嚴厲的對待（dealt severely）。『在埃及人中間行奇事』即『嚴厲的對待埃及人』。

令人慚愧的是，以色列人作為主角卻不把這事放在心上。正如我們在前面看到過的，當時乃是一個沒有王，個人任意而行的時代（士 21:25 那時，以色列中沒有王，各人任意而行。）神在他們當中似乎已經沒有任何地位，沒有人紀念耶和華神當初在埃及地所行的神蹟奇事，如今反而在外邦的非利士人當中被提起。我們今天是否也是如此，忘記了神在我們身上的作為，偏行己路，硬著心像埃及人和法老一樣呢？

非利士人為什麼會要歸榮耀給以色列的神？我經常歸榮耀給神嗎？ 我能否從今天世界發生的事情看到神的作為？我有什麼反應？

7『一輛新車，兩隻未曾負軛有乳的母牛』

新車與未曾負軛都代表從來沒有被人使用過的，不是 used。換句話說，就是把全新的車與牛獻給神。有乳代表它們正在乳養小牛犢，未曾負軛代表沒有拉過車、不熟道路。對於正在乳養小牛犢的母牛，它們是不願離開小牛的。但它若不顧小牛，拉著車前往從未去過的以色列境界，對非利士人來說這便證明這種賠罪方式是被以色列的神所接受。小牛犢則關在家裡，免得干擾到母牛的行程。

9『車若直行以色列的境界到伯示麥去...』

英文是 If it goes up on the way to its own land, to Beth-shemesh. 意即這兩隻母牛如果以伯示麥為它們的家鄉，直行而去的話…。同樣的，我們也不確知他們是根據什麼做出這樣的判斷：『這大災就是耶和華降在我們身上的；若不然，便可以知道不是他的手擊打我們，是我們偶然遇見的。』也許是出於自己的判斷，也許是神特別的啟示。伯示麥是猶大境內分配給利未人的城邑（書 21:16），離以革倫約 13 公里。

12『牛直行大道，往伯示麥去，一面走一面叫，不偏左右』

大道：highway。顯然當時從以革倫到伯示麥有一條交通大道。參附錄的地圖。不論如何，這個方法確實有效。即使這是出於他們自己的想法，神也使用來成就他的旨意。正如亞述、巴比倫雖然殘暴不仁，神也用他們作為手中的工具來懲罰列國。

13『收割麥子』

收割麥子應該是在陽曆四月中旬到六月中旬。伯示麥人可以自由地收割，很可能他們已經在非利士人的管轄之下。因為約櫃曾在非利士人手中七個月，所以約櫃被擄的戰役應該發生在秋季，約在住棚節的時候（陽曆 10-11 月）。

『舉目看見約櫃，就歡喜了』

約櫃被擄對以色列人來講乃是奇恥大辱，很可能已經傳遍了整個以色列境，伯示麥人也不例外。因此當他們看到約櫃被運回來的時候，心中的歡喜可想而知。這裡很明顯的看出，約櫃的歸回完全是神的作為，沒有絲毫以色列人的功勞。就如我們從黑暗中歸向光明，也完全是神的恩典與大能，與我們的行為無關。

14『他們把車劈了，將兩隻母牛獻給耶和華為燔祭』

非利士人將約櫃送回來的時候，無形之中也將祭牲和柴火都一起送過來了。車子是木頭做的，劈開來就可當柴燒；母牛則宰殺以後燒在柴上當作燔祭。雖然按照律法當用公牛獻為燔祭（利 1），但他們可能過分激動，以致忘記規矩。而神也接納他們的貢獻，並沒有降罰在他們中間。而且他們可能後來發現了這個錯誤，就繼續『將燔祭和平安祭獻給耶和華』。

15『利未人將耶和華的約櫃和裝金物的匣子拿下來』

根據律法，只有利未人可以扛抬聖物。參民 4:15 將要起營的時候，亞倫和他兒子把聖所和聖所的一切器具遮蓋完了，哥轄的子孫就要來抬，只是不可摸聖物，免得他們死亡。會幕裏這些物件是哥轄子孫所當抬的。伯示麥既然是利未人的城邑，他們就按照律法將約櫃抬下來。

16『當日就回以革倫去了』

正如在第一節所說的，約櫃乃是從以革倫運到伯示麥的。這些非利士人的領袖乃是從以革倫一路跟著牛車來到伯示麥。當他們發現一切事情都是按照計劃進行之後，就又回去以革倫了。

18『照非利士五個首領的城邑，就是堅固的城邑和鄉村』

所以老鼠所破壞的不止是五大城而已，也包括所屬的鄉村。換句話說，整個非利士地都被老鼠破壞了。

『以及大磐石』

這裡的翻譯可能有一點問題。大磐石在伯示麥境內，不在非利士地，因此應該是與下文連在一起。比較好一點的翻譯是『金老鼠的數目是照非利士五個首領的城邑，就是堅固的城邑和鄉村。放耶和華約櫃的大磐石到今日還在伯示麥人約書亞的田間作為見證。』

從整個送還約櫃的過程來說，你認為非利士人的做法正確嗎？為什麼？神會使用這些外邦祭司和占卜的嗎？為什麼？

2. 約櫃轉運到基列耶琳 (19-21)

6:19 耶和華因伯示麥人擅觀他的約櫃，就擊殺了他們七十人；那時有五萬人在那裏（原文是七十人加五萬人）。百姓因耶和華大大擊殺他們，就哀哭了。

6:20 伯示麥人說：「誰能在耶和華這聖潔的神面前侍立呢？這約櫃可以從我們這裏送到誰那裏去呢？」

6:21 於是打發人去見基列耶琳的居民，說：「非利士人將耶和華的約櫃送回來了，你們下來將約櫃接到你們那裏去吧！」

19『耶和華因…擅觀他的約櫃 looked into the ark of the LORD』

前面 15 節已經說過，只有利未人可以扛抬約櫃，而且還要在上面鋪上數層遮掩物。他們既然用利未人將約櫃抬下來，表明他們明白律法的要求。結果這些被擊殺的伯示麥人竟然擅自觀看約櫃的內部，難怪惹來神的憤怒。參民 4:20 只是他們連片時不可進去觀看聖所，免得他們死亡。

『就擊殺了他們七十人；那時有五萬人在那裏（原文是七十人加五萬人）』

神到底擊殺了多少人？少數希伯來抄本和猶太史家約瑟夫的記載都是七十人，而大多數希伯來抄本是『seventy men, fifty thousand men』，中間沒有連接詞 and。個人比較傾向於中文的翻譯，因為約櫃不大（約 1.1 米長，68 公分寬，68 公分高+基路伯），應該無法讓 5 萬人一起觀看內部。

神為什麼擊殺這些伯示麥人？他們到底錯在哪裡？

如果今天神像舊約一樣嚴厲，我們的光景會如何？我能夠達到神的要求嗎？從這個角度來看，你對『恩典時代』與『律法時代』有什麼新的看見？

20『這約櫃可以從我們這裏送到誰那裏去呢？』

因為神的擊打，伯示麥人就懼怕了。他們唯恐神繼續發怒，就想將約櫃送走，和非利士人一樣。其實如果他們遵照律法的規定而行的話，神不但不會發怒，反而會賜福給他們。參撒下 6:11 耶和華的約櫃在迦特人俄別以東家中三個月；耶和華賜福給俄別以東和他的全家。他們失去了一個神賜福的機會，真是可惜。

神從來沒有改變。我們今天如果遵照神的旨意行事的話，一樣會蒙福。也許不是世上物質方面的福氣，但屬靈的福氣遠遠勝過屬地的福氣。再多的錢財，在高的地位也無法換來內心的平安和喜樂。這是只有神才能填滿的空虛。

21『打發人去見基列耶琳的居民』

基列耶琳在猶大支派疆域的最北方，與便雅憫支派交界，位於伯示麥東北約十四公里，算是頗為有名的大城。此時示羅可能已經被毀，所以他們沒有請求示羅人來取約櫃。他們請求基列耶琳人來取約櫃，也許不是出於禍水東引的想法，只是想盡快的送出約櫃。不過他們沒有提到神擊殺他們的事，大概是怕基列耶琳人聽到後就不敢來了。

伯示麥人災禍的根源是什麼？約櫃所在的地方一定會帶來災禍嗎？

如果他們遵守神的吩咐會怎樣？我願意聽從神的話嗎？

6:1 耶和華的約櫃在非利士人之地七個月。

6:2 非利士人將祭司和占卜的聚了來，問他們說：「我們向耶和華的約櫃應當怎樣行？請指示我們用何法將約櫃送回原處。」

6:3 他們說：「若要將以色列神的約櫃送回去，不可空空地送去，必要給他獻賠罪的禮物，然後你們可得痊癒，並知道他的手為何不離開你們。」

6:4 非利士人說：「應當用甚麼獻為賠罪的禮物呢？」他們回答說：「當照非利士首領的數目，用五個金痔瘡，五個金老鼠，因為在你們眾人和你們首領的身上都是一樣的災。」

6:5 所以當製造你們痔瘡的像和毀壞你們田地老鼠的像，並要歸榮耀給以色列的神，或者他向你們和你們的神，並你們的田地，把手放輕些。

6:6 你們為何硬著心像埃及人和法老一樣呢？神在埃及人中間行奇事，埃及人豈不釋放以色列人，他們就去了嗎？

6:7 現在你們應當造一輛新車，將兩隻未曾負軛有乳的母牛套在車上，使牛犢回家去，離開母牛。

6:8 把耶和華的約櫃放在車上，將所獻賠罪的金物裝在匣子裏，放在櫃旁，將櫃送去。

6:9 你們要看看：車若直行以色列的境界到伯示麥去，這大災就是耶和華降在我們身上的；若不然，便可以知道不是他的手擊打我們，是我們偶然遇見的。」

6:10 非利士人就這樣行：將兩隻有乳的母牛套在車上，將牛犢關在家裏，

6:11 把耶和華的約櫃和裝金老鼠並金痔瘡像的匣子都放在車上。

6:12 牛直行大道，往伯示麥去，一面走一面叫，不偏左右。非利士的首領跟在後面，直到伯示麥的境界。

6:13 伯示麥人正在平原收割麥子，舉目看見約櫃，就歡喜了。

6:14 車到了伯示麥人約書亞的田間，就站住了。在那裏有一塊大磐石，他們把車劈了，將兩隻母牛獻給耶和華為燔祭。

6:15 利未人將耶和華的約櫃和裝金物的匣子拿下來，放在大磐石上。當日伯示麥人將燔祭和平安祭獻給耶和華。

6:16 非利士人的五個首領看見，當日就回以革倫去了。

6:17 非利士人獻給耶和華作賠罪的金痔瘡像，就是這些：一個是為亞實突，一個是為迦薩，一個是為亞實基倫，一個是為迦特，一個是為以革倫。

6:18 金老鼠的數目是照非利士五個首領的城邑，就是堅固的城邑和鄉村，以及大磐石。這磐石是放耶和華約櫃的，到今日還在伯示麥人約書亞的田間。

6:19 耶和華因伯示麥人擅觀他的約櫃，就擊殺了他們七十人；那時有五萬人在那裏（原文是七十人加五萬人）。百姓因耶和華大大擊殺他們，就哀哭了。

6:20 伯示麥人說：「誰能在耶和華這聖潔的神面前侍立呢？這約櫃可以從我們這裏送到誰那裏去呢？」

6:21 於是打發人去見基列耶琳的居民，說：「非利士人將耶和華的約櫃送回來了，你們下來將約櫃接到你們那裏去吧！」

NIV	ESV	NASB
<p>¹ When the ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory seven months, ² the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it back to its place.”</p> <p>³ They answered, “If you return the ark of the god of Israel, do not send it back to him without a gift; by all means send a guilt offering to him. Then you will be healed, and you will know why his hand has not been lifted from you.”</p> <p>⁴ The Philistines asked, “What guilt offering should we send to him?”</p>	<p>¹ 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 and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us with what we shall send it to its place.” ³ They said, “If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty, but by all means return him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why his hand does not turn away from you.” ⁴ And they said, “What is the guilt offering that we shall return to him?” They answered, “Five golden tumors and five golden mice, according to the</p>	<p>¹ Now the ark of the LORD had been in the territory of the Philistines for seven months. ² And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, “What are we to do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us ^[a]how we may send it to its place.” ³ And they said, “If you are going to send the ark of the God of Israel away, do not send it empty; but you shall certainly return to Him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be revealed to you why His hand does not leave you.” ⁴ Then they said, “What is to be the guilt offering that we shall return to Him?” And they said, “Five gold tumors and five gold mice <i>corresponding to</i> the number of the governors of the Philistines, since</p>

They replied, "Five gold tumors and five gold rats, according to the number of the Philistine rulers, because the same plague has struck both you and your rulers. ⁵ Make models of the tumors and of the rats that are destroying the country, and give glory to Israel's god. Perhaps he will lift his hand from you and your gods and your land. ⁶ Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When Israel's god dealt harshly with them, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way?"

⁷ "Now then, get a new cart ready, with two cows that have calved and have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart, but take their calves away and pen them up. ⁸ Take the ark of the LORD and put it on the cart, and in a chest beside it put the gold objects you are sending back to him as a guilt offering. Send it on its way, ⁹ but keep watching it. If it goes up to its own territory, toward Beth Shemesh, then the LORD has brought this great disaster on us. But if it does not, then we will know that it was not his hand that struck us but that it happened to us by chance."

¹⁰ So they did this. They took two such cows and hitched them to the cart and penned up their calves. ¹¹ They placed the ark of the LORD on the cart and along with it the chest containing the gold rats and the models of the tumors. ¹² Then the cows went straight up toward Beth Shemesh, keeping on the road and lowing all the way; they did not turn to the right or to the left. The rulers of the Philistines followed them as far as the border of Beth Shemesh.

¹³ Now the people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting their wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced at the sight. ¹⁴ The cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and there it stopped beside a large rock. The people chopped up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹⁵ The Levites took down the ark of the LORD, together with the chest

number of the lords of the Philistines, for the same plague was on all of you and on your lords. ⁵ So you must make images of your tumors and images of your mice that ravage the land, and give glory to the God of Israel. Perhaps he will lighten his hand from off you and your gods and your land. ⁶ Why should you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? After he had dealt severely with them, did they not send the people away, and they departed? ⁷ Now then, take and prepare a new cart and two milk cows on which there has never come a yoke, and yoke the cows to the cart, but take their calves home, away from them. ⁸ And take the ark of the LORD and place it on the cart and put in a box at its side the figures of gold, which you are returning to him as a guilt offering. Then send it off and let it go its way ⁹ and watch. If it goes up on the way to its own land, to Beth-shemesh, then it is he who has done us this great harm, but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that struck us; it happened to us by coincidence."

¹⁰ The men did so, and took two milk cows and yoked them to the cart and shut up their calves at home. ¹¹ And they put the ark of the LORD on the cart and the box with the golden mice and the images of their tumors. ¹² And the cows went straight in the direction of Beth-shemesh along one highway, lowing as they went. They turned neither to the right nor to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh. ¹³ Now the people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley. And when they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, they rejoiced to see it. ¹⁴ The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and stopped there. A great stone was there. And they split up the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹⁵ And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the box that was beside it, in which were the golden

one plague was on all of ^{1b}you and on your governors. ⁵ So you shall make likenesses of your tumors and likenesses of your mice that are ruining the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will lighten His hand from you, your gods, and your land. ⁶ Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had severely dealt with them, did they not let ^{1c}the people go, and they left? ⁷ Now then, take and prepare a new cart and two milk cows on which there has never been a yoke; and hitch the cows to the cart and take their calves back home, away from them. ⁸ Then take the ark of the LORD and place it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you return to Him as a guilt offering in a saddlebag by its side. Then send it away that it may go. ⁹ But watch: if it goes up by the way of its own territory to Beth-shemesh, then He has done this great evil to us. But if not, then we will know that it was not His hand that struck us; it happened to us by chance."

¹⁰ Then the men did so: they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut in their calves at home. ¹¹ And they put the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the saddlebag with the gold mice and the likenesses of their tumors. ¹² Now the cows went straight in the ^{1d}direction of Beth-shemesh; they went on the same road, bellowing as they went, and did not turn off to the right or to the left. And the governors of the Philistines followed them to the border of Beth-shemesh.

¹³ Now *the people of* Beth-shemesh were gathering in their wheat harvest in the valley, and they raised their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced at seeing *it*. ¹⁴ And the cart came into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite and stopped there where there *was* a large stone; and they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹⁵ And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the saddlebag that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone; and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices that day to the LORD. ¹⁶ When the five

<p>containing the gold objects, and placed them on the large rock. On that day the people of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the LORD. ¹⁶ The five rulers of the Philistines saw all this and then returned that same day to Ekron.</p> <p>¹⁷ These are the gold tumors the Philistines sent as a guilt offering to the LORD—one each for Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron. ¹⁸ And the number of the gold rats was according to the number of Philistine towns belonging to the five rulers—the fortified towns with their country villages. The large rock on which the Levites set the ark of the LORD is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.</p> <p>¹⁹ But God struck down some of the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh, putting seventy^[a] of them to death because they looked into the ark of the LORD. The people mourned because of the heavy blow the LORD had dealt them. ²⁰ And the people of Beth Shemesh asked, “Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?”</p> <p>²¹ Then they sent messengers to the people of Kiriath Jearim, saying, “The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to your town.”</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <p>a. <u>1 Samuel 6:19</u> A few Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint <i>50,070</i></p>	<p>figures, and set them upon the great stone. And the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices on that day to the LORD. ¹⁶ And when the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned that day to Ekron.</p> <p>¹⁷ These are the golden tumors that the Philistines returned as a guilt offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron, ¹⁸ and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both fortified cities and unwalled villages. The great stone beside which they set down the ark of the LORD is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh.</p> <p>¹⁹ And he struck some of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they looked upon the ark of the LORD. He struck seventy men of them,^[a] and the people mourned because the LORD had struck the people with a great blow. ²⁰ Then the men of Beth-shemesh said, “Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us?” ²¹ So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, “The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to you.”</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <p>a. <u>1 Samuel 6:19</u> Most Hebrew manuscripts <i>struck of the people seventy men, fifty thousand men</i></p>	<p>governors of the Philistines saw <i>it</i>, they returned to Ekron that day.</p> <p>¹⁷ Now these are the gold tumors which the Philistines returned as a guilt offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, <i>and</i> one for Ekron; ¹⁸ and the gold mice, <i>corresponding</i> to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five governors, both of fortified cities and of country villages. The large ^[a]stone on which they placed the ark of the LORD <i>is a witness</i> to this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite.</p> <p>¹⁹ Now He fatally struck some of the men of Beth-shemesh because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck 50,070 men among the people, and the people mourned because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter. ²⁰ And the men of Beth-shemesh said, “Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom will He go up from us?” ²¹ So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, “The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD; come down and take it up to yourselves.”</p> <p>Footnotes</p> <p>a. <u>1 Samuel 6:2</u> Or <i>what...send with it</i></p> <p>b. <u>1 Samuel 6:4</u> Lit <i>them</i></p> <p>c. <u>1 Samuel 6:6</u> Lit <i>them</i></p> <p>d. <u>1 Samuel 6:12</u> Lit <i>way</i></p> <p>e. <u>1 Samuel 6:18</u> As in some mss and ancient versions; MT <i>Abel</i></p>
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