

# Emerods and Mice

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“Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.”

Psalm 78:65-66

**Preparatory Reading:** I Samuel 4-6; Psalm 78; Jeremiah 7; Isaiah 1; Micah 6; Ezekiel 9; Malachi 4.

## Introduction:

- A. By the Lord’s leading, we will take a break from Romans before starting the next section of chapters 9-11.
- B. We have rejoiced together in the grand and glorious truth of the first half of Romans, especially chapter 8.
- C. You daily receive a Proverbs commentary, a study of a Bible chapter, and a daily thought from the Bible.
- D. I have just finished an important 18-month project of teaching Bible hermeneutics to the men of the church.
- E. I have just finished three sermons called, “Never Forget,” to remind you to remember God and His word.
- F. But I must remind you that having the Bible, hearing it, reading it, and even interpreting it ... is not enough!
- G. There is a very serious lesson in these obviously historical chapters of God’s word. Read Jeremiah 7 to see it.
- H. It will be our secondary pleasure to glorify God by the perpetual reproach He brought on Philistine idolaters.
- I. This should bring joy, not discomfort, unless you find Elijah’s spirit to be too much for your effeminate heart.
- J. As our brother Paul, I will preach the whole counsel of God and hold back nothing profitable (Acts 20:20,27).
- K. Visual aids below will help in properly appreciating some of the lesser known elements of the Bible lesson.

## BACKGROUND

- A. Because Israel rebelled against God under the weak Eli, He left them to their enemies (Ps 78:55-64).
- B. The Old Testament was given for teaching lessons to New Testament saints (Rom 15:4; I Co 10:11).
  - 1. New Testament Christians have the same temptations to compromise and hypocrisy as the Old.
  - 2. The great works and judgments of the true God should be taught to our children (Psalm 78:1-8).
  - 3. It is our wisdom to teach our children of God’s judgments (Psalm 9:16; 145:3-6; Proverbs 16:6).
- C. The book of Samuel ends the long period of judges that God raised up over Israel (Acts 13:19-21).
  - 1. I Samuel 1 records the tender mercy of God in granting Hannah a very special son by her prayer.

2. I Samuel 2 records Eli's sons' wickedness and God's promised judgment for his compromise.
3. I Samuel 3 records the word of God to Eli about his coming judgment by Samuel the prophet.

## INTRODUCTION

- A. When Israel lost a battle and four thousand men to the Philistines, they responded foolishly (4:1-2).
- B. They asked the right question, "Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us?" But the response was profane!
- C. When it appears the LORD has left you, it is your wisdom to carefully examine and prove yourself.
  1. God was angry with Joshua for his frustration and foolish response, when Moses had clearly explained such a contrary situation (Joshua 7:6-12; Lev 26:7-8; Deut 32:30-31; Josh 23:8-10).
  2. A better response was the inquiry of God made during a civil war in Israel (Judges 20:1-48).
  3. A better response was David's inquiry of the LORD at the disaster of Ziklag (I Samuel 30:7-8).
  4. Self-examination is a great mark of a true follower of God, and it begins the fruitful process of repentance, righteousness, and restoration (Ps 26:1-2; 139:23-24; II Cor 13:5; Rev 2:4-5).
  5. Do not be guilty of perverting your way and then fretting against the Lord (Proverbs 19:3).
  6. Guide carefully between excessive criticism (Job's friends) and foolish self-justification (Job).

## A PRESUMPTUOUS MISTAKE

- A. Israel, the church of God under the old covenant, tried to secure God's blessings through ceremonial religion and external flattery, instead of examining themselves and repenting for known sin (4:3-22).
- B. They should have examined themselves for sin and inquired of God's word or of God himself.
  1. This is a very valuable lesson that must be stressed as a principal purpose for this recorded event.
  2. The Preacher wrote that hiding sin will not prosper, but confession and forsaking will (Pr 28:13).
  3. Do you bellyache about negative situations without proving yourself or doing judgment (4:3)?
  4. The difference between obedience and flattery is very great (Ps 78:34-37; Isaiah 1:10-20; 29:13).
  5. The sacrifices that God seeks and accepts are a broken heart (Psalm 51:16-17; Isaiah 58:3-7).
  6. Confidence in external religious ordinances is a vain lie (Jer 7:1-16; Micah 6:6-8; Zeph 3:11).
  7. The Lord in one verse rebuked the Pharisees for just such a hypocritical distortion (Matt 23:23).
  8. This is a horrible fault of the present generation, trusting in a form of godliness (II Tim 3:5).
  9. Corinth thought themselves special by many spiritual gifts, while carnal (I Cor 1:4-10; 3:1-5)!
  10. Do not dare to think that baptism, church attendance, reading the Bible, giving, serving the church, Greenville, or any other outward act of worship can make up for compromise in your personal life. This was Israel's sin, and you must despise it ... or you will lose what you have!
- C. Remember the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, Who dwelleth between the cherubims.
  1. The most detailed passage describing the ark of God is found in Exodus 25:10-22. Read it.
  2. The dimensions of the ark were as follows: length – 2 1/2 cubits or 3 3/4 feet; height – 1 1/2 cubits or 2 1/4 feet; and width – 1 1/2 cubits or 2 1/4 feet.
  3. It was made of shittim (acacia) wood covered with gold on the inside and on the outside.

4. It had a crown of gold around the top, four rings at the corners, and golden staves to carry it.
  5. The staves were to remain in the ark at all times – a reminder of how they were to transport it.
  6. A mercy seat with cherubims all made of pure gold were to be on top of the ark of the Lord.
  7. The ark contained the tablets of stone, a golden pot with manna, and Aaron's rod that budded.
  8. The ark was the place where God would meet and communicate with select leaders of Israel.
- D. Note that Eli the priest did not stop Israel's wickedness, and his two sons assisted it (4:4 cp 4:11-12).
1. This high priest of God was severely judged for not forcibly stopping his wicked sons as priests.
  2. One of God's judgments on him and his family tree was for both to die the same day (2:34).
  3. It was his role as high priest to have condemned and tried to stop the plan of the elders (4:3).
  4. It was his role as high priest to have condemned and tried to stop the plan of the people (4:4).
  5. But he had helped create the wicked state of Israel by allowing his sons to continue as priests, which hypocrisy proceeding from the highest religious authority in the nation proved disastrous.
- E. Israel took great confidence – though entirely foolish and vain – in the presence of the ark (4:5).
1. In a way, this is trusting lying vanities to the forsaking of your own mercy from God (Jonah 2:8).
  2. The words “the earth rang again” describe an echo, not a repeat of an earlier, historical shout.
  3. See how excited they got with innovation, instead of repentance, reformation, and righteousness!
  4. This is nothing but a modern praise band making up in decibels what they lacked in devotion!
  5. They were “in the spirit,” as even a little knowledge of crowd psychology would indicate.
  6. The wicked often appear confident and joyful in their lying vanities (Job 20:5; Psalm 36:1-4).
  7. Here is the first praise band to make up for lack of virtue with volume. Consider it carefully!
  8. This false pretense of confidence and courage evaporated as soon as they saw Philistine swords!
  9. We can never allow either sobriety or euphoria in worship to cover for a lack of holiness!
  10. The outward acts of worship, ceremony or ritual, place or performance, are not righteousness!
  11. How many are present today in this assembly without the prerequisite personal righteousness?
- F. The Philistines were greatly intimidated by the news of Israel's God's ark with the army (4:6-9).
1. The Philistines feared God (4:7). But it did not bring obedience, so it was an evil, sinful fear.
  2. They knew Israel's God was greater than their own (4:8), but they still chose to fight Him.
  3. Adam feared God but hid (Genesis 3:8-10). The devils believe, fear, and tremble (James 2:19).
  4. They knew the ark stood for God's presence; it had never been in Israel's military camp before.
  5. They knew Israel's “Gods” to be mighty Gods that had greatly afflicted the great Egypt before.
  6. The use of “wilderness” either (a) refers to the Red Sea or was (b) their own historical error.
  7. They knew well that the God of Israel was able to afflict them greatly – “Woe unto us!” Glory!
  8. They foolishly exhorted one another to courage for the conflict: an example for Israel, which should have done this when the spies returned from Canaan, and for Christians under adversity.
- G. The Philistines won the battle, killed 30,000 men, killed Eli's two sons, and took the ark (4:10-11).
1. How quickly their trust in lying vanities revealed God's mercy was not with them (Jonah 2:8)!

2. The false courage created by crowd psychology quickly left them, and they ran to hide in tents!
  3. The superficial foam of loud praise bands and charismatic leaders does not build perseverance.
  4. God's arm was not shortened that He could not save, but for their sins (Is 59:1-8 cp Ps 78:56-64).
  5. Israel was as foolish as Samson, who thought God was still with him, without hair (Jdgs 16:20).
  6. Eli's two sons died the same day, exactly as God had promised they would (I Samuel 2:34).
  7. Do not face trouble by better attendance, more giving, louder singing, or any outward ritual!
- H. Eli and Shiloh grieved greatly over the capture of Israel's and Jehovah's ark by Philistines (4:12-18).
1. Eli's heart trembled for the ark, but he did nothing (4:12-13 cp I Sam 3:11-14 cp Num 25:10-13).
  2. Verbal rebuke is nothing when not followed up by enforcement against sin (I Samuel 2:22-25).
  3. True faith is more than knowledge – it is action on knowledge (John 12:42-44 cp Heb 11:24-27).
  4. God does not simply warn men and hope they convert: He punishes (Prov 29:1 cp Heb 12:5-11).
  5. Eli's punishment was equal to his sin – a great judgment for a great sin (4:14-18). Consider it.
  6. He heard (a) Israel fled, (b) a great slaughter, (c) dead sons, and (d) the ark had been captured.
  7. The news, especially of the stolen ark of God, caused him to fall backward and die right there.
  8. His age (brittle bones) and weight (greater pressure) broke his neck in the fall from his seat.
- I. Phinehas' wife showed more fear of God than did Phinehas in the birth of her son Ichabod (4:19-22).
1. The emotional trauma of the terrible news caused her to go into immediate hard labor to death.
  2. The pains that came on her were extremely severe and caused her unexpected death (4:20).
  3. Consider the order of the news she heard, as it is recorded: (1) ark, (2) Eli, and (3) her husband.
  4. The midwives encouraged her with news of a son, but she would not be consoled by the news.
  5. She named her child Ichabod – the glory is departed from Israel – for the tragedy of the ark.
  6. Her real pain was the taking of the ark, as is seen from her last words, which God gave us (4:22).
  7. She regarded the ark as the glory of God's presence, which David confirmed in Psalm 78:61.
- J. Consider how God wiped out a great portion of Eli's family in a single day of severe judgment.
1. If you trifle with loving and serving God, there is judgment coming on you and your family.
  2. God does not care who you are or what you have done, if you compromise and hide your sins.
  3. Trusting outward religious performance rather than personal righteousness will cost you dearly!
  4. The future of your soul, your life, your family, and your church depend on holy and pure living.
  5. Doeg took out the rest of his family tree, and Zadok later replaced Ahimelech as Israel's priest.

## **AN IGNORANT PRESUMPTION**

- A. The Philistines, though knowing its God and importance, took Jehovah's ark as spoil (I Sam 5:1-12).
- B. The Philistines had five great capital cities and ruling lords: Gaza, Gath, Ashdod, Askalon, Ekron.
  1. The Philistines lived in a narrow strip of land between Judah and the Mediterranean Sea.
  2. These five cities are listed by the name of their inhabitants in Joshua 13:3, helpful information.
  3. Samson found trouble in Gaza (Judges 16:1,21); Goliath and David lived in Gath (I Sam 17:4; 27:1-4);

the Anakim lived in Ashdod (Josh 11:22); Samson borrowed clothing from Askelon (Judges 14:19); and Ahaziah sought the God of Ekron (II Kings 1:1-4).

C. Ashdod was the first great city of the Philistines to learn more of Israel's God Jehovah (I Sam 5:1-5)!

1. The ark of the covenant was taken from the battlefield at Ebenezer to the capital city of Ashdod.
2. Believing that their god Dagon had defeated Jehovah, they took it as a prize for their god Dagon.
3. Samson knew of Dagon (Judges 16:21-24), and Saul visited his pagan temple (I Chron 10:8-10).
4. Dagon, by man's records, had the upper body of a man and the lower of a fish, due to geography.
5. The Philistines surely emphasized fish due to their geographical location by the Mediterranean.
6. Roman Catholic popes' mitre looks like a fish's mouth and may come from Dagon worship.
7. Why in the world do Christians get so excited about the fish symbol? Is it a symbol of Dagon?
8. God will not give His glory to another (Isaiah 42:8). He is a jealous God (Ex 34:14). He ridicules other gods (Ps 115:3-8). And He ridicules their makers and worshippers (Isaiah 44:9-20).
9. The first morning after the ark arrived, Dagon was found prostrate on the floor worshipping it.
10. The second morning Dagon was again found worshipping with only his stump (fish tail) intact.
11. The superstitious Philistines avoided Dagon's threshold for a long time afterward due to this.
12. The words "unto this day" must relate to the day the historian wrote I Samuel, not to our date.

D. God smote Ashdod and surrounding cities with a great destruction and with emerods (5:6-7).

1. As the context shows (5:12), there was a destruction of human life in addition to the emerods.
2. The emerods were given to those surviving the destruction from God; which would you prefer?
3. The destruction may have been disease carried by mice, but we are not told (I Sam 6:4,5,11,18).
4. The mice marred the land – destroyed or damaged it for usefulness, which enough could do (6:5).
5. What in the world are emerods (5:6,9,12)? What in the world are secret parts (5:9)? Consider.
6. Emerods = Hemorrhoids. [OED]. Hemorrhoid. A mass of dilated and tortuous veins in swollen tissue situated at or within the anal margin.
7. God had promised this curse upon Israel, if they disobeyed His word through Moses (De 28:27).
8. Jehovah will justly afflict any human being with physical diseases for sin (Num 5:27; 12:9-12; II Sam 12:15; II Chron 21:19; Job 2:4-8; Acts 12:21-23; 13:11; I Cor 11:30; etc., etc.).
9. Hemorrhoids today no more prove God's judgment than did boils and evil prove it on Job.
10. Ashdod sought to move the ark, because of God's sore judgment on them and their god Dagon.

E. Gath was the second great city of the Philistines to learn more of Israel's God Jehovah (I Sam 5:8-9).

1. The five lords of the Philistines determined to send the ark of the LORD from Ashdod to Gath.
2. God smote Gath and its Gittites with a great destruction and survivors of all ages with emerods.
3. Maybe Goliath was a little boy in elementary school and had a big pile of them in his bum.
4. Some commentators suggest that the emerods were internal ones by being "in their secret parts," which variety is much more painful and removed from any easy application of remedies!

F. Ekron was the third great Philistine city to learn more of Israel's God Jehovah (I Samuel 5:10-12).

1. Observe the lack of any record of a council of the lords. Gath just sent it to them to get rid of it!
2. The Ekronites knew the danger of Gath's gift, and they cried out against the ark being there.
3. The hand of the LORD was very heavy with deadly destruction throughout the city of Ekron.
4. Ekron quickly called for a council of the lords to send the ark back to Israel to its rightful place.
5. The pattern destruction continued: God destroyed many people and gave the survivors emerods.
6. The cry of the city went up to heaven – God knew of their intense suffering; He delivered them.
7. Consider how God looked similarly upon Babel (Genesis 11:5) and Sodom (Genesis 18:21).
8. Consider how Jesus Christ similarly heard and responded to the cry of demons (Matt 8:28-32).

## **A WORSHIPFUL SOLUTION**

- A. The Philistines worshipped God for a perpetual reproach and shame on their nation (I Sam 6:1-18).
  1. For seven months the ark of God travelled among the Philistines bringing grievous judgment.
  2. The Philistines had greater prudence than Israel in seeking divine wisdom about Jehovah's ark.
  3. God can direct the minds of reprobate men (I Sam 28:7-20; John 11:49-52; Nu 22:28; Acts 4:28).
  4. They knew they must return a trespass offering to the glory of Jehovah God for their great crime.
  5. God formally put them to a perpetual, public reproach by demanding golden emerods and mice.
  6. The five golden emerods and five golden mice were for their five cities and lords. How perfect!
  7. We are not told who posed for the craftsmen to make the emerods as realistic as possible. Glory!
  8. The plague of destruction and emerods had similarly hit all five capital cities of the Philistines.
  9. The Philistines understood well that the golden hemorrhoids would give glory to Israel's God.
  10. Humbling yourself under God's mighty hand gives Him the glory He seeks (I Peter 5:6). Do it!
  11. We glorify God by considering His humiliation of His enemies or us (I Sam 6:5 cp Psalm 78:66).
  12. The Philistines knew well the result of Pharaoh's stubborn and slow heart in Egypt (Ex 9:16).
- B. The instructions regarding the cart were to manifest Jehovah God's judgment for taking His ark.
  1. The cows were (1) milk cows, (2) with calves, and (3) without experience in a yoke and a cart.
  2. Milch-cow. A cow 'in milk'; a cow giving milk or kept for milking. See also Genesis 32:15.
  3. Kine. The archaic expression for a plurality of cows. See also Genesis 32:15 and 41:2.
  4. Taking the calves home from the milk cows should have caused the milk cows to follow.
  5. The plan had a very low probability of natural success: the priests knew it would prove the point.
  6. Only an idiot, and they were not idiots by this stage, would think the recent events were chance!
  7. The cows went straight to Bethshemesh without GPS, maps, or previous training! Glory to God!
  8. The cows took the cart into the field of Joshua, where they stopped beside a great stone (6:14)!
  9. The five lords of the Philistines followed to observe to their greater confusion and glory to God!

## **ANOTHER PRESUMPTUOUS MISTAKE**

- A. The initial response by the men of Bethshemesh was good and gave God glory without punishment.

1. Bethshemesh was a city designated for Levites and priests, the sons of Aaron (Joshua 21:13-16).
  2. There is nothing in the text for us to presume that the men of Bethshemesh sinned by sacrifices.
- B. The presumptuous men of Bethshemesh sinned terribly by looking in the ark (I Samuel 6:19-21).
1. God killed 50,070 men of Bethshemesh for presumptuously looking in the ark of the LORD.
  2. True to their profane nature, the Jews manifested again their inability to learn (Numbers 16:41).
  3. Was it a rather innocent crime? The holy LORD God does not know any such innocent crimes.
  4. An important lesson here is to never presume license by God's favor, as Uzziah (II Chr 26:16).
  5. Less obvious, but wrong, was Hezekiah's presumption in his extra fifteen years (II Chr 32:25).
- C. Their first presumptuous error was when facing trouble; the second was when receiving a blessing.
1. Neither circumstance – trouble or favor from God – provides any allowance for innovation.
  2. Do not ever think that prosperity is God's approval of your life – measure your life by scripture!
  3. God blessed Israel many times, but when Jeshurun waxed fat, then they kicked against Him.
  4. The Bible teaches that God's goodness should lead you to repentance, not license (Romans 2:4).
- D. They rejected the ark of God rather than repent of their sin against Him. Remember Eden (Gen 3:8)?
1. Why did not Adam and Eve repent and beg for God's forgiveness, instead of sewing fig leaves!
  2. They did not even want to transport it to its destination, but rather asked others to fetch it up!
  3. With repentance and care for the ark, they could have been greatly blessed (II Samuel 6:11-12).

## APPLICATION

- A. God the Holy Spirit inspired these three chapters for God's glory and your profit. Appreciate them!
- B. If you think the material is not spiritual enough for you, it is because you are not truly spiritual.
1. Where is Moses' and Miriam's spirit in your life, who celebrated drowned Egyptians (Ex 15)?
  2. Where is David's spirit in your life, who said the righteous rejoice at pagan blood (Ps 58:10-11)?
  3. Where is the martyrs' spirit in your life, who cry out for vengeance on enemies (Rev 6:9-11)?
- C. Authority carries responsibility with it. Eli did not discharge his child restraining duties to two sons.
1. All fathers have the responsibility to command and enforce righteousness in their own homes.
  2. Each man must bear his own burden and prove his own works before God (Galatians 6:4-5).
  3. Verbal rebukes are a start, but they are not nearly enough for flagrant sins like those two priests.
  4. Desire for judgment means little. Action is what counts. Eli grieved for Israel, but he did little.
- D. Ordinances do not carry residual value for the rebellious. The ark did not save Israel, but cost them!
1. Here again is where Jeremiah 7 has a great lesson for cross-reference. Read it and understand it.
  2. Baptism, church membership, Bible reading, or religious conduct will not save you from Him.
  3. We live in a generation with a form of godliness, but most deny the power of it (II Timothy 3:5).
  4. God seeks a broken spirit and heart, godly repentance, humility, and a great desire for the truth.
  5. If you want to draw nigh to God and have Him draw nigh to you, there is a plain passage that describes exactly what you should do, and it does not involve public ordinances (James 4:7-10).

- E. Jehovah is humorous. Consider Dagon's reaction, the choice of emerods, and the golden images; and He laughs at the calamities of the wicked under His judgments (Psalm 2:4; 37:13; 59:8; Pr 1:24-27).
- F. Jehovah is a God of judgment. He destroyed Eli's family, the Philistines, and fools of Bethshemesh.
- G. Humility is essential before God. The golden hemorrhoids gave glory to the true God by humility.
- H. Blessing or improving circumstances do not justify license. The men of Bethshemesh were fools.
- I. Our fear of God should encourage, not discourage, proper worship (Exodus 20:20; Heb 12:28-29).

## **Conclusion:**

- A. The range of material in the Bible is like no other book. Love its every part and the lessons contained in them.
- B. Yet, remember that Bible knowledge is not nearly enough. You must have the righteousness of the Bible.

## **For Further Study:**

- 1. The sermon outline, [The Bible Cannot Profit](#).
- 2. The sermon outline, [Eli and Sons](#).
- 3. The sermon outline, [Why Bad Things Happen](#).
- 4. The sermon outline, [An Angel with an Inkhorn](#).
- 5. A YouTube clip of pagan symbols and priests of Dagon, [The Return of Dagon](#).
- 6. See the visual aids below for a little help in properly appreciating some of the lesser known elements of the Bible lesson.

## **A Few Visual Aids**

- 1. The fish god, [Dagon](#).
- 2. External [hemorrhoids](#) [Warning: graphic].
- 3. [Ark of the Covenant](#).