

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 2ND-3RD, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

CAPTIVE (1 SAMUEL 4:1-11)

"ISRAEL WENT OUT TO MEET THE PHILISTINES..."

Israel goes into an unnecessary battle against the Philistines. The reason for calling it unnecessary is that the people of Israel **never sought God to see if it was His will** for them to go into battle with the Philistines.

- **Even though God didn't plan this battle for them, He will use it to display His perfect and sovereign will.**

ARROGANCE YIELDS TO DEFEAT

After they were defeated and lost 4,000 men, they started to wonder why God would allow this. Before stopping in their tracks to seek God, they instead go grab the Ark of the Covenant and bring it into battle.

- **They relied upon their religious traditions rather than their relationship with God. How often do we do the same?**

"WOE TO US..."

Israel gets excited and thinks this battle will work out in their favor. This causes concern in the Philistines. Now they are asking, who will rescue us from these gods?

- The Philistines are **polytheistic**. In the book of Judges, we see the people of Israel turn their back on God to worship other "gods."
- In Matthew 7:3 Jesus says, "Why do you look at the splinter in your brother's eye but don't notice the beam of wood in your own eye?"
- **In the Church today, we are quick to sacrifice our relationship with God at the altar of the idols of self, money, marital status, busyness, entertainment, addictions, pastors, etc.**

"No one can serve two masters, since he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other." - **Matthew 6:24a**

"NOW BE MEN AND FIGHT!"

The Philistines heard about what happened in Egypt, but instead of backing down, they decided it was better to fight and die than become slaves to the people of Israel and their God.

- Israel is defeated again. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas die (see also 1 Samuel 2:34). The ark of God is captured by the Philistines.

EFFECTS OF SIN (1 SAMUEL 4:12-22)

ANXIETY AND GRIEF

A Benjaminite (from the tribe of Benjamin) leaves the battle and displays the signs of mourning. Eli anxiously waits because he knows the importance and significance of what the ark of God means to Israel.

- **Eli's poor leadership has failed his family and now the people of Israel, causing an outcry of grief and hopelessness.**

BLINDNESS

Eli gets told the report in four parts with each becoming more tragic than the previous one. Eli is so distraught he falls backward, breaks his neck, and dies.

- Eli was physically and spiritually blind. **Spiritual blindness causes us to not see the dangers and destructiveness of our poor choices and actions.**

OUR SIN DOESN'T JUST AFFECT US

Eli's daughter-in-law hears the news of the ark of God, the deaths of her father-in-law and husband, and she goes into labor.

- She gives birth to a son, which is meant to be a joyful moment because the birth of a son meant the heritage and line of their family would continue.
- Ichabod is the beginning of this new line from Eli who will be marked by the effects of the sins of his father, uncle, and grandfather.
- **Our sin doesn't just affect us; it has the capability of affecting innocent generations. When the opportunity for repentance comes, we need to take it seriously.**

HOLY JUDGMENT (1 SAMUEL 5:1-12)

DAGON

Dagon is one of many gods the Philistines worshiped. He is the god of crop fertility but is depicted as a mermaid.

- The importance of the Philistines taking the ark of God after their victory in battle was that it showed how Dagon must have given them the victory, and thus, Israel's God **must serve** Dagon since he was more powerful.

NO RIVAL

The ark of God is just the representation of God's presence. God shows his presence by making Dagon fall before the ark.

- The Philistines were so oblivious and ignorant that they decided to prop Dagon back up to showcase his towering over God.
- **A god isn't a god if it needs the help of human hands to make it a god.**

NO EQUAL

The next morning, Dagon is headless and both of his hands are broken off. This time, in the position of bowing down to the ark of God.

- **In the end, every idol and every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. God is the one true God. He's the only One worthy of our praise and worship.**

THE DARKNESS HATES THE LIGHT

The Philistines, the people of Ashdod, the city of Gath, and the Ekronites all reject the presence of God both physically and spiritually.

- Because of their rejection, God judges the people and the cities by striking them with tumors, grief, tragedy, and death, foreshadowing the eternal judgment .

IDOLS

- The idols that we create will be the idols we end up worshipping.
- When we do have idols, we end up breaking the greatest command in all of Scripture.
- What are the idols (addictions, hobbies, etc.) in our lives that we have made?
- Are we willing to surrender those idols to God?

SIN

- Satan is looking for anything to seek to distract, kill, and destroy us.
- Our sin doesn't just affect us. Sin will lead to death in our spiritual lives, marriages, families, etc.
- The mistake of thinking sin is innocent will jeopardize the innocence of the generations to come.

JUDGMENT

- God is Holy and will judge all who put other idols before Him.
- The time for repentance is now. God wants to offer us grace, mercy, and forgiveness. This starts with us sacrificing our idols before Him.

"This is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light and avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed. But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God." - **John 3:19-21**

JUDGMENT (CONT.)

- **Are we willing to surrender those idols to God?**