

I SAMUEL 4-5

REVIEW...

- **CHAPTER 1-2 – THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL...**

- Elkanah had two wives – Peninnah and Hannah – but Hannah could not have children...
 - One year at Passover Hannah went to the Temple and asked the Lord for a son...
 - If He granted her requests – she would dedicate him to the Lord his whole life...
 - The Lord heard Hannah – and she gave birth to a baby boy – Samuel!
- The sons of Priest Eli – Hophni and Phinehas – were evil men...
 - They would take the best of the meat of the sacrifices (*steal*) from the people...
 - They had affairs with the women who came to worship...
 - They were such poor representatives of God - the people hated coming to God...
 - Eli did nothing – so God sent a prophet to tell him both sons would die the same day!

- **CHAPTER 3 – HEARING FROM THE LORD...**

- Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle – when the Lord called out to him 3 times...
 - He thought it was Eli calling him – because he did not know the voice of the Lord...
 - The 3rd time Eli realized it was God – and told Samuel to wait for Him to answer
- The Lord was going to do something ‘terrible’ in Israel...
 - He was going to bring the promised judgment on Eli and his sons...
 - When Eli found out the next morning – ‘let Him do what seems good...’

THE CAPTURE OF THE ARK... (3 THINGS)

- **1ST – TRUSTING IN THE ARK...VS. 1-10 (3 THINGS) READ: I SAMUEL 4:1-10**

- 1st - Israel was at war with the Philistines... vs. 1
 - The Philistines were one of the descendants of Ham – **Genesis 10:14**...
 - They had settled into the land of Canaan along the Mediterranean coast...
 - They established five major cities - Gaza / Ashkelon / Ashdod / Ekron / and Gath...
 - Israel was unable to conquer them when they first entered the Land – **Joshua 13:2**
 - During the period of the Judges – God used them to punish the nation of Israel...
 - Sampson famously judged Israel while under the Philistines – **Judges 13:5**
 - Mentioned over 250 times in the Old Testament...
 - They would remain the chief rival of Israel - till King David took the throne...
- 2nd - The Philistines defeated Israel in a battle... vs. 2-3
 - Over 4000 men died in the battle – so the people cried out to the Lord...
 - They wanted to know why God had let them be defeated by their enemies...
 - A better question would have been before the fight to ask – God are you with us!
 - Too often in life we make our decision without asking God first...
 - Then after the fact - when things have gone terribly wrong...
 - We ask God why – in effect blaming God for not taking care of us...
 - If you jump off a cliff – then ask God to catch you on the way down...
 - The likely answer you will get is – why did you jump off the cliff in the first place!

- God did not answer Israel – so they came up with an idea of their own...
 - Let us bring the Ark of the Covenant into the battle with us – it will save us!
 - Israel was not trusting in the ‘God of the Ark’ – they thought the box had power...
 - They thought a gold covered box – with stones inside – could give them victory...
 - They were trusting in an object – cause they did not have a relationship with God!
- When Israel sinned in the wilderness - God sent deadly snakes - **Numbers 21**...
 - They repented God told Moses to put up a bronze serpent - look at live...
 - But many years later (*over 600*) - the people began to worship the serpent...
 - **II Kings 18:4** - “[King Hezekiah] broke up the bronze serpent that Moses had made, because the people of Israel had begun to worship it by burning incense to it.”
 - The people were far from the Lord - so they worshiped something God has used!
 - The serpent was just a chunk of metal - the power to save only comes from God!
- The farther we are from the Lord - the greater our tendency to worship things...
 - I think of the shroud of Turin – the cloth that supposedly was used to wrap Jesus’ body
 - Millions of people flock to see it – on the rare occasion it is put on display...
 - They believe there is power in a cloth – because Jesus dead body was buried in it...
 - How foolish to put your faith and trust in a piece of dirty laundry!
 - When we do not have a strong relationship with God – are not close to the Lord...
 - We fill the void in our lives with superstitions / trinkets that remind us of God...
 - But there is no power in charms/idols/superstitions - only God has the power to save!
- 3rd - Hophni and Phineas arrived with the Ark – and all of Israel rejoiced... vs. 4-10
 - The sound a their cheers were so loud – they very ground shook...
 - When the Philistines heard it – they wanted to know what had happened...
 - They were told the ‘Ark of God’ had come into the camp of Israel – they panicked!
 - They had heard the stories of what God of Israel did to Egypt – the 10 plagues...
 - How the God of Israel had parted an ocean to let His people walk through...
 - Interesting that all of those things happened BEFORE the Ark was created...
 - The Philistines were not afraid of the Ark – they feared the God of the Ark!
 - Our enemy knows what to be afraid of – and it is not ‘pretty golden boxes’...
 - Satan does not care if there is a crucifix on your wall...
 - He is not concerned if there is a ‘manungal’ and salt over your door...
 - The only thing that satan fears is God Almighty – He trembles at His name!
 - Philistines – fight as you never have before...
 - Ironically the Ark had the opposite effect from what Israel expected...
 - Israel put all their faith in the Ark of God – so did not fight hard...
 - The Philistines afraid of the God of Israel – put all they had into the battle...
 - The result was Israel was soundly defeated – over 30,000 men lost their lives!
 - Our faith is only as effective - as the strength of the one we put our faith in!
 - We can have faith in a government - that they will make our lives better...
 - We can have faith in a person - that they will give us money when we need it...
 - We can have faith in a ‘faith healer’- that they will heal us when we are sick...
 - The problem with all of these is that they can let us down - they are not faithful!
 - Only God has all the power - never fails - only God’s Word is absolutely true...
 - When we put our faith in God and His Word - our faith is powerful!
- 2ND – WORRIED OVER NOTHING...VS. 12-22 READ: I SAMUEL 4:12-22

- o The Philistines captured the Ark – and killed Hophni and Phineas... vs. 12-13
 - Fulfilling the prophecy given to Eli – your sons will die in one day – **I Samuel 2:24**
 - One of the warriors from Benjamin ran to Shiloh – his clothes torn in grief...
 - Eli who was 93 years old / completely blind / and VERY fat...
 - Was waiting by the road – worried for the safety of the Ark – but not his sons...
 - The Ark was not in any danger – but his sons were in danger of the judgment of God!
 - **Too often we are worried about all the wrong things...**
 - **We spend all of our time worrying about food / school / electric bills...**
 - **How much will the sugar cane sell for this year / will I have enough money...**
 - **Yet God promises us He will provide for all of our needs – Luke 12:32**
 - **What we should be worried about is those who do not know Jesus Christ!**
- o When Eli heard the commotion – he demanded to know what had happened... vs. 14-18
 - The messenger told him Israel had been defeated in battle – terrible news...
 - He went on to say that thousands of troops had been lost – even worse news...
 - The sons of Eli had died – the greatest fear of any father – devastating news...
 - AND – I am sure there was a pause - the Philistines had captured the Ark of God...
 - When Eli heard the Ark was captured – he fell backwards broke his neck and died!
 - When we worry about the wrong things – it kills us...
 - **Life can have a tendency to throw bad new / problems our way...**
 - **Sometime the new can go from bad / to worse / to terrible / to unimaginable!**
 - **In one day Job found out he lost his livestock / money / house / and children!**
 - **The problem is worrying about our problems does not help – it makes things worse**
 - **It can make us physically sick – upset stomach / high blood pressure...**
 - **Proverbs 12:25 – “Worry weighs a person down...”**
 - **Worry is the opposite of trust- we are worried because we are not trusting in God!**
 - **So instead of killing ourselves by worrying – run to Jesus and find peace!**
 - **Philippians 4:6 – “Do not worry about anything; instead, pray about everything... and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**
- o Phineas’ wife was pregnant... vs. 19-22
 - It can be assumed that with the death of Eli – and both of his sons...
 - That his new baby became the new High Priest of Israel at his birth...
 - When she heard her husband and father-in-law were dead – and the Ark captured...
 - She went into hard labor – and died giving birth to a son...
 - With her dying words the mother gave him a name – Ichabod – ‘the glory is gone’...
 - She thought the glory was gone – because she was looking at the circumstances...
 - The glory was not gone – God was still on His throne – He had not abandoned Israel
 - **When we focus on our problems – it is VERY EASY to get overwhelmed...**
 - **But when we look up - our perspective changes - we see things in a new light...**
 - **The Glory is still there - God is still on His throne – we have nothing to fear...**
 - **We no longer see our problems - instead our God who is greater than any problem!**

- **3RD – THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD...VS. 1-12** **READ: I SAMUEL 5:1-12**
 - The Philistines took the Ark to the city of Ashdod... vs. 1-6
 - The put the Ark in the temple of their god Dagon – ‘our god defeated your God...’
 - Dagon had the head and torso of a woman – but the body of a fish (*mermaid*)...
 - The next morning – Dagon was on its face in front of the Ark...
 - **Jeremiah 5:10** - “Do not be afraid of [idols], they cannot do evil of good...”
 - Idols have no power - they are neither harmful nor helpful...
 - It is foolish to trust in them to help - just as foolish to be afraid of them...
 - They are just a block of wood or cement - no more powerful than a stick or rock!
 - The Philistines set the statue back up (*must have been an earthquake*)...
 - The next morning – Dagon was again on the ground in front of the Ark...
 - But this time the heads and hands had been cut off the statue...
 - They were thrown to the side – so there could be do doubt God had done it!
 - Too often people make the mistake of thinking satan is the equal of God...
 - Satan is not God’s equal - God has no equal - God has absolute power over all...
 - God kicked satan from glory - kicked out of heaven - **Revelation 12:9**
 - He and the angels that followed suffered quick reprisal for rebelling against God...
 - He fell like a flash of lightning - so quick if you had blinked you would’ve missed it!
 - One day all of them will bow down and kneel before Jesus - **Philippians 2:10**
 - The Hand on the Lord was heavy on the people of Ashdod... vs. 7-12
 - The Lord sent a plague on the people of the city – hemorrhoids!
 - The modern definition of hemorrhoids is a sore butt – painful to sit / bathroom...
 - It would have been inconvenient – but more humorous than a lethal judgment...
 - But the LXX adds rats began to overrun the city – causing death and destruction...
 - It is possible that the rats brought some form of the ‘black plague’...
 - When Europe experienced the ‘Black plague’ in the Middle Ages - millions died...
 - Bubonic or ‘black’ plague - spread by contact - killed within 24-48 hours...
 - People would be alive and well in the morning - dead by evening!
 - The people realized it was a judgment of God – the Ark had to go!
 - So the leaders got together and decided to move the Ark to Gath...
 - Gath was the largest and most powerful city of the Philistines...
 - The moment it arrived – the plague followed – causing panic and hysteria...
 - So they sent the Ark to the city of Ekron – but when they saw it coming...
 - They cried out - ‘They are brining the Ark of the God of Israel here to kill us too!’
 - So the people begged the leaders to send the Ark back to Israel...
 - What had seemed like a defeat for Israel – and a humiliation for God...
 - In the caused more death and damage to the Philistines than if Israel had won...
 - And as a result the whole nation now believed in the power of God (*hemorrhoids*)...
 - God always has a plan – it is just not always obvious to us!
 - He wants us to learn to trust in Him – not in the things of this world...
 - And learn not to worry – but to instead keep our eyes fixes on Him...
 - So that we can see the power and victory God brings to every problem!