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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The Israelites reacted to defeat at the hands of the Philistines by calling for the ark of the covenant to be brought into their camp. 4:1-11
  - At God's command the ark of the covenant was a part of the procession that marched around Jericho each day.
  - No indication this instance was at God's direction and the results of the capture of the ark and the death of Hophni and Phinehas support that view.
  - The plan backfired as the Philistines recounted how powerful Israel's "gods" were and they were motivated to fight with all their might.

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The news of the defeat and loss of the ark. 4:12-22
  - Eli was anxious about the ark being taken. Another example of his passivity in allowing his sons to take it.
  - The messenger related to Eli that the Israelites had been defeated, his sons killed, and the ark captured.
  - Eli old, blind and obese fell over backwards from his seat, broke his neck, and died.

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The news of the defeat and loss of the ark. 4:12-22
  - The pregnant wife of Phinehas went into labor when she heard the news, gave birth to a son and died.
  - The child was named Ichabod, which means, there is no glory, since the glory of God as represented by the ark had departed from Israel.

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The ark among the Philistines. 5:1-12
  - The Philistines placed the ark of the Covenant at the city of Ashdod in the temple of their god Dagon as a spoil of war and expression that their god had defeated Yahweh, the God of the Israelites.

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:2-7:2

- The ark among the Philistines. 5:1-12
  - Yahweh began to reveal Himself as the one true God as the image of Dagon was found the next day facedown before the ark and the day after again facedown with the head and hands broken off by the threshold. (See Zephaniah 1:9)

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The ark among the Philistines. 5:1-12
  - A plague soon followed the capture of the ark of the covenant with the following characteristics.
    - Produced “tumors”
    - Associated with rats
    - High fatality rate

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The ark among the Philistines. 5:1-12
  - Although some have associated it with bubonic plague, the National Library of Medicine in a 2007 publication makes a case that the disease was tularemia which “is carried by animals, is transmitted to humans, results in the development of ulceroglandular formations, often misdiagnosed for bubonic plague, and is fatal.”

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The ark among the Philistines. 5:1-12
  - The people of Ashdod sent the ark of the covenant to another one of the five cities of the Philistines, Gath, where the same disease broke out among the people of that city.
  - The ark was then sent to the city of Ekron over the outcry of the people there where they began to experience the same suffering and death.

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The return of the ark of the covenant. 6:1-7:2
  - After seven months the Philistines determined to return the ark of the covenant to Israel.
  - They sought the counsel of their priests and diviners who gave this counsel:
    - Send it back with offerings of gold made in the form of the tumors and mice.
    - They reminded the people of what had happened to Egypt hundreds of years before when Pharaoh had hardened his heart and resisted the god of the Israelites.

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The return of the ark of the covenant. 6:1-7:2
  - After seven months the Philistines determined to return the ark of the covenant to Israel.
  - They sought the counsel of their priests and diviners who gave this counsel:
    - They proposed a test in which milk cows that had never borne a yoke would be separated from their calves, yoked to a cart, and allowed to proceed without any prodding or direction. If the cows returned the ark of the covenant back of the land of Israel under these conditions, they would know that it was the God of Israel who had caused the plague.

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The return of the ark of the covenant. 6:1-7:2
  - After seven months the Philistines determined to return the ark of the covenant to Israel.
  - They sought the counsel of their priests and diviners who gave this counsel:
    - Although lowing for the calves they were leaving behind, the cows made a bee line to Beth-shemesh, a border town between the Israelites and Philistines.

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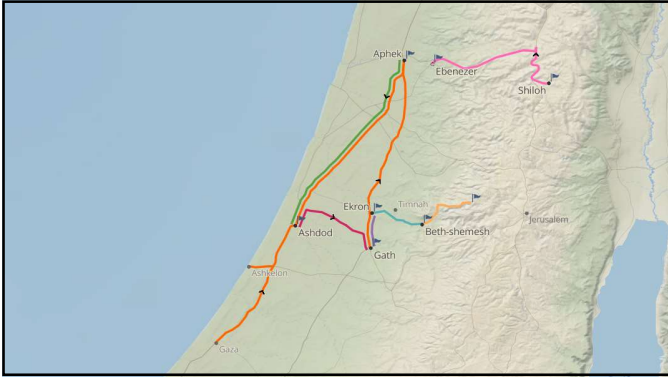
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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The return of the ark of the covenant. 6:1-7:2
  - The cows stopped in a field belonging to Joshua of Bethshemesh.
    - The people working the wheat harvest rejoiced in the return of the ark.
    - The people sacrificed the cows using the wood of the cart to fuel the burnt offering.
    - The ark was set on the large stone along with the box containing the offering.

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The return of the ark of the covenant. 6:1-7:2
  - The cows stopped in a field belonging to Joshua of Bethshemesh.
    - All this was witnessed by the five rulers of the Philistines.
    - The offerings consisted of one golden replica of the tumors for each of the five cities of the Philistine, Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. It contained additional replicas of mice representing all of the cities and villages under the rule of the rulers of each of these cities.

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The return of the ark of the covenant. 6:1-7:2
  - God struck down 70 men of Beth-shemesh for “looking upon the ark of Yahweh”.
  - The men of Beth-shemesh reached out to the men of Kiriath-jearim to take the ark.

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The loss and return of the Ark of the Covenant 4:1-7:2

- The return of the ark of the covenant. 6:1-7:2
  - The ark resided in the house of Abinadab under the care of Eleazar who was consecrated to take charge of it.
  - The ark remained there for 20 years. (2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13-16 gives the account of David bringing the ark back to the Tent of Meeting.)
    - The only mention of the ark of the covenant in that 20-year period is 1 Samuel 14:18 during the reign of Saul.

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