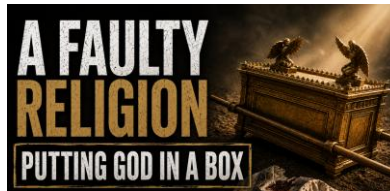


Expositional Preaching from the Authorized Version of the Holy Bible

Scriptures for Today: 1 Samuel 4:1-22 – God’s warning of judgment comes to pass

Today’s Message:

“A Faulty Religion”



INTRODUCTION

Last week, we learned how bad things had gotten when *ere the lamp of God went out*. We also saw God’s personal calling of Samuel to obey Him and to speak His words of truth to another generation. Today, we will witness the judgment of God and the fall of Eli’s house. This true historical account will help us to see our own time in history quite clearly. We will see how the children of Israel put their trust and faith in a box – the ark of God. They will mistakenly think that the box possessed the power of God. They wanted what God could do for them without submitting themselves to God and His clear commands in Scripture. They tried to use God; the results were catastrophic! This is God’s message...

LEARNING TOGETHER

❖ The Text 1 Samuel 4:1-22

A. The Unexpected Defeat 4:1-2

1. God’s people were defeated by the enemy in **BATTLE**.

1Samuel 4:1 – And the word of Samuel came to ALL Israel.

Now **Israel went out against the Philistines to battle...**

1Samuel 4:2 – ... Israel was smitten... slew of the army... **about four thousand men**.

“The word of Samuel” – The 1st words God spoke to him: judgment on Eli’s house + Israel
“Israel was smitten... four thousand” – if God’s people are defeated, study the context!

THE SUBJECT OF
SAMUEL’S WORDS

God’s judgment is coming...

KEY TRUTH

A difficult circumstance is not automatically a sign of God’s judgment (e.g. Job). However, a difficulty should cause a Christian to ask:

Is there sin in my life?

Am I walking in obedience to God?

Is there something God has told me to change that I am not obeying in my life?

SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE

Hormah	Numbers 14:40-45	Israel presumed victory; God had said, “Go <u>not</u> up”
Ai	Joshua 7:1-5	Israel was defeated due to sin in the camp!
Moabites	Judges 3:12-15	Israel did evil; God strengthened the enemy!
Midianites	Judges 6:1-6	Israel did evil again; God strengthened the enemy!
Benjamin	Judges 20:17-26	Israel suffers defeat; they seek God in humility!

Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

KEY TRUTHS

- The defeat should have gotten their attention; they should **EXAMINE** their lives!
- God allowed them to experience defeat. He warned them by Samuel! **(3:12)**
- Instead, they will choose to blame God and not deal with their sin issues!

“And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.”

The word of God has now made its way out to all of God’s people.

There is no cloak for their sin. They know what they are doing and how God feels about it.

They will fail to ask, “Lord, what are you trying to show me?” **Psalms 139:23-24**

B. The Religious Substitute

4:3-11

2. God's people blamed God and ran to the **ARK** to save them!

Important Note

Notice their solution!

*They did not say,
"Let us seek the LORD." They said,
"Let us fetch the ark." They were not seeking God. They wanted to use God for His blessings!*

1Samuel 4:3 – ... the elders of Israel said, **Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us...**

Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh...

that, when it cometh among us, IT MAY SAVE US... our enemies.

1Samuel 4:4 – ... two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, **were there with the ark...**

1Samuel 4:5 – ... when the ark... came... camp, all Israel shouted... a great shout...

1Samuel 4:6 – ... when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout...

1Samuel 4:7 – And the Philistines were afraid... Woe unto us! ...

1Samuel 4:10 – ... Israel was smitten... a very great slaughter... thirty thousand...

1Samuel 4:11 – And the ark of God was taken... Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

"Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us" – they knew God is Lord over all human affairs!

"Let us fetch the ark... it may save us" – it was misplaced faith; beware of bad thinking!

"The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain" – God's word was true! Amen.

KEY TRUTHS

- They wanted God's presence and power without obeying His words. **Deut 28:1-2**
- **Putting God in a box!** Thinking... "If I do this religious thing, God must bless me."
- They were trusting in a religious symbol (thing) without actually trusting in God!
- Their faith was misplaced – they shouted, they were confident, and they **LOST!**
- The great irony is that the Philistines were afraid of the God of Israel.
- You cannot manufacture God's blessing through religious activity (**superstition**).
- It is scary to consider how confident they were in their **faulty RELIGION!**

Application

You can:

*Have a Bible
Go to Church
Sing the Hymns
Be Baptized
Partake Communion
Say Religious things
Do Religious things
Wear Religious things
... and still be walking
in disobedience to God!*

C. The Catastrophic Consequence

4:12-22

3. The word of God came to pass **EXACTLY** as God said.

Psalms 119:160

*Thy word is true
from the beginning:
and every one of thy
righteous judgments
endureth for ever.*

1Samuel 4:17 – ... thy two sons also... are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

1Samuel 4:18 – ... he fell... off the seat ... and he died... judged Israel forty years.

1Samuel 4:19-20 – And his daughter in law... was with child... time of her death...

1Samuel 4:21 – ... she named the child Ichabod... **The glory is departed from Israel...**

1Samuel 4:22 – ... **The glory is departed from Israel: and the ark of God is taken.**

"Dead... he died... death" – the judgment of God had fallen on Eli's house as God said!

"She answered not, neither did she regard it" – without natural affection! Our time!

"The glory is departed... ark... taken" – her greatest tragedy – the ark, the ark, the ark!

KEY TRUTHS

- The Bible is true. Every one of God's righteous judgments endureth for ever!
- What has God already told you to do/change? Are you obeying Christ? **Jn 14:15**

Application

*Are you seeking God's
blessing or God?
Are you using religious
activity to cover up
your disobedience?
Have you departed from
God and His words?*

"Ark" is found 12 times in this chapter. In the OT, it represents God's presence and holiness.

"... Let us fetch the ark of God... that, when it cometh among us, it may save us..."

You cannot seek God's blessings while rejecting God's words. Where are you putting God in a box? What religious practice, tradition, possession, experience, or activity are you trusting to make things right with God while ignoring something He has clearly told you to do?