### 1 Samuel

## Chapter 6

1Well threafter, the Chest of Jehovah just laid there in a Philistine field for 7 months, and soon their land became overrun with mice! 2So the Philistines called a meeting of their priests, clairvoyants, and witches, and they asked:  
  
 ‘What should we do with the Chest of Jehovah? Tell us how we can go about returning it to where it belongs!’  
  
3And they replied:  
  
 ‘If you return the Chest of the Sacred Agreement of Jehovah the God of IsraEl, return it empty.  
  
 ‘For by doing this, you’ll really upset them… But the thing will be settled. [Their God] will no longer [oppress you] and everyone will be healed [from the plague].’  
  
4Then [the leaders] asked:  
  
 ‘But, what should we do to make up for all the torment that it caused us?’  
  
And they replied:  
  
 5‘Each of the 5 Philistine governors should send along a gold [image of their] buttocks, since the fault was theirs… Both the rulers and the people.  
  
 ‘Also, send along a representation of 5 gold mice, the type that are overrunning the land.  
  
 ‘However, [don’t forget to] give glory to Jehovah if you want Him to [stop being angry] with you, your gods, and your land. 6Don’t allow Him to oppress your hearts the way that He oppressed the hearts of the Egyptians and their pharaoh... For it was only after He mocked them that [His people] were finally set free.  
  
 7‘So now, take a new wagon and two first-born oxen that have given birth to their first calves, and hook them to a yoke. Then hitch the oxen to the wagon and lock their calves inside the temple.  
  
 8‘Next, take the Chest of Jehovah and put it on the wagon, then replace the things in the Chest with the gold representations of your torment.  
  
 9‘After that, send it on; and if it travels across their border continuing on to BethShemesh, we’ll know that He’s the One who brought all those evil things upon us.  
  
 ‘But if it doesn’t, we’ll know that it was just a coincidence.’  
  
10Well, that’s what the Philistines did. They took two first-born oxen and hitched them to the wagon (after locking their calves inside their temple). 11Then they put the Chest of Jehovah on the wagon and placed the gold mice and the images of their buttocks inside the chest 12(after removing all the [sacred] things that were in there).  
  
Thereafter, they sent it along the road to BethShemesh… And [the oxen] didn’t turn to the right or to the left!  
  
Meanwhile, all the Philistine governors followed behind it until it had reached the borders of BethShemesh.  
  
  
13Well at the time, the people of BethShemesh were out harvesting their wheat in the valley. And when they saw the Chest of Jehovah, they started cheering and ran to meet it.  
  
14Then they took the wagon into the field of JoShua (which was near BethShemesh) and they led it up to a huge rock, where they split the wood of the wagon and sacrificed the oxen as whole burnt offerings to Jehovah.  
  
15Thereafter, the Levites took the Chest of Jehovah and removed the items of gold that were in it, placing them all on that large rock.  
And there the men of BethShemesh sacrificed the whole burnt offerings (along with other sacrifices) to Jehovah.  
  
  
16Meanwhile, the 5 Philistine governors were watching all of this. Then they turned around and headed back to EkRon that day.  
  
17These are the gold buttocks that the Philistines sent to remove the torment of Jehovah:  
  
 • One from AshDod,  
 • One from Gaza,  
 • One from AshKelon,  
 • One from Gath, and  
 • One from EkRon.  
  
18Also, each of the well-fortified Philistine cities sent gold mice, one from each of the 5 governors. And that large rock where they placed the Chest of Jehovah can still be found in the field of JoShua near BethShemesh to this day.  
  
19But then Jehovah struck down the men of BethShemesh because they’d gotten too close to the Chest of Jehovah… He struck down 70 of their [leaders] and 50,000 of their people!  
  
So they went into mourning, because Jehovah had struck so many people with such a great calamity.  
  
20And the people of BethShemesh asked:  
  
 ‘Who can stand in the presence of this holy God Jehovah, and whom can we use to carry this Chest?’  
  
21So they sent messengers to the people of KiriAth JaiRim saying:  
  
 ‘The Philistines have returned the Chest of Jehovah, so please come here and take it!’