

## Background to 1 Samuel 5-7:1

The Israelites have brought out the Ark of God like a lucky charm to help them win their battle against the Philistines. But God was not with the Israelites, so the Philistines defeated the Israelites and captured the Ark of God.

### Icebreaker

Who is the most powerful person in history (modern or ancient)? Describe him/her.

In your opinion, who is someone who is so holy or good that is worthy of your highest respect or even worship? (Can be real or fictional person)

### Pray

Ask God to help us understand, accept and obey His word even when it is challenging or hard.

### Read 1 Samuel 5:1-12 (map behind)

1. Who is Dagon?
2. With the Philistines defeating the Israelites and capturing the Ark of God, how does it make God look compared to Dagon?
3. What happened to Dagon after the Philistines put the Ark of God beside it? What do you think is happening? (v.2-5)
4. What did God continue to do to the people of Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron? How did the Philistines respond? (v.6-12)

**Philistines:** Enemies and neighbours of the Israelites in the area of Ancient southern Palestine.

**Ark of God:** The representation of God's presence (it contains God's laws given to the Israelites).

**Threshold:** A doorstep at the bottom of a doorway.

**Vicinity:** The area surrounding or near a particular place.

**Devastation:** Great destruction or damage.

**Afflicted:** Cause pain or trouble.

**Tumours:** A swelling of a part of the body caused by growth of tissue.

**Diviners:** People who seek knowledge by supernatural ways; fortune-tellers.

**Guilt offering:** A sacrifice to repay God for one's sin.

**Plague:** A disease that spreads.

**Yoked:** Attach two animals together with a wooden piece over their necks to work the field or pull a cart.

**Calves:** Baby cows.

### Read 1 Samuel 6:1-7:1

5. What did the priests and diviners tell the Philistines to do to stop God's judgment on them? (v.1-9)

What guilt offering should they send?	
Step 1:	

<b>Step 2:</b>	
<b>Step 3:</b>	
<b>Step 4:</b>	

6. Why did the Philistine watch if the cows carrying the Ark of God went straight to Beth-shemesh? What does it mean if the cows turned right or left? (v.9, 12)
  
7. Why do you think God struck down 70 people in Beth-shemesh? (v.19-20)
  - a. How is God's holiness related to why these 70 people died? (**See Numbers 4:4-6, 19-20**).
  
8. God is supreme - Does this feel true in your life? Describe a time where this doesn't feel true and a time when this feels true.
  - a. How do you react when your experience or your feeling is different from what the Bible says about God's power? What has helped you to keep trusting in God?
  
9. How do you feel about God's holiness? Is it a good thing or a bad thing?
  - a. Compared to the Israelites who cannot look into the Ark of God, how did Jesus make a difference for us who trust in him? (**see Ephesians 3:11-12**)
  
  - b. What is your response to what Jesus has done for us (ie. feelings, actions, speech)?

## Talk Notes

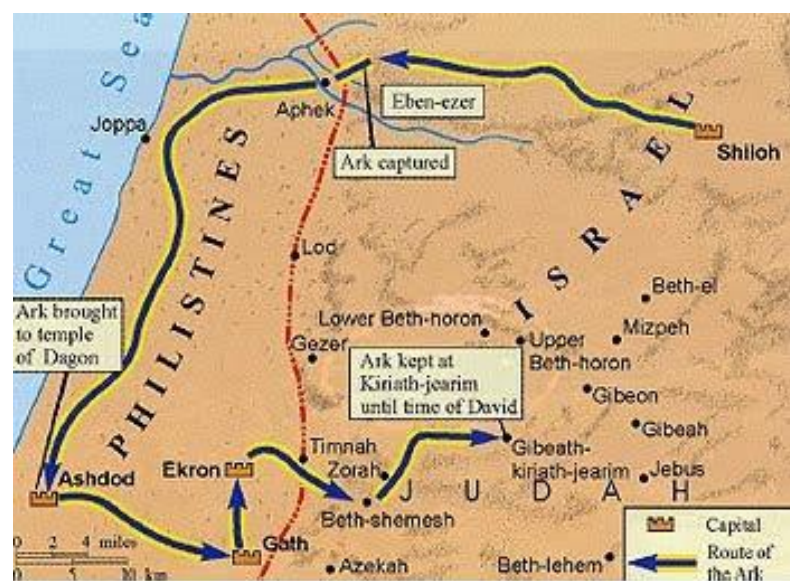
God vs. Dagon (“hand”)

Revelation through cows

This Supreme and Holy God is revealing himself to you too

Orphan adopted into the Father’s family

Bravely share the good news of Jesus because God is supreme



(Illustration from the book *From Sinai to Jerusalem* by Leen Ritmeyer.)



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## *God's Supremacy and Holiness*

### **1 Samuel 5-7:1**