

## **Lesson 2-Homework The Capture and Return of the Ark**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Samuel Chapters 4-6**

**Directions:** Use your study bible, internet, or any other study source to help you with these questions.

1. Locate the following in your Bible map and write down the general location.
  - Benjamin
  - Ashdod
  - Shiloh
  
2. The Ark of the Covenant signified the meeting point between God and Israel.
  - What part of the tabernacle housed the Arc
  - Describe Eli's reaction when he heard the news of Israel's defeat?
  
3. Why did Phinehas' wife name her child Ichabod?
  - Where did the Philistines take the ark?
  - How did God punish the Philistines?
  
4. The Philistines took the Ark back to Israel.

- How did the Philistines prepare for the Ark's removal?
- Why did the Philistines separate the cows from their young?
- Did the Philistines realize God had punished them for taking the Ark? Explain.

5. Read Numbers 4:5-20.

- Explain God's rules for transporting the Ark?
- List the objects within the tabernacle?
- Why did God strike down the people of Beth-shemesh?

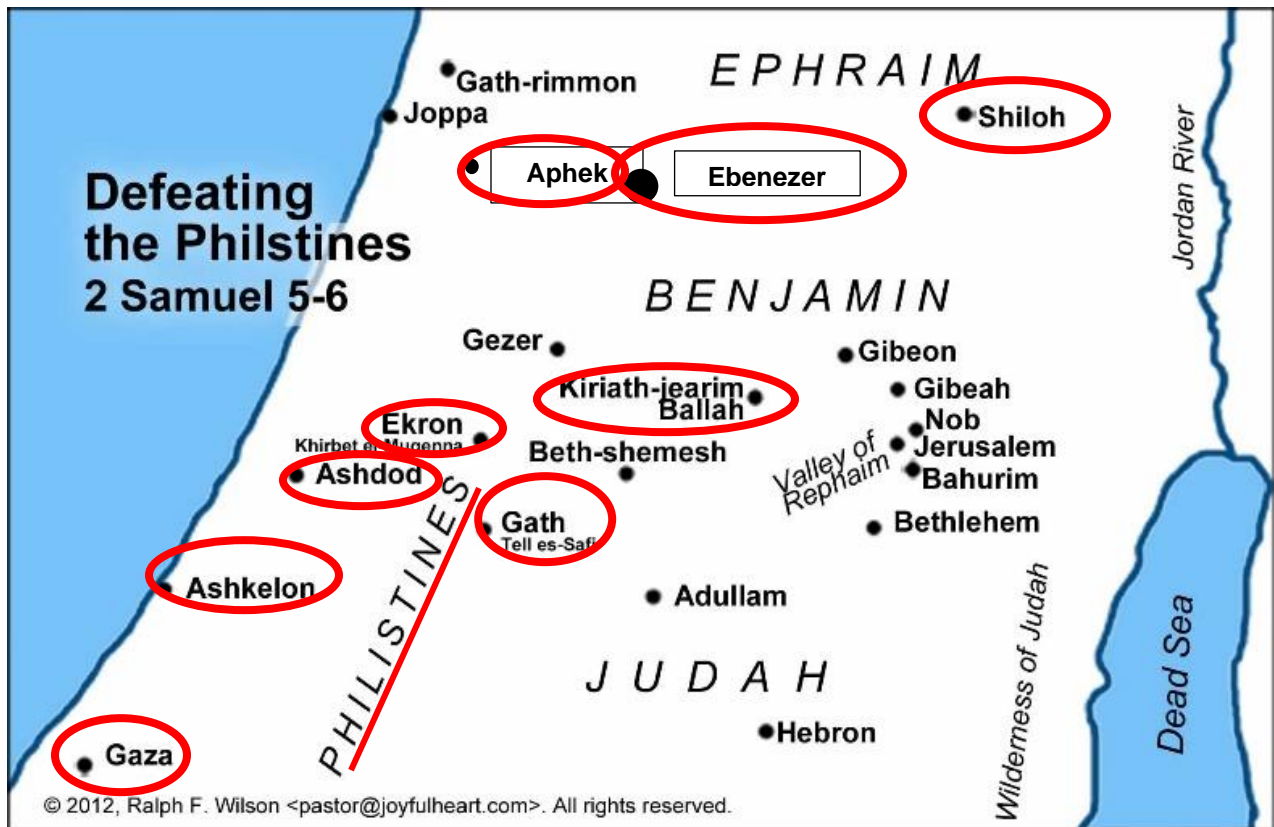
## Lesson 2

### 1 Samuel Chapters 4-6 The Capture and Return of the Ark

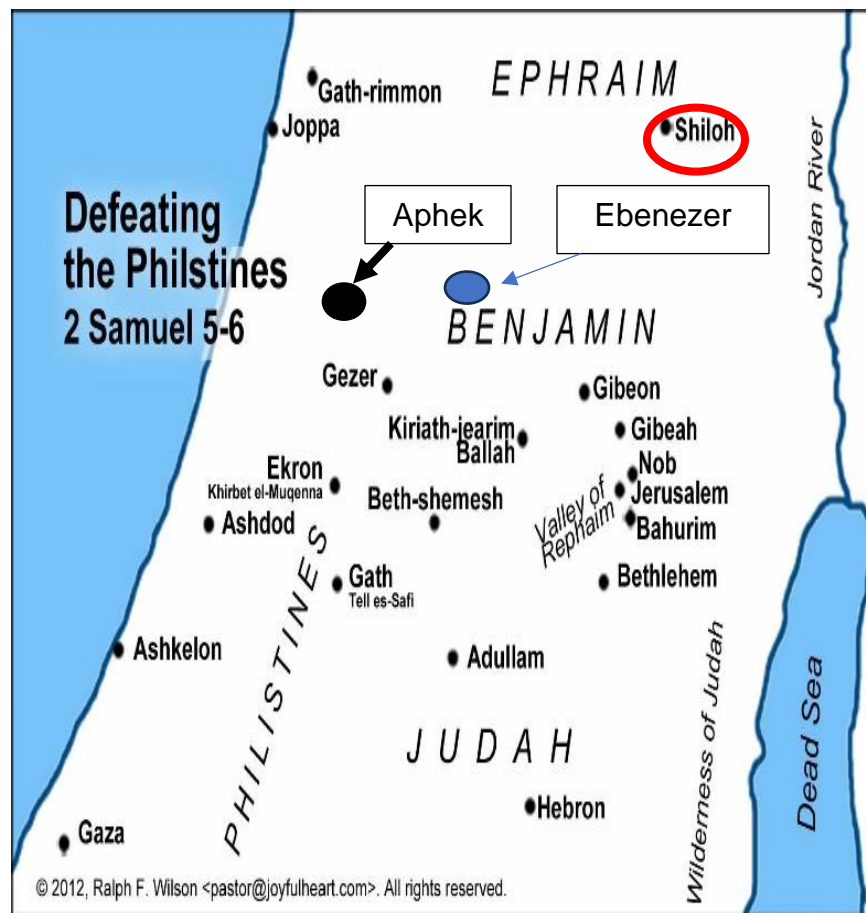
#### Chapter 4-The Philistines Capture the Ark

##### Vs. 1-11-Israel's Defeat

- Note verse 1 states, "Thus the word of Samuel came to all Israel." This phrase also meant "The Word of the **Lord**" came to all Israel (3:21).
- God made it plain that Samuel's **words** came from Him.
- Can we speak the word of God? Yes!
  - Speak His Word-the Bible
  - Discouraged? Speak Joshua 1:7
  - Fearful? Speak Joshua 1:9



- The Philistines warred against Israel until the end of King David's reign. The Philistines, a non-Semitic people, lived along the coast of southern Canaan. They controlled the five cities of Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza
- The Israelites camped at **Ebenezer** while the Philistines camped in Aphek.
- The Israelites suffered defeat and wondered why God had not delivered them.
- To rectify this defeat, Israel removed the Ark of the Covenant from **Shiloh** to their camp.
- Since the glory of the Lord rested upon the Ark, the Israelites brought the Ark into their camp thinking the Lord would deliver them.
- The Israelites did not understand continued disobedience resulted in their defeat.
- Vs. 8 explains the Philistine's fear when they heard the Ark of the Covenant had entered Israel's camp.
- The Philistines remembered how God defeated the Egyptians during Israel's captivity.
- The Philistines strengthened their courage and defeated Israel. They killed **30,000** Israelites including Eli's two sons-Hophni and Phinehas. To make matters worse, the Philistines took the Ark of God.



## Vs. 12-18-The Death of Eli

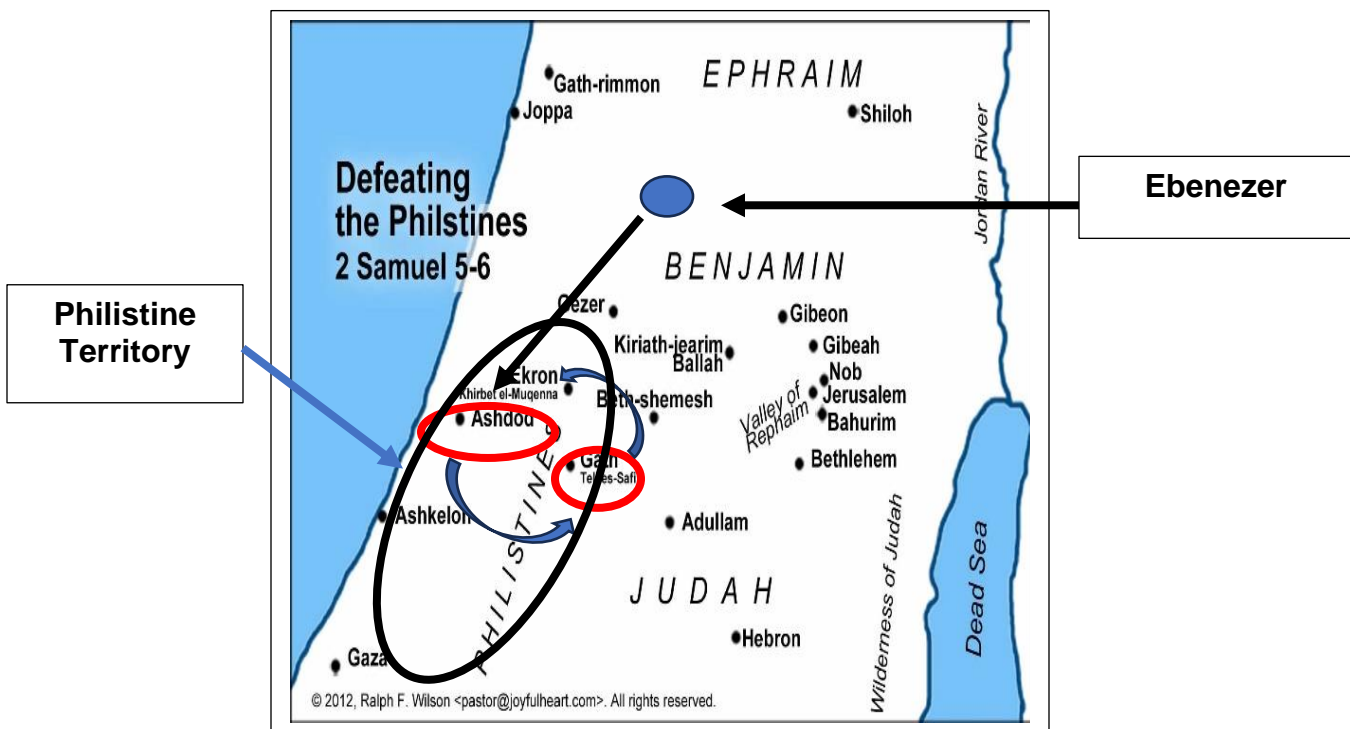
- A man from the tribe of Benjamin ran from the battle to Shiloh. He found Eli sitting on his seat by the side of the road.
- The messenger told Eli his two sons had died.
- When Eli heard the news of his sons and the Philistines had taken the **Ark of the Covenant**, he fell backward, broke his neck, and died.
- Eli obviously remembered the prophecy that said he would see the distress of God's dwelling (1 Samuel 2:32).
- The capture of the Ark symbolized the absence of the Lord.
- Eli died at the age of **ninety-eight** and he judged Israel forty years.

## Vs. 19-21-The Departure of God's Glory

- When Phinehas' pregnant wife heard her father-in-law and her husband had died, and the Ark of God stolen, labor pains came upon her, and she gave birth to a son and died.
- Before her death, she named the child **Ichabod**, meaning- "The glory has departed from Israel."
- Can God's Glory depart from a Christian? **No!** See Ephesians 1:13; 4:3; 2 Corinthians 1:22.

## Chapter 5-God's Curse upon the Philistines

- The Philistines brought the Ark from Ebenezer to **Ashdod** and set it beside their God-Dagon. The Philistines worshiped Dagon as the father of Baal.
- The next morning, Dagon had fallen on his face before the Ark.

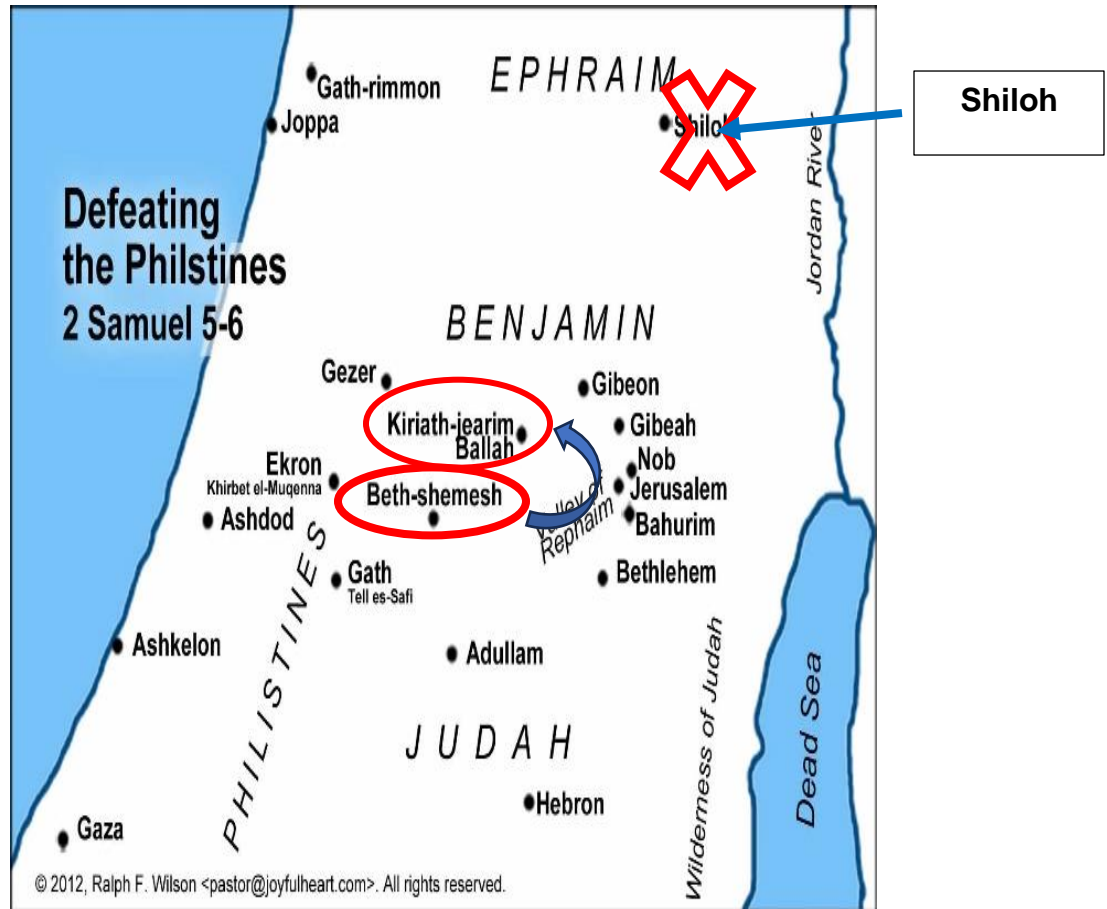


- The Philistines set **Dagon** back in its place. The next morning it fell again before the Ark of the Lord with his head and palms cut off.
- The Lord smote the Ashdodites and the surrounding area with painful tumors (possibly sores or boils).
- Realizing the Lord had punished them for taking the Ark, the Philistines sent the Ark to **Gath (see map above)**.
- The Lord punished the people of Gath with confusion and smote the men of the city with tumors. Scholars feel a bubonic plague, carried by rats, infected the people of Gath.
- The Philistines sent the Ark of God to **Ekron (see map-pg.17)**.
- The Ark frightened the people of Ekron and God sent them a deadly confusion.
- God smote the men who survived with tumors and their cry went up to heaven.
- Now, things get interesting. God did not forget these cities. The book of Acts relates how, after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Disciples on the day of Pentecost.
- God chose Philip, full of the Holy Spirit, to minister to a eunuch traveling from Jerusalem to Ethiopia. Philip explained the gospel message to the Ethiopian and he accepted Jesus as his savior. Immediately after the eunuch's baptism, Acts 8:39 states the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away to a city called **Azotus**,
- the ancient city of Ashdod.
- God showed the people in Azotus that His anger had not lingered. God wanted to invite them into His fellowship.

### **Chapter 6-The Philistines Return the Ark**

- The Ark of the Lord resided with the Philistine's for **seven** months.
- The Philistines asked the priests and the diviners how to send the Ark away.
- They told the Philistines to accompany the ark with five golden tumors and five golden mice.
- The five golden tumors stood for the five Philistine cities affected by the tumors. Possibly, the five golden mice stood for an infestation of mice.
- The Philistines acknowledged their sin and gave glory to the God of Israel.
- To test whether God sent these plagues, they hitched two **untrained** cows to the cart and kept their calves from following. Only a supernatural event would keep the cows from following their calves.
- The cows went straight to Beth-shemesh, a **Levitical** city and the original site for the descendants of Aaron. (**see map-pg. 17**).
- The fact the cows lowered meant they did not want to leave their calves but could not turn back. This proved God's judgment.
- The Levites of Beth-shemesh took the cart, split the wood, and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord.
- The Lord struck down some of the men of Beth-shemesh since they **looked** inside the ark. This violated God's command (Numbers 4:20).
- The people of Beth-shemesh sent messengers to Kiriath-jearim asking them to take the Ark (**see map next page**).

- The ark possibly went to Kiriath-jearim due to Shiloh's destruction during the battle at Aphek. Archaeologists seem to confirm its destruction.



<http://www.jesuswalk.com/david/maps/philistine-defeat-2sam-5-1800x1170x300.jpg>

## Summary

We must never feel it necessary to defend God. Sometimes our failures, sins, and bad judgments condemn us into thinking we have let God down. Our failures can trick us into believing we have ruined our testimony. God's strength overshadows our weaknesses. His truths will reach the hearts of every individual despite our shortcomings.

God loves each of us more than we can imagine. He understands when we fall short of his purpose and plans. Keep focused on God's love and do not worry about how others may view your weaknesses and failures. God always gives us "new beginnings."

# 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel

## Discussion Questions

### Lesson 2

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel Chapters 4-6

1. The Philistines continually threatened Israel during the time of the judges.
  - a. Have you ever experienced a time in your life when you felt surrounded by adversaries?
  - b. How did it feel?
  - c. What did you do about it?
  - d. How do we know the difference between patience and action?
2. Israel felt they could defeat the Philistines by bringing the Ark into their camp.
  - a. Do you think Christians often feel vindicated by performing good acts? Explain.
  - b. How does God look upon our works?
  - c. Have you ever had a time in your life when you behaved poorly, and felt condemned by God? Should we feel this way?
  - d. Does salvation depend upon works or faith?
3. Losing the battle and the Ark humbled the Israelites.
  - a. Have you ever felt you let God down?
  - b. Did you feel like you ruined your testimony to others?
  - c. Do we have assurance that God can overcome our faults and restore our testimony? Explain.
4. God called Philip to the ancient city of Ashdod to preach the Gospel.
  - a. Have you ever felt God calling you to an uncomfortable place?
  - b. How did you respond?
  - c. How does God encourage us when moving into a strange or unfamiliar situation?
5. The Philistines tested God's judgments by sending the cart away with the ark.
  - a. Have you ever put God to the test when seeking an answer? Explain?
  - b. Should we always put God to a test?
  - c. How do we know when an answer comes from God?
  - d. List some ways you hear from God?