

1 Samuel 4

King James Version (KJV)

4 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. (Ebenezer = stone of help) (Aphek = a fortress)

(Ebenezer wasn't named Ebenezer at this time. Samuel will name it about 20 years later, in Chapter-7:12)

(By now, the Philistines had military posts throughout Israel. Israel was corrupt with perversion and idolatry. As the leaders of a nation go, so goes the nation. God allowed the Philistines to punish Israel because of their idol worship and their perversions)

²And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men. (Did God tell them to go to war? No. Samuel may or may not have done this on his own)

(The Israelites needed to repent, and stop the sinning. They had a lot to put back in order. They needed to return to God first, for His mercy and His protection. God chastises those He loves, when they go awry. HE does it to wake us up and to help us see the light) Hebrews-12:5-8

³And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. (Eli had been allowing his perverted sons <priests> to corrupt the worship of God)

(God was not happy with Israel and didn't protect them against the Philistines. They're not repentant in the least. They think that the Ark of the Covenant is just some magic object that they can use as a weapon. The Ark isn't going to deliver them. Only God can do that)

⁴So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. (Two corrupt priests carrying the

Ark of God. God won't be with these two. They have been judged to death for cursing God)

⁵ And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

⁶ And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. (The Israelites are happy to see the Ark, but no one has repented for their sins. The Ark is only a symbol. It's an inanimate object. It's God who does the saving)

⁷ And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. (The Philistines have more respect for God than the Israelites do. The Philistines say that God has arrived. Israel says that the Ark has arrived)

⁸ Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. (Even the heathen nations knew about God and how He had mightily neutralized Egypt to free Israel. They remembered how God came into the Promised Land before Israel, to defeat the Canaanites)

(Ironically, it is the Israelites who have forgotten God; not the heathen peoples. God is about to correct the Israelites, so that they might wake up and remember Him; and all that He has done for them)

⁹ Be strong and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. (The Philistine leaders are pumping up the troops, in order to raise their courage before the battle ensues)

¹⁰ And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. (Israel was involved in idol worship and apostasy to God. No one was repenting at this time, so God was not protecting them. Even their priests were corrupt)

¹¹ And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain. (God's judgment on these two perverted priests is completed)

¹² And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. (These were signs of sadness and mourning)

¹³ And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. (As high priest, Eli was responsible for the Ark and for the tabernacle of God. Now, he lost the Ark to the Philistines. Also, Israel lost 30,000 men)

¹⁴ And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli. (By now, Eli was blind from old age)

¹⁵ Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

¹⁶ And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?

¹⁷ And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. (This could have been a sign that God had removed Eli from being a high priest. God took the Ark of the Covenant away from him)

¹⁸ And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. (heavy = stupid or thick – better translation; God's judgment on Eli is completed)

(Eli allowed his sons to pervert his ministry. He should have sided with God and stopped his sons. Follow God's Word, not your family – is the lesson here)

¹⁹ And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

²⁰ And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. (She died in childbirth)

²¹ And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. (Ichabod = the glory is departed<Hebrew>)

²² And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken. (She believed in God. She understood why all of these bad results were happening to Israel)