

- I) **V1 INTRO: And the word of Samuel came to all Israel**
In this chapter, God is about to fulfill His promise to Eli
He is bringing judgment upon him for **honoring his sons** more than God (2:29)
- II) **God is a holy God, and is to be honored**
The priests were to encourage the people to worship God
- III) **Eli's sons were doing the opposite**
They caused the people to stop giving their offerings
1 Sa 2:17 The sin of the young men was great before the Lord, for men abhorred (despised) the offering of the Lord
- IV) **His sons were robbing God of His offerings and seducing the women who served**
Eli was aware of this, had spoken to them, but did nothing to stop it
- V) **He treated the sin of his sons lightly, minimizing the seriousness of the sin**
He should have exhorted them to confess their sin, repent, and seek forgiveness
He also should have exhorted them to pursue holiness
- VI) **Instead of dealing with their sin he allowed them to continue in it**
He could have removed them but instead he allowed them to continue
- VII) **Because of this, God said that He would bring judgment upon his house**
1 Sa 2:31 Behold the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house
1 Sa 2:34 He said This shall be a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die, **both of them**.
Ps 37:38 transgressors shall be destroyed together; the future of the wicked shall be cut off.
- VIII) **God made it clear: He would bring judgment because of their great sin**
Their sin was so great that it involved all of Israel
Because of them, unbelief began to fill the land: judgment must come
- IX) **It would be on his sons, and would fall on him and his future generations**
God was bring judgment on the house of Eli

- I) He was also raising Samuel to be a judge in Israel
In Israel, there were fourteen judges, from Othniel to Samuel
Samuel was Israel's last judge
- II) We closed ch. 3 with the call of Samuel (V19-21)
Ch 4:1 appears to actually be a continuation of the last verse of ch. 3
THIS TELLS US WHAT HAPPENED NEXT
- III) V1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel
This gives us two insights
- IV) Samuel's word was recognized as authoritative in the nation of Israel
Also, Samuel, as God's prophet, became the last Judge in the nation
Soon there will be kings over the nation
- V) V2 Israel went to battle against the Philistines and encamped beside **Ebenezer**
Ebenezer (the stone of help) may have been 40-50 mi. NW of Jerusalem
PHILISTINES
- VI) They are mentioned around 286 times in the OT, the first time in Gen 10:14
It is estimated that they were in Israel from 1200 BC to roughly 730 BC
Judges 13 speaks of how Samson had to deal with them (1160 BC)
- VII) Philistine means migrant, wanderer, or divider: it can be translated "Sea Peoples"
It has been suggested that the Philistines formed part of the great naval confederacy, the "Sea Peoples," who had wandered, at the beginning of the 12th century BC, from their homeland in Crete and the Aegean islands to the shores of the Mediterranean and repeatedly attacked Egypt during the later Nineteenth Dynasty. Though Pharaoh Ramesses III eventually repulsed them, he finally resettled them, according to the theory, to rebuild the coastal towns in Canaan.
These towns included the main cities: Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and **Gaza**
- VIII) The Romans renamed Judea Palestine around 135 CE, following the Bar Kokhba Revolt which was an attempt to resist the Hellenization of the Jewish population. This was part of an effort to suppress Jewish identity and connection to the land.
- IX) At this time they are plaguing Israel, and Israel responds aggressively
The location is referred to as Ebenezer, a memorial stone erected by Samuel

- I) It identifies where God helped Israel to defeat the Philistines
This actually occurs around 20 years later and is mentioned in 1 Sa 7:12
Aphek is a city a few miles NE of Tel Aviv, on the Mediterranean Sea
- II) V2 The Philistines put themselves in battle array against Israel. And when they
When the two armies engaged, Israel was defeated at a loss of 4,000 men
- III) V3 When the people had come into the camp the elders of Israel said Why has the
They had expected victory, and the defeat completely took them by surprise
They had gone out in self-sufficiency, without seeking God's direction
- IV) God had told them if they were unfaithful, He would allow them to be defeated
He had made it clear to their father's that this would happen if they rejected Him
Dt 28:15 If you **do not obey** the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully
all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these
curses will come upon you and overtake you
Dt 28:25 The Lord will cause you **to be defeated before your enemies**
IN THE FLESH THEY DEvised A PLAN
- V) V3-4 Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Shiloh to us that when it
The people are surprised that they have been defeated
- VI) They thought that they were God's people, and that victory was inevitable
In their past, God had given them victory over their enemies: why not now?
- VII) When Joshua led the nation into the land, he reminded Israel who gave it to them
They were given the land, and they displaced seven distinct nations
They were given instructions concerning its conquest
Dt 7:1-4 When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to
possess and drives out before you many nations—Hittites, Gigashites, Amorites,
Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than
you—and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated
them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them and show them no
mercy. **Do not intermarry with them.** Do not give your daughters to their sons or take
their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your children away from following me to
serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly
destroy you.

- I) Josh 12:12 tells us that under his leadership, Israel defeated 31 kings
- II) Later, Joshua would remind the people of what God had done
Josh 23:3 You have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the LORD your God is He who has fought for you.
- III) The Philistines had defeated them, and it caused them to consider why
One thing they knew: Their enemies had not defeated them, but that God had
This made it clear that God was not with them, and they are truly surprised
- IV) Instead of asking God what they did wrong, they took matters in their own hands
They got the Ark of the Covenant (Testimony), and brought it to the battlefield
It contained the tablets of the Commands, a pot of manna, and Aaron's rod
- V) V4 This is because the Ark symbolized God's power and presence in the nation
Ex 25:22 There I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

BRIEFLY

- VI) When their fathers first entered the promised land, they brought the Ark
When they crossed the Jordan River to enter in, the priests carried the Ark
Josh 3:14-16 So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho.

IMPORTANT

- VII) The Ark symbolized God's presence among the people of Israel
- VIII) Sadly, their behavior was just as superstitious as the Philistines (V8)
They used the ark like a good luck charm
- IX) They did not understand what a relationship with God is

- I) **V4 And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas were there with the ark
They were the guardians of the ark, but were in fact rejected priests
They went along with the carnal actions of the people**
- II) **This reminds us that they were going to die at the same time, as God had said**
- III) **V5 When the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp all Israel
The people shouted with joy when they saw the ark being brought into the camp
They anticipated victory over the Philistines and had a thunderous pep rally!**
- IV) **V6-8 When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout they said What does the
Pagans worshiped tribal gods: they thought the Jews had gods who were greater
They had heard of what God had done centuries before, and feared**
- V) **This reminds me of what Rahab said to the two spies she was hiding in Jericho
Josh 2:9-11 I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you
has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.
For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you
came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the
other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we
heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in
anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth
beneath.**

HOW DID THEY REACT

- VI) **V9-11 Be strong and conduct yourselves like men you Philistines that you do not
Conduct yourselves with courage and exert yourselves to the uttermost
Their fear of becoming slaves to Israel gave them the nerve to fight, and to win**
- VII) **Sometimes pagans can be more committed to their cause than believers
They knew what they were fighting for, and did so with all of their might**

INTERESTINGLY

- VIII) **Israel had been commanded to uproot all of the inhabitants of Canaan
Dt 9:4 Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out
before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to
possess this land'; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is
driving them out from before you.**

- I) They were commanded to have no dealings with the inhabitants **but disobeyed**
Lev 20:23 **You shall not** walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them.
Judges 2:2-3 (God said) you shall **make no covenant** with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'"
Ps 106:34-36 They did not destroy the peoples, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them, but they mingled with the Gentiles and **learned their works**; they served their idols, which became a snare to them.

APPLICATION

- II) These pagans are a type of the flesh (our old unregenerated and rebellious nature)
If the flesh is not overcome, it will rise up and overcome you
If the flesh is not put to death, it will rise up and overcome you
- III) You do not make a compromise with your flesh, you put it to death
Col 3:3-6 For **you died**, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. **Put to death**, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.
- IV) V12-18 A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line the same day and came to
In spite of their attempts to through superstition and flesh, they were defeated
- V) God allowed the ark to be taken, and the messenger runs and informs Eli
Though Eli failed to discipline his sons, he had real concern for the ark of God

NOTICE

- VI) V18 Upon hearing it was captured, he fell back and broke his neck
He took the news of his sons' death, but died when hearing of the ark's capture
With all his faults, he cared for the things of God and the ark's capture was greater heartache
- VII) V19-22 Now his daughter-in-law Phinehas' wife was with child due to be delivered
Not only did Eli's sons die, but his daughter-in-law died giving birth
- VIII) She lost her father-in-law and her unfaithful husband
Her greater sorrow was the capture of the ark

- I) **Ichabod: The glory has departed**
This reveals how deeply she had taken to heart the carrying off of the ark of God

- II) **In our day, how does God's glory disappear**
It departs when God's word isn't taught, worship isn't inspired, bad doctrine becomes welcome and conviction is rejected

- III) **God's glory departs when our first love is replaced with busy religious practices**
It departs when we leave our first love
We need to remember, repent, and then to return