

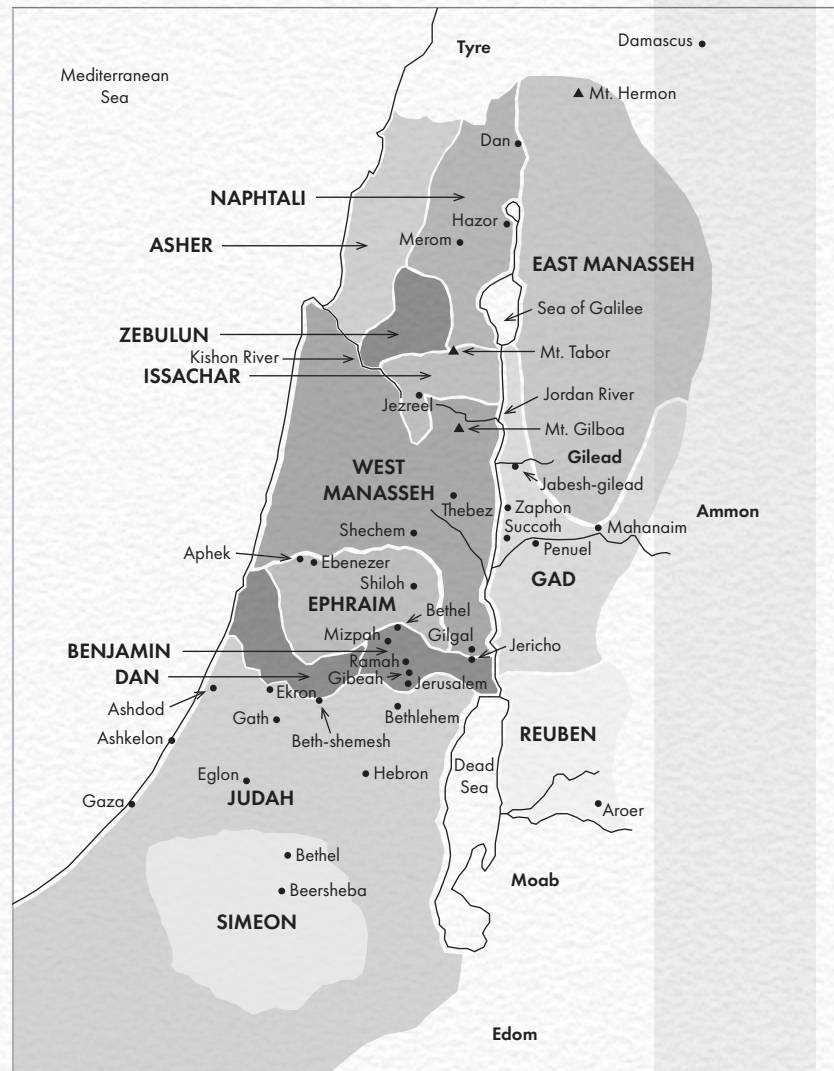
1 Samuel 6

WHEN

- The birth of Samuel is usually dated between 1100 B.C. and 1070 B.C.
- The events recorded in 1 Samuel 6 appear to have happened when Samuel was a young man.

WHERE

- In 1 Samuel 4, the Israelites fought the Philistines and lost. The Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant, and sent it to Ashdod, Gath, and then to Ekron.
- From Ekron, the Philistines sent the Ark to Beth-shemesh (an Israelite city).



CHARACTERS

- **The Philistines** – The long-time enemies of Israel. They lived in the cities near the coast of the Mediterranean Sea (Gaza, Ekron, Ashkelon, etc.).
- **The Men of Beth-Shemesh** – These men were the first to receive the Ark of the Covenant after the Philistines returned it to Israel. They were punished by God because they did not treat the Ark with the respect it deserved.

OUTLINE

- THE PHILISTINES RETURN THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (6:1-12):

- + 1 Samuel 5 describes how God afflicted the Philistines after they stole the Ark of the Covenant from the Israelites.
- + The Philistines were stricken with “tumors” and a plague of mice (6:4-5).
- + The Ark was in Philistine hands for 7 months before they decided to return it.
- + The Philistines called together their priests and diviners and asked them how they should return the Ark to appease the God of Israel.
- + Their holy men told them to make 10 golden images, 5 golden tumors and 5 golden mice, and to send them with the Ark as a guilt offering.
- + The Philistines made a new cart, yoked 2 milk cows to it, and put the Ark of the Covenant and the golden images in the cart.
- + They decided to release the cart without directing the cows as a way of determining the source of their 7-month affliction.
- + If the cows chose to go in the direction of Beh-shemesh (towards Israel) they would conclude the tumors and mice were a judgement on them from Israel’s God.
- + If the cows chose to go in another direction, they would conclude it was all coincidence.
- + Sure enough, when released, the cows pulled the Ark in the direction of Beth-shemesh.

- THE ISRAELITES REGAIN POSSESSION OF THE ARK (6:13-21):

- + The men of Beth-shemesh saw the Ark coming down the road as they were harvesting their wheat in the field.
- + They rejoiced, set the Ark by a large stone, and offered the cows as a burnt sacrifice to the Lord.
- + The text tells us God killed 70 men of Beth-shemesh “because they looked upon the Ark of the Lord” (6:19, see Num 4:18-20).
- + The men of Beth-shemesh sent messengers to the men of Kiriath-jearim asking them to take the Ark to their city.

APPLICATION

- The Philistines viewed God as worthy of honor, but they saw Him as one God among many.
- They didn’t denounce their other gods when they sent their guilt offering back with the Ark of the Covenant, even though God had shown Himself superior to their gods.
- A similar sentiment is present in our day. Many people will express their respect for Christianity, even for Jesus, but only in the sense that Christianity is one of many religions worthy of respect.
- Those who hold this view suggest we can all coexist together in mutual respect for each other’s views.
- The problem with this is that many religions, gods, religious teachers, and systems of morality directly contradictory to one another. They cannot coexist together.
- Not all ideas and not all religious claims are worthy of respect. We need to sort through the information available to us to determine the identity of the true God and what He expects from us.
- Coexistence and mutual respect sound nice, but the slightest amount of research into world religions quickly reveals a distinction has to be made between which one/s are true and which one/s are a sham.