

Israel in a state of moral & spiritual decline—*every man did what was right in his own eyes*. The priesthood was corrupt so God got a woman in order to get a man to turn things around. Hannah dedicated Samuel and brought Him to the tabernacle to serve under Eli. God's word was rare in those days until God began speaking to little Samuel w/ prophecy dealing w/ household of Eli. His household no longer priests in Israel and H & P will die. So God is now speaking after 300 years or so...

1 Thus the word of Samuel came to all Israel (when they paid attention). Now Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle and camped beside Ebenezer while the Philistines camped in Aphek. (good time to seek Samuels help) 2 And the Philistines drew up in battle array to meet Israel. When the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield. (why not find out from Samuel strategy for battle or even if should go out to battle—problem when we pick a fight)

Origin of the Philistines uncertain but believed to come from Greece & Cyprus or Crete & settled in costal area from Joppa to Gaza **50 miles long 15 miles wide**. Includes Ashdod, Gath, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron from which we get the term Palestine—originating out of Philistine settlements. Excavations uncovered smelting furnaces—they skilled in metal works—common item excavated were **beer mugs**—heavy drinkers & very warlike people *Pr 20:1 NIV Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise*.-not completely subdued until David's reigned.

Word supplied but not applied-to Samuel for all Israel **if** they ask—defeat takes place spiritually first before all other defeats.

3 When the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? (blamming God for their own sin) Let us take to ourselves from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that it may come among us and deliver us from the power of our enemies." (lucky charm/rabbits foot/ark to deliver—superstitious religion) 4 So the people sent to Shiloh, and from there they carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts who sits above the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. (why would God deliver w/ corrupt priests and a box of wood and gold) 5 And it happened as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, that all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth resounded (cheering for a box, trusting in what now is an idol-like pagans)

Unwilling to acknowledge their own sin—Adam *'this woman, you gave me'*
Pr 19:3 A man's own folly subverts his way, yet his heart rages against the LORD.

Defeat should bring brokenness & examination—*God chastens those He loves*. Blaming God says a lot about the one doing the blaming—self centered & shallow in their relationship w/ God.

Showing just how shallow they are--using Ark as **good luck charm**, rabbits foot—all the while no prayer or seeking Samuel for direction. **Plus** spiritual leaders were corrupt, ark brought by crooked priests Hophni & Phinehas
Nu 32:23...sinning against the LORD; & you may be sure that your sin will find you out.

They were loud like a *noisy gong, clanging symbol* thinking shouts & a box will deliver them. Nowhere does it say they prayed. Carnal mind looks to symbols to deliver them—*fish of car—energy bracelet—pyramid on head*
6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What does the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" Then they understood that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp. 7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp." And they said, "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. (pagans knew more about Israel's God than Israel, pagans feared God's presence—but God wasn't there only a box representing God—caring a bible not help if don't know author)
8"Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who smote the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness.(this before ark built—pagans smarter & wiser, than Hebrews-knew Israel's history) 9 *"Take courage and be men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been slaves to you; therefore, be men and fight."* 10 *So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent, and the slaughter was very great; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. 11 And the ark of God was **taken**; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died. (believers lose to unbelievers if their religion/Christianity is only a ritual and not a reality of personal savior)*

Incited enemy to fight harder-flesh against flesh & God not a part of it. Pagans knew of & feared God of Israel Who did all the miracles—**actual vs virtual**. Israel giving wrong impression of God—a thing, built w/ human hands-power in the box to deliver not the person of God a living being.

So God allowed defeat to show He's not God in a box—But He is jealous God for His name and reputation.

Privilege does not promise protection—when it's abused as w/ H & P.

Ark taken, **seized as trophy**, judgment on Israel. A discipline--not abandon but to turn back to God. God's love is the dominant & motivating factor in all He does. A good task carried out by bad men resulted in loss at the hands of the enemy—God's discipline—afterward God will deal w/ enemy. **Here 2:24 came to pass.** When we leave God we leave His protection. ***Jer 7:12 NIV "Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for my Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel.***

They Boasted in God while abusing Him—celebrate Ark & ignore God.

Emboldens enemies--Public, tv, visible preachers do stupid things & bring shame to name of Lord, **emboldens** enemies to come against Church.

12 Now a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes torn and dust on his head. 13 When he came, behold, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road eagerly watching, because his heart was trembling for the ark of God. (not his sons-exasperated) So the man came to tell it in the city, and all the city cried out. (I would have cried out 'thanks God you've dealt w/ worthless priest who bring shame to your name-& ministry & sorry ark is in hands of enemy) 14 When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, "What does the noise of this commotion mean?" Then the man came hurriedly and told Eli. 15 Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were set so that he could not see. 16 And the man said to Eli, "I am the one who came from the battle line. Indeed, I escaped from the battle line today." And he said, "How did things go, my son?" (asks a question he should know answer & yet a good man but weak, spiritually incompetent)

Torn clothes a sign of deep mourning & grief. Eli tho he's old & lost his spiritual edge in ministry—he's never lost his concern for God & Israel.

God's true leaders are more concerned for God's reputation & interests than their own. Are in turmoil & unable to sleep when these at risk.

17 Then the one who brought the news answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has also been a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been taken." (we don't want to believe it until it's too late-reap w/ sow) 18 And it came about when he mentioned the ark of God that Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy. Thus he judged Israel forty years. (heart attack or died of grief—a good man but weak, concerned for God & people but lost will to deal w/ sin & stand for Lord)

Eli is old 98 yrs & heavy & almost blind. He bears the news of Israel's defeat, sons death but collapses when hears Ark taken. He was concerned for Israel & sons but **double** concern for Ark which represented God. He's jolted off his seat by heart attack or fainting & broke his neck.

Eli indulged his sons & paid the price, spiritually & physically. It happens today in government & the church. *Matt 10:37* "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

Eli is a sad & pathetic figure--too weak to discipline his sons, allowing them to corrupt & bring shame to the ministry & worship of God---yet honestly having a heart for the things of God. **Enabler** of his sons getting away w/ crimes against God yet deep down he loved the Lord. **An enigma**

19 Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was pregnant and about to give birth; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she kneeled down and gave birth, for her pains came upon her. 20 And about the time of her death the women who stood by her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son." But she did not answer or pay attention. 21 And she called the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," because the ark of God was taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband. (no joy in childbirth where should have been as thought about the spiritual condition of Israel-married to cheating husband she the spiritual one in the home). 22 And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God was taken."

News brought on labor pains as she lay dying--symbolically named her son **Ichabod**-- 'no glory' or **departed glory**.

When God's glory departs, people look for symbols, icons, images to replace or remind them. When a person loses hope & spirit dies, they lose the will to live—death soon follows as w/ her.

She is a spiritual woman, her dying concern was the Ark & what it represented--the glory of God departed. Sad to have these kinds of last words when dying but we need to realize when God's glory departs from one place His glory appears in another. He is never w/o a witness.

Lord purify our hearts & let your glory fall-----

You will never hear dying words such as 'I wish I would have made more money or I wish I would have sinned more.

Playwright Wilson Mizner (1876-1933) *was on his deathbed* When a priest said, "I'm sure you want to talk to me" **"Why should I talk to you? I've just been talking to your boss."**

Thomas Edison (1847-1931) "It is very beautiful over there."

Jamaican reggae singer **Bob Marley** (1945-1981) "Money can't buy life."

My mother's last words to me were at first simply, "I want to go home". I told her she couldn't go back home, she was too ill. She then clarified for me by adding, "To Jesus".

My grandmother had always told my grandfather, "I have to die first, because I cannot stand the thought of living without you." When she had a heart attack, she looked at him, smiled & said "Told you I would go first" & died . Grandpa just shook his head & said "She always did have to have the last word, & loved it when she was right."

Ps 90:12 So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.