

# 1 Samuel 4 - 7

## Disaster, Repentance and Deliverance

### Lesson 2

In 1100 BC the spiritual condition of Israel was one where, "the word of the Lord was rare." (3:1) This was sad but not surprising as the sons of the High Priest Eli, Israel's spiritual leaders, were called "wicked men." (2:12) It was into that setting, that God raised up a child who would become His next prophet and lead the nation back to God. This child, named Samuel, was born in answer to the prayer of Hannah, a woman of faith. (1:27, 28)

#### **Philistine Battles - 4:1-11**

1. No information was given as to what provoked this battle between the Philistines and Israel, only the results. From verse 2:
  - Which side won the battle?
  - How many did the victor kill?
2. Using verse 3:
  - Who did the elders blame for their defeat?
  - What was their intent when bringing the Ark into battle?
3. The Ark was carried from Shiloh to the battlefield by Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas. What was the reaction when it arrived in camp by:
  - The Israelites (vs. 4:5)
  - The Philistines (vs. 4:6-9)
4. Even with God's Ark present, Israel was defeated a second time. Using verses 10 & 11:
  - How many Israelite soldiers were slaughtered?
  - What happened to the Ark of the Covenant?
  - What about the priests, Hophni and Phinehas?

#### **Eli Hears the News - 4:12-22**

5. A man from the tribe of Benjamin escaped from the battle and ran to Shiloh with the news. Where was Eli sitting and why? (vs. 4:13)

- How did Eli find out the news? (vs. 4:13, 14)
6. Verse 15 said that Eli was 98 years old and blind at this time. He had to ask what happened and was told that his sons were dead and that the Ark had been captured. What happened when Eli heard about the Ark? (vs. 4:18)
  7. Phinehas' pregnant wife went into labor when she heard of the death of her husband and father-in-law. But it was the capture of the Ark that brought great fear. She had a son she named "Ichabod," meaning no glory. What were her words of grief? (vs. 4:22)

### **The Philistines and the Ark - 5:1-12**

8. The Ark of God was taken to the city of Ashdod where it was placed before the Philistine god Dagon. What did they discover the next morning? (vs. 5:3)
  - What about day two of the Ark's time in Ashdod? (vs. 5:4)
9. The Philistines soon learned what it meant to have "the Lord's hand heavy upon them." (5:6) As a result of the tumors the Lord inflicted them with, the Philistine rulers came together to decide what to do with the Ark. What was their solution? (vs. 5:8)
  - How did that work out for them? (vs. 5:9)
10. What was the next plan the rulers came up with? (vs. 5:10a)
11. This time the Philistine people got involved. They cried out to the rulers accusing them of trying to kill them with the Ark. What was the people's solution? (vs. 5:11a)
12. Everyone was in a panic; those who had not died were still afflicted with these tumors. What was their understanding of why this was happening? (vs. 5:11b)

**The Return of the Ark - 6:1 - 7:2**

13. How long did the Ark remain in Philistine territory? (vs. 6:1)
14. Once they decided to return the Ark to Israel, the leaders discussed the best way to do so. They knew that a guilt offering must accompany the Ark. What did they hope the guilt offering would accomplish? (vs. 6:3b)
- What did the leaders decide would be an appropriate guilt offering? (vs. 6:4, 5a)
15. They hoped that perhaps Israel's God would lift His hand from the people, their gods and their land. (1 Sam. 6:5b) What was the reason behind this action? (vs. 6:6)
16. The Ark was placed on a new cart led by two cows that had just given birth and had never been yoked. What were they "testing" by doing it this way? (vs. 6:9)
- What happened? (vs. 6:10-12)
17. The Ark had been gone for seven months when it showed up, unexpectedly, in Israel. The people were in the fields harvesting wheat when they saw the cart. Who took the Ark off the cart? (vs. 6:15a)
- What did the people do? (vs. 6:15b)
18. All was right again in Israel - - or was it? Using verse 19:
- What did God do?
  - How many?
  - Why?

19. There have been several seven's in this section. Seven is symbolic for completion. God was reminding His people who He is. What right question did the people of Beth Shemesh finally ask? (vs. 6:20a)
20. The men of Kiriath Jearim went to Beth Shemesh and carried the Ark back, to the home of Abinadab. What else did these men do? (vs. 7:1)
21. How long did the Ark remain in Kiriath Jearim? (vs. 7:2a)
22. During that time, what were the people of Israel doing? (vs. 7:2b)

### **Samuel Becomes Israel's Leader - 7:3 - 17**

It has been 20 years since the story left Samuel at the Temple in Shiloh. After the Philistines captured the Ark, Shiloh was destroyed. Samuel now emerges as God's chosen leader.

23. Samuel assembled the leaders of Israel and gave them a stern warning. If they are truly returning to the Lord with all their hearts, and if they expect the Lord to help them, how must they show this change of heart? (vs. 7:3)
  - Was Israel serious about returning to the Lord? (vs. 7:4)

With that commitment, Samuel called for the nation to assemble at Mizpah. During the assembly they fasted and confessed before the Lord. They poured out water symbolizing the pouring out of their hearts in repentance. But while they were confessing before the Lord, the Philistines, hearing all Israel was together at Mizpah, were planning a new attack. (vs. 7:7)

24. How was Samuel's leadership different than Eli and his son's? (vs. 7:8)
  - What did Samuel do personally? (vs. 7:9)

25. While Samuel and Israel were seeking the Lord, the Philistine troops advanced. How did the Lord answer Samuel's prayer? (vs. 7:10, 11)
26. To remember this event, Samuel set up a standing stone. Why did he name the stone Ebenezer? (vs. 7:12)
27. How did life change in Israel under Samuel's godly leadership? (vs. 7:13, 14)
28. In addition to being God's prophet, what role did Samuel hold in Israel? (vs. 7:15, 16)
29. Where did Samuel live? (vs. 7:17)