

GLORY & PRESENCE | Shiloh's Fall

INTRO

Glory & Presence Sermon Series

- [1 Samuel 4, 5, 6](#), along with [2 Samuel 6](#) describe how different people treated the Ark of the Covenant and the consequences of their actions.
- [1 Samuel 4](#) describes the fall of Shiloh, the house of Eli and the loss of the Ark of the Covenant to the Philistines.
- Our story contains a warning against:
 - The consequences of unrepentant sin
 - The error of presumption
 - The neglect of seeking God

The Ark of the Covenant

- What is (was) it?
- What was in it?
 - The stone tablets that contained the law
 - Aaron's staff that budded
 - Some of the manna from the wilderness journey
- Most importantly — the ark of the covenant was associated with God's presence and glory on earth.

Exodus 25:22 ESV

²² There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

Psalm 80:1 ESV

¹ Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock. You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.

Psalm 99:1 ESV

¹ The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

1 Samuel 4:4 ESV

⁴ So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

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CONTEXT LEADING UP TO OUR PASSAGE ([1 SAMUEL 4](#)):

- The ark's journey (along with the Tabernacle/Tent of Meeting):
 - Created/built under the command of God given to Moses in the wilderness—God was pictured in the center of the camp and the people.
 - When Joshua crossed the Jordan, it was when the priests carried the ark and stood in the river that the waters were stopped/diverted upstream and the river dried up for the people to cross.
 - It's seen with Joshua in the promised land at Gilgal and for a short stop in Bethel.
 - By [Joshua 18](#), the ark and the tabernacle are set up in Shiloh and this becomes the center of Israel's devotion to Yahweh. (Where God's presence is most clearly seen — upon the cherubim/ark in the most holy place within the tabernacle/tent of meeting.)
 - This is where the Ark is located when we come to the text. 300-350 years after Joshua set everything up in Shiloh.
- Eli is the judge and priest of Israel.
 - His rule lasts 40 years and is an old old man at the time of our passage.
 - He took in the boy Samuel at a young age and has mentored him in the ministry.
 - However, importantly—Eli's own sons (Hophni & Phinehas) are incredibly wicked.
- God has announced judgment on the house of Eli
 - The sins of Eli's sons have become known to the people
 - Eli hears the evil reports and warns his sons, but noticeably doesn't remove them or discipline them.
 - When God sends a prophet to Eli, he accuses Eli of 'honoring his sons more than the Lord.'

1 Samuel 4:1-4 [ESV](#)

¹ And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. They encamped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines encamped at Aphek. ² The Philistines drew up in line against Israel, and when the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the field of battle. ³ And when the people came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD defeated us today?"

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before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD here from Shiloh, that it may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies.”⁴ So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

1: THE LORD FOUGHT AGAINST ISRAEL.

- **The people are quick to have an accurate assessment of the scene.**
 - Israel suffers a great loss, but nothing compared to what is to come.
- **They ask the right question: Why has the Lord defeated us?**
 - There's a great similarity to [Joshua 7](#) and Israel's defeat following the victory of Jericho.
 - The people of Israel fail in a small battle that should have been won
 - Joshua goes to the Lord in prayer and the Lord revealed that their was sin in the camp.
 - Joshua and the people enact judgment for the blatant sin that occurred and God restored victory.
 - But notice: Joshua SOUGHT the Lord for answers and HEARD from God in how to respond.
- **It's important to distinguish “HOW”.**
 - Notice:
 - V2... Israel was defeated before the Philistines
 - V3... Why has the Lord defeated us?
 - Its not that God turned His hand upon Israel, but rather that He lifted his hand.
 - They went into battles, operating under their own wisdom, NOT leaning and inquiring upon the Lord—therefore they went without him.
 - He judged them by NOT going with them (as we will see)

2: THE PEOPLE SOUGHT TO WIELD THE ARK AS A WEAPON

- **Surely they had better intentions than that... that they were thinking to bring God into their battle.**

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- But that's the problem.
 - They asked the question, but never truly inquired of the Lord.
 - They rushed to just bring the ark and what they thought was the Lord's presence into the battle.
- **They PRESUMED that God was with them.**
 - But they didn't ask what He wanted them to do.
 - They had neglected to deal with their sin.
 - Eli had tolerated his sons sins
 - Reminds me of one of the saddest verses in scripture, when Samson tries to shake himself free one more time but was unaware that the Lord had left him — Samson's sin and foolishness had finally caught up. (Remember this is not the end of Samson's story, but rather a tragic moment).
- **Notice who's in charge of the ark: Hophni & Phinehas**
 - wicked men who used the things of God for their gain
 - wicked men who didn't repent of their sin even though they had lived their whole lives near the glory of His presence.
- **Not only were they PRESUMPTUOUS in their beliefs, but they were attempting to manipulate God.**
 - We'll see in a few moments that not only the house of Eli was wicked, but so were the people.
 - They weren't interested (on a corporate scale) in walking with God—they wanted their idolatry too.
 - They weren't interested in repentance
 - They just wanted to use God for their purposes
 - They sought to force God to fight their battle by bringing him into it, but didn't actually seek him or inquire of him.
 - NOTICE: WHAT'S MISSING IN THE STORY?
 - There's no mention, not one word of prayer.
 - It's worthy pointing out that other than the battle of Jericho, this doesn't seem to be a scriptural practice for 'using the ark'

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⁵ As soon as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the earth resounded. ⁶ And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, “What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?” And when they learned that the ark of the LORD had come to the camp, ⁷ the Philistines were afraid, for they said, “A god has come into the camp.” And they said, “Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. ⁸ Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness. ⁹ Take courage, and be men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you; be men and fight.” ¹⁰ So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell. ¹¹ And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

3: THEIR CONTINUED FAILURE TO REPENT AND SEEK GOD BROUGHT GREATER CONSEQUENCES

- They recognized that God was against them, they asked the right question, but they didn't seek the correct answer.
- The result was the an incredible loss — even more than what the Scriptures fully describe in this passage.
- Hophni and Phinehas had been warned and continued to walk in the hardness of their hearts all the way to their defeat and their graves.
- In the process, the ark of God was captured.
- Shiloh — the city of God — lost the ark and its priests.
 - The tabernacle — represented of their sacrificial system was separated from the manifest PRESENCE and GLORY of God.

1 Samuel 4:12-22 ESV

¹² A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes torn and with dirt on his head. ¹³ When he arrived, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the

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city and told the news, all the city cried out.¹⁴ When Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he said, “What is this uproar?” Then the man hurried and came 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 he who has come from the battle; I fled from the battle today.” And he said, “How did it go, my son?”¹⁷ He who brought the news answered and said, “Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great defeat among the people. Your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured.”¹⁸ As soon as he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.¹⁹ Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant, about to give birth. And when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed and gave birth, for her pains came upon her.²⁰ And about the time of her death the women attending her said to her, “Do not be afraid, for you have borne a son.” But she did not answer or pay attention.²¹ And she named the child Ichabod, saying, “The glory has departed from Israel!” because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband.²² And she said, “The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.”

4: END OF AN ERA

- **The house of Eli has been judged and destroyed.**
 - The very people who were charged with keeping the worship of God right and in order had broken faith with God and violated his holiness and refused to repent.
 - They mistook being and serving in his house for faith and faithfulness
- **Shiloh itself (although not described in this passage) falls to the Philistines and is destroyed.**
 - Archaeological evidence points to its destruction by the Philistines, in this exact time period, following the loss of a battle.
- **Jeremiah and the Psalms contribute to our understanding of why this all happened.**

Jeremiah 7:11-12 ESV

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¹¹ Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the LORD. ¹² Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel.

Psalm 78:56–61 ESV

⁵⁶ Yet they tested and rebelled against the Most High God and did not keep his testimonies, ⁵⁷ but turned away and acted treacherously like their fathers; they twisted like a deceitful bow. ⁵⁸ For they provoked him to anger with their high places; they moved him to jealousy with their idols. ⁵⁹ When God heard, he was full of wrath, and he utterly rejected Israel. ⁶⁰ He forsook his dwelling at Shiloh, the tent where he dwelt among mankind, ⁶¹ and delivered his power to captivity, his glory to the hand of the foe.

- In Jeremiah's passage, the people of his day were acting like the people of Shiloh...
 - They believed God wouldn't judge them because they clung to the temple of the Lord.
 - They were keeping his sacrifices, so they thought they were good.
 - The problem was that they were also serving other gods and idols.
- In the Psalms
 - We see similarly, the people had filled the land with idolatry
 - The sins weren't just with Eli's house, but with the people too.
- Remember last week:
 - If they don't drive out their enemies, the Lord would do to them what he had planned for the wicked inhabitants of Canaan?
 - Today's passage is the warning.
 - They didn't drive out sin and instead allowed the idolatry of Canaan to fill their land and lead them away from God.
 - Until God said enough and essentially left them to themselves.

RESPONSE:

- Warning of two dangerous ditches:

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- lawlessness/sin
- legalism
- God in His mercy and patience has provided forgiveness through Jesus' death and resurrection
- Yet we must believe, trust, repent and obey.
- We cannot presume that God will bless us simply because we are in church or are serving in church.
- We must seek to worship and love him with pure hearts.
- When we fail or get off track, we must quickly turn to Him and allow him to restore us.

John 1:14 ESV

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- The tabernacle and the ark were intended to reveal God's presence, glory and holiness to Israel.
- When they lost it through their waywardness and sin...
- God sent Jesus, who tabernacled with us... revealing the glory of God and being God with us.

“The Heart of Worship”