

## OUR APPROACH TOWARDS THE SACRED

READ 1 SAMUEL 6 to 7 verse 2.

This chapter is set around 1100BC, towards the end of the Judges' period, when the Philistines were still a distinct tribe.

During this period, a temple had not been built, so the Ark represented the presence of God on earth. In the 1960's, when I joined the Adventist Church in Glasgow the reverence of the 'Sanctuary' was taken very seriously because it was reckoned to be God's house, and therefore Holy and Sacred.

Can we discuss the importance of the Ark in Jewish worship and life around 1100BC?

For seven months, the period for which they held onto the Ark, it appeared to cause their nation great distress. They were racked with disease, some commentators suggesting it may have been some form of bubonic plague. Their priests and diviners suggested it had to be returned with a guilt offering.

Why do you think they considered this to be necessary?

What's the significance of the five gold tumours and five gold mice?

What part do you think the Exodus played in the return of the Ark?

Interesting story about the new cart and two milk cows.....

When harnessed up they were left to their own devices. If they headed toward Beth-shemesh, then it was the Lord who brought the plagues on them. If they do not, then the plagues happened by chance.

How do we determine when God has intervened in our lives, or that an event occurred purely by chance?

It appears that the people of Beth-shemesh who were harvesting in the field at the time when the Ark appeared, were ecstatic.

They chopped up the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering. Do we have an equivalent way today of expressing our appreciation when the Lord has done something remarkable for us?

Worth reading verses 17 and 18 to understand the significance of the number '5'.

God struck down 70 men because they looked inside the Ark. Comment!

Eventually, the Ark ended up in Abinadab's house at Kiriath-jearim. "And all the house of Israel mourned and sought after the Lord. What will make the people of our nation turn to the Lord today?"