

1 Samuel 4:1b-11

The capturing of the Ark

Now the Israelites went out to fight against the Philistines. The Israelites camped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines at Aphek.

² The Philistines deployed their forces to meet Israel, and as the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand of them on the battlefield.

³ When the soldiers returned to camp, the elders of Israel asked, "Why did the LORD bring defeat upon us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the LORD'S covenant from Shiloh, so that it may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies."

⁴ So the people sent men to Shiloh, and they brought back the ark of the covenant of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim. And Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

⁵ When the ark of the LORD'S covenant came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook.

⁶ Hearing the uproar, the Philistines asked, "What's all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?" When they learned that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp,

⁷ the Philistines were afraid. "A god has come into the camp," they said. "We're in trouble! Nothing like this has happened before.

⁸ Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? They are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the desert.

⁹ Be strong, Philistines! Be men, or you will be subject to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Be men, and fight!"

¹⁰ So the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers.

¹¹ The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

QUESTIONS

1. How can we know early on that Israel will not be successful in battle?
2. In what ways are we tempted to get lazy in our battle against sin?
3. Did the leaders of Israel make a good or bad decision in verse 3?
4. What was their decision based on?
5. In verses 9-10, why were the Philistines victorious?
6. When enemies of God are successful what is really going on?

Compare verse 11 to 1 Sam. 2:34

1 Samuel 4:12-22

The Death of Eli

¹² That same day a Benjamite ran from the battle line and went to Shiloh, his clothes torn and dust on his head.

¹³ When he arrived, there was Eli sitting on his chair by the side of the road, watching, because his heart feared for the ark of God. When the man entered the town and told what had happened, the whole town sent up a cry.

¹⁴ Eli heard the outcry and asked, "What is the meaning of this uproar?" The man hurried over to Eli,

¹⁵ who was ninety-eight years old and whose eyes were set so that he could not see.

¹⁶ He told Eli, "I have just come from the battle line; I fled from it this very day." Eli asked, "What happened, my son?"

¹⁷ The man who brought the news replied, "Israel fled before the Philistines, and the army has suffered heavy losses. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured."

¹⁸ When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man and heavy. He had led Israel forty years.

¹⁹ His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and near the time of delivery. When she heard the news that the ark of God had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labor and gave birth, but was overcome by her labor pains.

²⁰ As she was dying, the women attending her said, "Don't despair; you have given birth to a son." But she did not respond or pay any attention.

²¹ She named the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel"—because of the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband.

²² She said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe Eli's demeanor when we see him in v. 13?
2. Eli had been successful in mentoring Samuel, yet failed as a father. Which seemed to effect him the most?
3. How can our families be neglected, while we are doing apparent Godly service?
4. What part of the report effects Eli the most?
5. Phinehas' son was named Ichabod in reference to the Ark, but how was it even more correct in relationship to God's presence with Israel?
6. How can God's glory depart from His people today?

1 Samuel 5: 1-12

The Affliction of the Philistines

After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

² Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon.

³ When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! They took Dagon and put him back in his place.

⁴ But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained.

⁵ That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor any others who enter Dagon's temple at Ashdod step on the threshold.

⁶ The LORD'S hand was heavy upon the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation upon them and afflicted them with tumors.

⁷ When the men of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of the god of Israel must not stay here with us, because his hand is heavy upon us and upon Dagon our god."

⁸ So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and asked them, "What shall we do with the ark of the god of Israel?" They answered, "Have the ark of the god of Israel moved to Gath." So they moved the ark of the God of Israel.

⁹ But after they had moved it, the LORD'S hand was against that city, throwing it into a great panic. He afflicted the people of the city, both young and old, with an outbreak of tumors.

¹⁰ So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. As the ark of God was entering Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, "They have brought the ark of the god of Israel around to us to kill us and our people."

¹¹ So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and said, "Send the ark of the god of Israel away; let it go back to its own place, or it will kill us and our people." For death had filled the city with panic; God's hand was very heavy upon it.

¹² Those who did not die were afflicted with tumors, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven.

QUESTIONS

What was the dismemberment of the idol Dagon intended to illustrate?

What was the role of the hand of the Lord?

How can we be haphazard in our treatment of God's presence?

APPLICATION

As we celebrate the resurrection of Christ we must understand our complete dependence on the power of God. He is not a good luck charm or a mere positive influence. He is the Lord God Almighty we should humbly submit ourselves to Him, live for His glorious presence, and do what He says.

We must always confess the truth of Christ as Scripture says, "²²Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

1 Cor. 1:22-24

FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON March 28th, 2010

The Glory and Power of the Lord

Focal Passage: 1 Samuel 4 - 5

Cross References: Exodus 25:8, 1 Samuel 5:9-12, 2 Samuel 6, Psalm 26:8, Hebrews 9:5

Central Idea: Israel did not consult God and went into battle. After suffering a demoralizing defeat they brought in the Ark of the Covenant to gain an upper hand over their enemies. They were again defeated by the Philistines who took the ark and suffered their own trials. God cannot be manipulated and His presence and power should not be taken for granted.

Lesson Idea: There is great power in the name and presence of our Lord. We must be very careful when we invoke the name of the Lord. We must submit ourselves to the will of God and humbly obey Him. God is in control and obedience is the mark of true allegiance to God's sovereign power.

Historical Context: The Philistines, inveterate enemies of Israel during the latter half of the period of the judges and the early years of the Israelite monarchy, are mentioned nearly 150 times in 1 and 2 Samuel alone. They were so entrenched and dominant in the coastal areas and the foothills of Canaan that they eventually gave their name

(Palestine) to the entire land. Although their connections with various Aegean cultures have been verified through decades of intensive research, their origins remain somewhat obscure Youngblood, Ronald F. "1. The capture of the ark (4:1b-11)" In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*: Volume 3. 594.

Bible in a Year Daily Readings

March 21st - 28th, 2010

Mar 21 Ruth 1-4
Mar 22 1 Sam. 1-3
Mar 23 1 Sam. 4-7
Mar 24 1 Sam. 8-12
Mar 25 1 Sam. 13-14
Mar 26 1 Sam. 15-16
Mar 27 1 Sam. 17-18
Mar 28 1 Sam. 19-21

Read the Bible Through Highlights of the Week: March 21st -28th, 2010

Ruth 2-4 Ruth and Boaz
Ruth 4 The genealogy of David
1 Samuel 1 The birth of Samuel
1 Samuel 2 Hannah's Prayer
1 Samuel 3 The call of Samuel
1 Samuel 10 Saul made King
1 Samuel 15 God rejects Saul
1 Samuel 16 David anointed by Samuel
1 Samuel 17 David and Goliath
1 Samuel 19 Saul tries to kill David
1 Samuel 20 David and Johnathan