

BOOK OF 1 SAMUEL
ISRAEL SUFFERS DEFEAT
1 SAMUEL 4

Introduction

In our text today we find that Israel had gone out to engage in battle with the Philistines. **(Vs 1-2)**

We learn from this that before we take on an enemy we would be wise to do two things:

1. Consider the strength of our enemy.
2. Consider our own strength and resources available to us.

Israel evidently had done neither.

After losing 4000 men in battle you would think God's people would realize God was not with them.

However, instead of looking at their own sinful condition, they blamed the defeat on the Lord. **(vs 3)**

All they asked was how God allowed them to suffer such a defeat. There is no confession of sin and no repentance.

Instead, they came up with the idea of turning the ark of the covenant of the Lord which was at Shiloh into a good luck charm.

They had lost 4000 men and now they foolishly reasoned that they lost the battle because they did not have their good luck charm, the ark of the covenant. They erroneously thought if they got it and kept it with them they would never lose another battle as long as they lived.

So they went back to Shiloh and brought the ark back with them along with Eli's two wicked sons.

How many times have Churches today followed some of the same steps Israel took in this tragic chapter.

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I. ISRAEL COMMITTED GREAT SIN!

Verses 1-5 tell how Israel turned the ark of the covenant of the Lord into a good luck charm. No doubt they had learned this superstitious practice from the heathen nations around them.

They resorted to that instead of revering the ark as the symbol of God's presence and turning to God Himself.

Christians today have done the same thing:

- 1) Carrying images of the cross
- 2) Bumper stickers
- 3) The Bible
- 4) Church Building
- 5) A Pastor

Many Churches have done the same thing:

- 1) With Buildings
- 2) With Ministries
 - a. Buses
 - b. Missionaries

However, we will never have victory over Satan until we put our faith in the living God.

The great sin of Israel was that they turned the things of God into objects of superstitious good luck charms and they lost touch with the living God.

II. ISRAEL SUFFERED A GREAT DEFEAT! (vs 6-10)

The enemy does not have anything to worry about until God's people buckle down and confess their sins and repent and once again put their faith in the true and living God!

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A. We Need To Realize Today That God's Presence With Us Should Not Be Taken For Granted.

Matt 18:20—"For where two or three are..."

God's Presence Depends On Obedience To His Word!

Israel had two ungodly priests with them. All their presence brought was God's judgment, not God's blessing.

B. The Biggest Slaughter Of Israel's Army Came When They Lost The Presence Of God And Placed Their Faith In A Religious Relic. (vs 10)

To apply this to the Church today, a Church can lose a pastor and still survive! God will raise up another!

Before any of us gets the "big head", this Church could lose any one of us and still survive!

This Church could lose these facilities we worship in and still survive.

But, this Church cannot survive without the presence of God!

And if we place our faith in anything except Him, we will lose His presence and end up suffering a "*great slaughter*" at the hands of the enemy.

III. ISRAEL SUFFERED GREAT SORROW. (vs 11-22)

In Eli's old age he had nothing but regret and a knowledge of judgment that was soon to come.

A messenger came to Eli with news of the battle. He told him 4 things.

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1. Israel is fled.
2. There had been a great slaughter.
3. Hophni and Phinehas were dead.
4. The ark of God had been taken. **(vs 18)**

When he heard that the ark of the covenant was taken, which to him meant God was no longer present with them, it shocked him so bad that he fell off his seat, broke his neck, and died.

Then Eli's daughter-in-law heard the news. **(vs 19)**

Conclusion

When we come to Church, we must never take it for granted that this building is a "good luck charm", where we can always have God's presence.

We need to make sure that we take care of the sin in our lives by confession of our sin, repenting of our sin, and forsaking our sin!