

Samuel – A Light in the Darkness

1 Samuel 4-6



Big Takeaway from Session 4

We are living in a dark time where spiritual blindness is the norm rather than the exception. Like Samuel, we've been chosen, called, equipped, and are sent to be the light!

Question for Reflection:

Are you willing to do what it takes to keep the Lamp of the Lord burning in this dark world?

I. Context – The Ark of the Covenant

Originally created to be part of the _____

Made of _____ – one of the only timber products available in the wilderness

Overlaid with _____ inside and out

Could not be touched with _____

Had rings through which the priests and Levites would insert poles of acacia wood so the ark could be _____ from place to place

_____ (mercy seat) – solid gold, two cherubim hammered into the metal

The ark was the _____ of God on earth (foreshadowing _____ God with us)

Housed three sacred objects

The ark was the _____ of Israelite worship and Israelite life

But ark was more than just a symbol, it was _____, it possessed _____

The ark accompanied the Israelites in battle and _____ the enemies of God

Raiders of the Lost Ark

The Nazi's want to find the ark of the covenant because they believe the army who marches with the ark is _____

God's people _____ believed the same thing

The battles were won not because of the ark, but because of the people's _____

II. Role of the Ark

The Israelites and the Philistines both have the _____ idea about the power of the ark

Israel believes – _____ that guarantees God's favor and their victory

Philistines believe – _____

Power is in the _____ to the God of the ark, not the _____

III. Judgment on Eli's House

Enacted in steps:

- Eli's _____ and _____ (1 Samuel 2-4)

- Premature death of the _____ and Phinehas' _____ (1 Samuel 4)

- Loss of _____ as the central sanctuary (1 Samuel 7, 1 Samuel 21)

- _____ losing the priestly prominence to Zadok when he sides with Adonijah taking the throne (1 Kings 1-2)

“Only let the Lord make good his _____”

1 Samuel 1:23

“He is the Lord, let Him _____ what is good in his eyes”

1 Samuel 3:18

The judgment on the house of Eli was the Lord making good his word to _____ and to _____ with very different results

IV. Power of God

The Philistines _____ the ark and take it to Ashdod—capturing enemy “gods” was common practice in the Ancient Near East

Set up the ark in the Temple of their god _____

Next morning, Dagon is _____ “bowing” to ark of the Yahweh

Following morning, Dagon is on his _____, _____, and _____ to the ark of Yahweh (1 Samuel 5:4-5)

People are breaking out with _____ (1 Samuel 5:6-7)

Tracing the Path of the ark

The leaders of _____ want nothing more to do with the ark, so they have it moved to _____ (1 Samuel 5:8-10)

The sickness continues, so the leaders of Gath move the ark to _____

(1 Samuel 5:10b-12)

The same thing happens in Ekron, so the leaders decide it's time to _____
_____ once and for all (1 Samuel 5:12-6:2)

They decide to send it back to _____ with appeasement _____
(1 Samuel 6:3-12)

Strange Gifts of Appeasement

5 gold _____

5 gold _____

They put the ark on a cart pulled by two cows (oxen) that have recently _____ and have never pulled a _____

The thinking—if the cows go to _____ the plague was from _____, Israel's God. If they go elsewhere, it was chance

V. Holiness of God

The cows pulling the ark make _____ and they stop in a field in Beth Shemesh (1 Samuel 6:13-14)

The men of the town chop up the cart, build an altar, slaughter the cows, and make a _____ to the Lord (1 Samuel 6:15-16)

Some of the men look into the ark, and God puts them to _____
(1 Samuel 6:19-20)

The people are terrified of God and _____ sending it to Kiriath Jearim (1 Samuel 6:21)

VI. Big Takeaway

Sacred _____, _____, or _____ are not good luck charms. God is _____, He's _____, He's _____, He demands _____, and He is _____ when He punishes sin

Good News

While we continue to struggle with sins of the flesh, God doesn't _____ us in the same way he judged Israel. He gave that _____ to _____ (Isaiah 53:5-6; 1 Peter 2:24)

Because of the _____ of Jesus, we receive mercy, grace, and a new chance to _____ and live in a way that pleases Him

Table Talk Ideas

1. Check in; how is everyone's week going? Anything for which we can pray?
2. How do you see chapter 4 of this story (misuse of and wrong ideas about the ark) playing out in a similar way in our day and age?
3. Have you experienced a radical display of the power of God as enacted in the Temple of Dagon?
4. Do the extreme judgments bother you? Why was it so important for God to make good his word? Do you realize that Gabriel will say almost these exact same words to Mary when he announces the conception. "For no word from God will ever fail." Luke 1:37 (NIV)
5. Have you received the mercy, grace, and new chance to reconcile with God provided for you by death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? How are you taking this message of hope, truth, and light to the people in your life?