

THE STONE OF ABEL

1 Samuel 6:18 (NKJV) and the golden rats, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both fortified cities and country villages, even as far as the large stone of Abel on which they set the ark of the Lord, which stone remains to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.

The Ark of God was taken in battle due to the idolatry of Israel. While the Ark was in Philistine country a great plague hit each city where the Ark was taken. [1 **Samuel 6**] Judgment fell upon those who did not have a covenant with God. God's judgment was heavy upon the Philistines for seven months. Seven speaks of completion or fullness. This speaks of God's complete and perfect judgment upon sin based upon His perfect holiness. They decided to send the Ark back to Israel with some guilt offerings. Along with the Ark they sent golden images of their tumors and of rats that they fashioned by their own hands to be guilt offerings for their sin. They did not realize that only by the shed blood of an unblemished lamb could their guilt be covered. The world does not realize that their guilt will only be removed by the blood of the Lamb of God. Instead they try to fashion their own forgiveness by their own hands and works. The presenting of good deeds by an unbeliever to God is like trying to give Him golden tumors and rats!

The Ark came back into the area of Israel unto the region of Beth Shemesh. This name means "the house of the sun" This term speaks of Christ and His Covenant of grace. Once the Ark was received back to his covenant people then blood offerings were offered to God, which reveal the only way sin and guilt was to be dealt with is by the shedding of blood. [1 **Sam. 6:15**] However, many of that land experienced judgment like the Philistines because they removed the Mercy Seat to look at the contents within the Ark. When the Mercy Seat was removed God's holiness and judgment fell upon those who removed it and looked in the Ark. Once the Mercy Seat was removed then God no longer viewed the blood of the lamb but saw the broken Law, His refused

provision of the manna, and His rejected leadership represented by Aaron's rod that budded. When this happened many were struck dead. Only when the Mercy Seat covered the contents of the Ark were the covenant people of God blessed and favored. After the judgment of the Philistines [non covenant people] and of those of Israel that lifted off the Mercy Seat to view the Law [legalists], the Ark was placed upon the great stone of Abel. This great stone represented the Law. Hebrews tells us that the blood of Christ speaks better things than that of Abel. [Heb. 12:24] Abel's blood cried out for vengeance and judgment after Cain killed him, [Gen. 4:10] but the blood of Christ cries out forgiveness, mercy, grace, and favor forever! The Law was engraved upon stone. The Law is seen by the Great Stone. The Law's demands were great, but Christ, His grace, and His finished work of redemption are greater than the Law! **The Ark was put on top of the great stone of Abel.** This was to reveal that the finished work of Christ's redemption triumphed over sin, judgment, and condemnation of the Law. The Law cries out for Justice but the blood of Jesus cries out for mercy and grace! Many today seek to remove the Mercy Seat in a desire to establish their own righteousness before God. They want to return to a system of personal merit based upon the moral code of the Law. They want to earn the provisions of God and deserve His leading and blessing by their own level of holiness and obedience. In doing this they remove the Mercy Seat which has the blood of Christ sprinkled on it and which intercedes without end on our behalf. Those who lift off the Mercy Seat to seek for blessing and provision by their own performance only experience condemnation, lack, and distance from God. They seek the stone of Abel instead of the Ark that rests upon the stone. **Leave the Ark upon the stone of Abel and leave the Mercy Seat upon the Ark** and you will experience blessing, favor, and only good from your God and Your Heavenly Father.