

## God's Calling Requirements Part 8

*(The Failures of Beth Shemesh Are The Lessons for the Church of God Today)*

*"1 And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. 2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place. 3 And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. 4 Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords. 5 Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. 6 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? 7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: 8 And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. 9 And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: it was a chance that happened to us. 10 And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: 11 And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. 12 And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh. 13 And they of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. 14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD. 15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD. 16 And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day. 17 And these are the golden emerods which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one; 18 And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great stone of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: which stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite. 19 And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter. 20 And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us? 21 And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim,*

*saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you." (1 Samuel 6:1-21 KJV)*

As we know that God allowed the Israelites to be defeated and His ark to be captured by the Philistines due to the sins that was committed at Shiloh by the family of Eli the priest and as the following:

1. In despising the offerings of the Lord: *"12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. 13 And the priest's custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; 14 And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. 15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. 16 And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force. 17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD." (1 Samuel 2:12-17 KJV)*

2. In committing adultery with the women who were serving the Lord at the entrance of the tent of meeting: *"Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." (1 Samuel 2:22 KJV)*

3. Their father, Eli the priest, condoned and cover up their sins: *"27 And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? 28 And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? 29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? 30 Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. 32 And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. 33 And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. 34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. 35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. 36 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of*

*bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.” (1 Samuel 2:27-36 KJV)*

For all the above reasons God allowed the Israelites to be defeated and His ark to be captured by the Philistines.

While the ark was in the territory of the Philistines God did havoc to them, defeating their gods, and causing them sicknesses in their bodies and losses in their farming fields, *“1 And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. 2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 12 And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.” (1 Samuel 5:1-12 KJV)* Therefore for all these reasons the Philistines decided to send the ark of God back to the Israelites to be relieved from God's heavy wrath that He was severely afflicting them with. Therefore they decided to return it back with guilt offering to give glory to the God of Israel: As they suggested, *“4 Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords.” (1 Samuel 6:4 KJV)* *The Philistines were non believers but when God disciplined them they humbled down and decided to send the ark back to the Israelites with guilt or trespass offering. Now many Christians they trespass against God but they will continue to brag with the blood of Jesus and they have no sense deep in their conscious what havoc their sins had caused.*

*Yes and true, we are saved by the blood of Jesus and not by any work or by any offering, but repentance is needed, and when our sins had caused troubles, then part of our repentance is to restore what losses we had caused by our sins.*

The Philistines who were non believers after God disciplined them, they decided to bring back the ark of God with an offerings in order to give glory and honor to the God of Israel, *“5 Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. 6 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?” (1 Samuel 6:5-6 KJV)* *“5 Make models of the tumors and of the rats that are destroying the country, and give glory to Israel's God. Perhaps he will lift his hand from you and your gods and your land. 6 Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When Israel's God dealt harshly with them, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way?” (1 Samuel 6:5-6 NIV)* *We who are called by the name of the Lord, Christians, when we do mess, we should know how to give glory to God. Let us bring glory to God as we return in repentance to God and do what He required of us, and walk in His ways.*

The Philistines priests and the diviners they suggested to return the ark of God to the Israelites in the following manner: *“7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: 8 And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. 9 And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: it was a chance that happened to us.” (1 Samuel 6:7-9 KJV)* They suggested this way to know and to be sure whether or not it was God's hand who struck them with death and plague. Therefore, and for this purpose they suggested and did the following, *“7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them.” (1 Samuel 6:7 KJV)*

**A. They use cows that never being yoked:** Because yoked cows might know what to do by themselves without guidance, because they are already trained on the work.

**B. They use cows with calves that had been brought home:** Cows who has calves will not be moved unless their calves with them. Since they moved spontaneously without their calves that mean that the hand of God was on them, and was moving them in the direction that God wanting them to go. The cows submitted themselves to God and were moved against the law of nature, departing from their young calves, and that explains to us why they were lowing along the way, crying for their young calves, as they were submitting themselves to God's hand, and God's will and moved toward the direction that God wants them to move, as we can read, *“12 And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh.” (1 Samuel 6:12 KJV)*

The scene was awesome, and the Philistines rulers were watching how God was directing the cart to its destination toward the town of Beth Shemesh. And how the cows were submitting to God's will, even overcoming their own emotions, moving away from their young calves. There was no man leading them, but the hand of the Living God leading them toward their

destinations. We learn from these animals how to submit to the will of God and go to do what He is pleased with, even if we are not happy of what He is asking from us.

Therefore the Philistines were sure that God's hand was destroying them, and they were sure that they got the ark of God, not because they were military wise able, but because God was disciplining His corrupted people, the Israelites for their sins. **"16 And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day."** (1 Samuel 6:16 KJV)

We learn from the Philistines that we need to find out what is the root cause of the troubles that we are in by starting to seek God and find out what He is pleased with. "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." (Ephesians 5:10 KJV)

The Israelites while the ark was not with them were not thinking or were concerned of how to return the ark of God from the hand of the Philistines. But God Himself brought back the ark to His people the Israelites. We as Christians should not be negligent and careless of the things of God when events go wrong. When troubles fall into our midst, we need to seek God and do all what we can to bring God's presence in our midst. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to search our souls and we need to be sensitive to the things that He is talking to us about, and the things that we need to do to reconcile with Him and to do the things that will please Him.

To sit careless and irresponsible, and complacent not to do any effort to correct our mistakes, such behavior God will not be pleased with.

Let us see what the people of Beth Shemesh did and how they responded to that particular event and to what God had called them to do, and let us see if they fulfilled God's calling requirements:

**1. They rejoiced:** **"13 And they of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it."** (1 Samuel 6:13 KJV) Rather they should mourn and repent. The ark was taken due to sin in the priestly office. Now since God had return it back, they would rather be humbled before God and commit themselves to stand firm and cleanse the priestly office. Now a day many Christians behave in the same way; they would wait for miracles and event to happen to celebrate and enjoy life but are not willing to see how to repent and come back to God. They are not willing to deal with sin and with the root causes of the havoc that came upon them. Therefore, what we need to do today is to discern the sin and to work with God to help the people to come back to God with repentance.

**2. They sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD:** **"14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD."** (1 Samuel 6:14 KJV) As burnt offering cows should not be used but a male without defect, as we can read here **"If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD."** (Leviticus 1:3 KJV) It was not ordained for them to slaughter the two cows, but they should let them go back to their calves who were waiting for them. Many Christians they use to offer things that are not ordained by God to cover up their lack of commitment. Instead of

bringing to God their first fruit, their tithes and offering, they will bring food, things they don't need, gifts from non believers, etc. And the outcome of that is corrupted mind fixed on food fellowships and entertainment and church activities that cannot please God or achieve God's will.

**3. "15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD."** (1 Samuel 6:15 KJV): What the Levites needed to do was to carry the Ark of God on their shoulders and bring it to Shiloh from where it was taken, and there they will repent and commit themselves to God. They needed to cleanse the priestly office from corruption and immoralities, and further to offer their lives, as burnt offerings, living sacrifices, and once again to serve God wholeheartedly. The city of Beth Shemesh is a city that was a city allocated for the Levites who knew very well the Word of God and the Law of God. But they were complacent and lazy and were not willing to serve God in the manner that He ordained in His Word. What was going on from sin and corruption in the priestly office made them insensitive to the Word of God. Many ministers, pastors and workers they know the Word of God but they are not willing to suffer, standing firm with God, facing the people and correct them. We need to be alert and wake up, not to allow corruption and immoralities to go on without dealing with it.

**4. They looked into the ark of the LORD:** **"19 And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter."** (1 Samuel 6:19 KJV) God stroke them because they should not look into the inside of the Ark of the Covenant. The Levites were prohibited to look into the ark of God. **"But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die."** (Numbers 4:20 KJV) God Himself brought the ark; may be they wanted to see and check if God had brought His ark and if something is missing from it. Many Christians they will not do what they ought to do but they interfere and disturb of what God is doing. They did not fear God or stood in awe in His presence, they took God for granted and that is why they look into the ark. They interfered with the things that God had told them not to do. Therefore, focus to do your ministry and your part well and do not interfere with the things that God had told you not to do.

**5. They did not repent but they mourned and murmured against God:** **"20 And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?"** (1 Samuel 6:20 KJV) **"And the people of Beth Shemesh asked, Their murmurings went in two points.**

**A. "Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God?"** What they were saying, that God is so strict and who can manage to obey His law. Many Christians now a day when you speak about the discipline of God's Word they will say immediately who can obey and who can do all these things? Such a language is murmuring and rebellion against God.

**B. "And to whom shall he go up from us?"** They were looking to hand over the responsibility of the Art of God to other people. Many Christians they just want to enjoy the blessings of God but they are not willing to suffer for Christ and abide in His Word and do the ministry faithfully.

**6. They sent for someone else to do their ministry:** “21 And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim, saying, *The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.*” (1 Samuel 6:21 KJV) “Then they sent messengers to the people of Kiriath Jearim, saying, “*The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to your town.*” (1 Samuel 6:21 NIV) They enjoyed eating the cow meat, they took the golden tumor and the golden rats; they took the material things, but they were not willing to bear God’s Word and His discipline. They throw away the ministry and the service of God and walked away when He disciplined them.

**7. Kiriath Jearim are better than Beth Shemesh people:** “*And the men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD. 2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.*” (1 Samuel 7:1-2 KJV) Kiriath Jearim people were better Levites, they feared God and have reverence to Him. They dedicated a house and a person to guard and take care of the ark. The result of their dedication is fruitful ministry; “*And all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.*” As we dedicate our lives faithfully to serve God, others will start to fear the Lord and will come back to Him.

***My Dear and Beloved:*** God is calling you today to take your stand to fear God and to serve Him wholeheartedly. Failure in the Levitical priesthood, corruption among ministers, irresponsible workers, parents and pastors as people of Beth Shemesh, all these are good reasons for you today to respond to God’s call and to commit yourself fully into His service as the people of Kiriath Jearim, so then all the people will turn back to the LORD, and God’s blessing will continue to flow in your life.

*As workers in God’s vineyards, let us learn the lessons from the true story that we meditate on. Let us accept the rebukes that we received from God’s Word. Let us repent, let us amend our ways, that we may serve God in the proper way and be pleasers to Him.*

*As a church, let us learn our lessons to be in God’s standard and expectation. Let us fear Him and do what is right and just in His sight.*

***My Prayer:*** Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who dies for my sins on the cross and rose from the dead to give me eternal life.

*Thank you for your word that reminded me of your Word and your invitation to me once again to serve you wholeheartedly.*

*Let us repent of our sins. \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Lord I repent from the following sins: laziness, lack of commitment, my non willingness to suffer, and non willingness to face and deal with sins and corruption inside the body of Christ.*

*Lord I commit myself to serve you in accordance to your Word and law. Lord encourages me and takes my discouragement and upholds me with your grace to go on further forward to do your work and your whole will.*

*Lord I pray for my Brothers and Sisters who repented and who are willing now to serve you wholeheartedly, Lord refill them with the Holy Spirit and encourage them and give them the spiritual gifts that they need in their lives to serve you more effectively. Lord uses their lives and make it a good testimony to others to know you and follow you.*

*Lord I pray for us as a Church of God, continue to cleanse us from spots and blemishes and perfect us and take us to the stage of growth and maturity that you wants us to be. Lord increases our faith and our trust in you. Lord fights the battle for us. Lord leads us to evangelize and reach out new people and to disciple them. Lord helps us to start new Bible studies and to plant new congregation for the church. Lord protects us and provide for us. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.*

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