

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, January 23, 2022

Passage: 1 Samuel 4:1-11

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 4:1-11.** What was the conclusion of the elders as to why Israel had suffered defeat in the first battle? Who did they think was responsible for this, and were they correct in their assumptions?

(b) What seems to have been the elders' rationale for bringing the ark to the battle front? Why might they have reasoned that such an action would give them a military advantage?

(c) Clearly, the elders' idea of bringing the ark into battle didn't produce the intended result. Does the text give us any clues about where they went wrong in their thinking?

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 4:1-11 & 1 Samuel Chapters 1-3.** Who were Hophni and Phinehas, and how did they function in their assigned duties? Why might they have accompanied the ark?

(b) Although 4:13 indicates that Eli was deeply concerned about the ark, there is no record that he offered any strong objection to the elders' plan. Consider also what we are told about Eli and his sons in 2:12-17 and 2:22-25. What does all this indicate about the nature of Eli's leadership?

(c) What was the response within the Israelite camp when the ark arrived? Considering what the ark represented, was their response appropriate? Why or why not?

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 4:1-11.** Why did the Philistines initially respond with fear upon discovering that the ark had been brought into the camp? What was it that motivated their second response to "be men and fight?"

(b) What does the Philistines' response tell us about their knowledge of Israel's history?

(c) How significant was the capture of the ark from the Philistines' point of view? What was the impact from Israel's point of view?

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 4:1-11; Joshua 6:1-21** Explain how bringing the ark into battle in 1 Samuel 4 differs from the account of the battle at Jericho in Joshua 6?

(b) Israel seems to have fallen into the trap of viewing the ark as simply a means of access to God's power, rather than its original purpose. What was the true purpose of the ark?

(c) As believers today, what are some ways in which we can be guilty of treating God as a "power source" that can be used for our own self-centered purposes?

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 4:1-11; Luke 18:1-8.** What is the difference between being "persistent in prayer" (Luke 18:1-8) and trying to put pressure on God to act on our behalf, as Israel seems to have done in Eli's day?

(b) What lessons should we learn from this event when it comes to making plans and important decisions in our lives today?

(c) Although the Philistines initially seem to have gone into "full panic mode" when learning that the ark had entered the Israelite camp, they ultimately took courage and rallied to deliver a crushing defeat to Israel. What are some ways in which faulty assumptions concerning God's power and blessing might embolden the enemies of Christ today?

DATE: January 23, 2022

PASSAGE: 1 Samuel 4:1-11

A Perilous Power Play