

**1Samuel 5:1 ¶ And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod.**

**1Samuel 5:2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.**

**1Samuel 5:3 And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.**

The Philistines took the ark of God to Ashdod and put it in the house of Dagon, their god. This was meant to declare that Dagon was the greater “god” since they had gained the victory over Israel. JFB describes the image of Dagon as follows: “It was represented under a monstrous combination of a human head, breast, and arms, joined to the belly and tail of a fish.”

When they went to the house of Dagon the next morning, Dagon had fallen upon his face before the ark of the LORD (a position indicative of worship). So they picked up Dagon and set him back in place.

Wouldn't you begin to question the power of a god that you had to pick up and couldn't get up by himself?

**1Samuel 5:4 And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *were* cut off upon the threshold; only *the stump of* Dagon was left to him.**

**1Samuel 5:5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.**

On the next morning they found Dagon fallen on his face before the ark of the LORD and both the head and the palms of his hands were cut off and on the threshold. From that day on, none of the priests or anyone else that came into the house of Dagon in Ashdod stepped on the threshold.

Instead of questioning whether they were worshipping the right “god,” they foolishly avoided stepping on the threshold in deference to their false god.

**1Samuel 5:6 ¶ But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, *even* Ashdod and the coasts thereof.**

**1Samuel 5:7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that *it was* so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.**

Though the LORD had not intervened for Israel, He was still jealous for the honor of His name. Because they were treating the ark with such dishonor, the LORD inflicted the men of Ashdod and the surround area with emerods, boils and ulcers in the anus (from the Hebrew). Other commentators identify the affliction as hemorrhoids or bubonic plague.

The men of Ashdod realized that this was a judgment from the God of Israel against them and Dagon, their god.

**1Samuel 5:8** They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about *thither*.

**1Samuel 5:9** And it was *so*, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.

**1Samuel 5:10** Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

The leaders of the Philistines gathered together to determine what to do with the ark of the God of Israel. They decided to take it to Gath. When the ark was left in Gath, the men of that city were afflicted with emerods. The men of Gath then sent the ark to Ekron causing a great uproar among the people of Ekron. They feared that the God of Israel would kill them.

**1Samuel 5:11** So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

**1Samuel 5:12** And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

The men of Ekron sent and gathered the leaders of the Philistines together and asked them to send the ark of the God of Israel back to "His" own place. People throughout the city were dying and suffering from emerods as a result of God's judgment.

It was interesting to me that the Philistine leaders sent the ark to two more of their own cities before considering sending it back to Israel.