

FIRST SAMUEL

Lesson 9: Chapter 4, Israel is Smitten by the Philistines

19 August 2016

VS. 1 **Israel's Self-Confidence:** they trusted themselves instead of God. Everything they did was right; they did what they were supposed to do. The problem is that they left God out of it entirely (Matt. 6:33, Deut. 20:1-4).

VS. 2 **The Result:** they went to battle without God's help and they were badly defeated and 4,000 men were killed.

VS. 3 **God Gets the Blame:** instead of repenting and seeking God's forgiveness, they blame Him for the defeat and then continue to take actions without Him.

They Turn to Religion: instead of asking God to save them, they look for some "THING" that they *hope* can save them. They place their hopes in the ark of the covenant hoping "IT may save us." That is religion. If you're trusting an "IT" to save you (good works, baptism, church membership, etc.), then you are lost. Jesus Christ is the only Savior.

The Ark of the Covenant was given to Israel for a memorial; to remember how God had taken care of them in the wilderness. Now they believe it has some power to save them.

This is still practiced today by some churches who teach that communion (a memorial) and baptism (a memorial) must be partaken of for salvation.

Bible illustration: the account of the brazen serpent (Num. 21:5-8, John 3:14). Good King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1-5) had to break that brazen serpent in pieces because the children of Israel "did burn incense to it." IT! Religion can't save you!

Bible illustration: Gideon's father, Joash (Judges 6:25-32). If Baal is a god, let him plead for himself.

VSS. 4-6 **The Israelites Rejoice at the Sight of the Ark of the Covenant:** They shouted so loud that it echoed and the Philistines heard it and trembled.

Bible illustration: Exodus 32:15-24. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments, he heard a great shout in the camp. They had created a golden calf to worship because man is incurably religious. They lost faith in the TRUE God (Heb. 11:1, 6)—and created something they could see with their eyes.

VS. 7 **There is no difference** (Rom. 3:22). The Israelites believed the ark was their God. Likewise, when the Philistines learned that the ark was there, they said, “God is come into the camp.” They’re the same! Either you trust God or you trust yourself (Some “IT”). Those are the only two choices. You don’t need to learn about all religions because they’re all the same.

VSS. 8-18 **The Philistines decide to fight.** They say, “Quit yourselves like men, and fight” (vs. 9). The Apostle Paul used these words in 1 Corinthians 16:13. “**Quit**” doesn’t mean to stop doing something. It is an archaic usage that means “*to do your part, to behave yourself, to bear yourself.*” So “**quit yourselves like men**” means do your part like a man; act like a man.

Israel is Defeated. Thirty thousand footmen were killed by the Philistines (vs. 10).

The Ark was Taken (vs. 11). God was not taken.

Eli and Phinehas were Slain (vss. 11, 17). Fulfilling God’s promise (1 Samuel 2:34).

A Messenger Reports all the bad news to Eli and the rest of the city (vss. 12-17).

Eli Fell Backward off his Seat, Broke His Neck, and Died (vs. 18). See Exodus 13:13.

VSS. 19-22 **Eli’s daughter in law, Phinehas’ wife dies in childbirth** (vs. 19). She named the child I-chabod, which means “The glory is departed from Israel.” Contrast this with the joy of Hannah and her song of praise in chapter 2 after she gave birth to a son.

JEREMIAH 7:12: God said, “Go see what I did in Shiloh.” This event in Shiloh was used as a warning when the temple was built. The ark never returned to Shiloh. Judgment must begin at the house of God (1 Peter 4:17).

1 SAMUEL 4:18: Eli “**had judged Israel forty years.**” Verse 15 said he was 98 years old. God didn’t call this man to ministry until he was 58 years old.

Moses was eighty years old when God called him to service (Exod. 7:7, Deut. 24:7). It’s never too late to serve the Lord. It’s never too late for you to bring forth some fruit for God (Psalm 92:14).
