

230628-4 1Sa 4, Judgment Falls on Eli's House, & the Ark of God Is Captured— CThurman

In 1Samuel ch. 3 we considered especially the effectual call of God upon the boy named Samuel. Three times the LORD called Samuel by name and three times Samuel was sure that Eli had called him. But on the third time Eli perceived that it was the LORD calling to Samuel and so Eli gave this young boy instructions about what to say if the LORD should call again. And the LORD called Samuel's name and Samuel knew what to say, 'Speak LORD, for thy servant heareth.' (cf. 1Sa.3.10) What Samuel said was, Speak LORD, because your servant will obeys your voice.

The effectual call is a call that *works powerfully* in them that receive it. Not everyone receives this call. We know that because not everyone comes to Christ savingly. But those which do receive the call, come to Him. The LORD calls them by name and they hear His voice and follow Him.

Jn.10.14 I am the good shepherd, and know my [sheep], and am known of mine.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd.

...

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand.

Among men, it is a rare thing indeed that anyone heard an audible voice to come to Christ. The greater part hear nothing with the human hearing. They came to Christ because He opened their ears to the spiritual reality of Christ's death, burial and resurrection for them. That they understood this in the gospel is proof that they had received the call of Christ to be saved. These will come to Christ with that same, humble spirit of repentance and faith, 'Speak Lord, for they servant hears.'

In this (4th) chapter the LORD judges the house of Eli and the glory of the LORD departs Israel.

Chapter 4

1 ¶ And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

Based on the last verses of the previous chapter, the children of Israel knew that the LORD's presence was manifested again in Shiloh through the ministry of Samuel, and that the Lord had entrusted him to be His prophet.

1Sa 3:19 ¶ And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel [was] established [to be] a prophet of the LORD.

21 And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

(Some interpret this to mean that Samuel had given Israel commandment to go to battle against the Philistines.)

Now Israel went out ^{לקראת} against the Philistines to battle,
to meet (the)

battle, מִלְחָמָה, fem. noun also tss. war, fight.

and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

pitched, פָּתַח, Qal fut. & Qal pret. (respectively) verbs, also tss. to pitch the tent, to encamp, to dwell, to camp, to rest in the tent.

Ebenezer means 'a stone of help.' (cf. 1Sa.7.12)

Both Ebenezer and Aphek are located near to a river that flows out of the hill country of the tribe of Ephraim. This river will continue northwest until it drains into River Kanah. Aphek is located about 3-3 ½ miles southeast of

this juncture, and Ebenezer is about a mile further up this river, southeast of Aphek. Because Shiloh will be mentioned later let me say that here that it is located about 20 miles due east of Ebenezer, in hills of Ephraim.

We should understand that since the days of Samson there has continued a strife between Israel and the Philistines. Now we are at the end of the term of Eli as judge of Israel. He has been judging Israel for the past 40 years. The corruption of the priesthood has reached the point of judgment.

2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel:
ordered themselves לקראת
to meet

and ... put themselves in array, Qal fut. of the verb עָנַן, also tss. to set in order, to prepare, to ordain, to furnish, to reckon up in order; then add the 3pl. masc. pronominal suffix, i.e., themselves.

and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines:
the battle spread abroad put to the worse

when they joined, Qal fut. of the verb נָטַשׁ, also tss. to suffer, to lie still, to forsake, to leave, to leave off, to fall, to spread to spread abroad.

and ... was smitten, Niphal (simple pass.) fut. נִצַּח, also tss. put to the worse, to be slain, to be dashed, to stumble, to plague, to hurt; 1Sa.4.3, hath smitten us (Qal pret.); 4.2, and ... was smitten (Niphal fut.); 4.10, and ... was smitten (Niphal fut.); the noun form of this is מַגֵּפָה, v.17, tss. plague, a slaughter, a stroke.

and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.
caused to kill ranks

and they slew, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb נָכַח, to smite, to punish, to slay, to strike, to kill, to beat, to give stripes.

of the army, of the fem. noun מַעֲרָכָה, tss. set in order rows, ordered place, of the army, the fight, rank. vss. 2, 12, 16

3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said,

the camp, common noun מַחֲנֶה, also tss. band, drove, host.

Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines?

Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that,
take from

the ark of, of the common noun אָרוֹן, also tss. coffin, chest.

when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

The priests, particularly Hophni and Phinehas, abused their offices as priests of the LORD, claiming as their own more of the sacrifices than the LORD had given to them, threatened the people that would deny them, and committed whoredom in Israel. All of this was done under the auspices of their father Eli. And for this cause the people of Israel abhorred the sacrifices of the LORD. So once this is a dark place in the history of Israel. The question, *Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines?* should have moved Israel to do some soul-searching. The sins of Eli and his sons' weren't the only issue. They were a reflection of the people over whom they service. This is the next time we read of Samuel, twenty years later ...

1Sa.7.2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

3 ¶ And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, [then] put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

So the Israelites, rather than examining themselves for the answer of a defeat at the hands of the Philistines prefer to default to ceremony. It's far more comfortable to do religious things that to obey the LORD from the heart. We're all quite familiar with that, right? Bring forward the ark of the LORD. Let's not consider our adulteries and fornications, our drunkenness, our gluttony, our lies, our covetousness, and our idolatries. God will deliver us because of ceremony? That was their thinking.

Mt 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with [their] lips; but their heart is far from me.

And we tend to do the very same things that Israel did. Certainly, there's a place for ceremony and service after we have given Him our hearts. But we are prone to default to religious exercises and neglect the issues of the heart.

Mt 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier [matters] of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

For the Christian there is no fellowship with God until first the heart is right before Him. Then there is fellowship.

1Jn.2.4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

4 So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth [between] the cherubims:

By this time it would seem that the Israelites were still handling the ark of the covenant correctly. In Nu.4.5 the high priest would take down the vail which served to divide the sanctuary from the holy of holies and lay this

over the ark of the covenant. Then lay on that badgers' skins, and a cloth of blue over that. (cf. Nu.4.6, 7) Then the staves would be installed so that the four men of the Kohathites might bear it up. And if they marched in ranks according to their sojourn through the wilderness and for war would be (Nu.10.13-25):

Judah, Issachar, Zebulon (Gershom [tabernacle software], Merari [tabernacle hardware]) – **Reuben**, Simeon, Gad (Kohath [all the furniture & utensils]) – **Ephraim**, Manasseh, Benjamin – **Dan**, Asher, Naphtali

At this place perhaps a note should be made concerning the staves that were inserted into the four rings located at each corner of the ark of the covenant. These staves are used for the transportation of the ark from place to place. Israel was commanded that the staves were not to be removed. (cf. Ex.25.15) The meaning seems to be that as long as the ark of the covenant was in transit the staves must remain in place, because we read in Nu.4.6 that when the Israelites began to break camp to begin another leg of their 40-yr. sojourn they were to insert the staves. Only after the ark of the covenant has arrived to its final destination will the staves be permanently removed. (cf. 1Ki.8.8)

As best that I understand it, the ark of the covenant would lead the way. (cf. Nu.10.33-35) Inside the ark of the covenant was the two tables of the Law Covenant, a golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that blossomed.

and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, [were] there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

a joyful sound

and ... shouted, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb עָרַב, tss. *to smart, to destroy, to shout, to blow an alarm, to cry alarm, to make a joyful noise, to cry aloud, to triumph, to shout for joy*. The noun form of this is directly below.

a shout, and v.6, the shout, of the fem. noun הַרְוֹעָה, tss. a blowing of trumpets, an alarm, a sound, joy (with rejoicing, with joy), with a loud noise, a joyful sound. The verb form of this is directly above.

that ... rang again, Niphal (simple pass.) fut. of the verb הָרוּ, tss. to destroy, to move, to ring again, to make a noise, to make a great noise.

The people were excited because the ark was to them an outward show of the LORD's presence among them. But they failed to discern that He was with them to bring judgment.

1Co 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

6 And when the Philistines heard the *noise* of the *shout*,
 sound joyful noise

the noise of, of the masc. noun קוֹל, tss. a voice, a noise, a sound.

they said, What [meaneth] the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?
 sound joyful noise

וַיִּדְעוּ

And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp.

אֱלֹהִים

7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.
 Alas even of late

heretofore is tss. from the Hebrew אַתְּמוּל וְשֶׁמַּח (two adverbs), perhaps meaning yesterday and the day before (the third day).

אֱלֹהִים

8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods?
 rescue excellent

shall deliver us, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb נָצַל, tss. *to be without fail, to deliver, to escape, to take, to take away, to spoil, to recover, to rescue, to pluck.*

mighty, of the adj. אֲדִיר, tss. *mighty, noble, lordly, excellent, famous, glorious, gallant, principal.*

these [are] the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

desert

smote, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the verb נָכַח, tss. *to smite, to punish, to slay, to kill, to strike*; the noun form is directly below.

plagues, of the fem. noun מַכָּה, tss. *plague, stripe, slaughter, wound, beat, sore, blow. v.10*; the verb of this is נָצַח, directly above.

wilderness, of the masc. noun מִדְבָּר, tss. *wilderness, desert, the south.*

These Philistines seemed to have more fear of the LORD at the moment than the Israelites had for the LORD. Even 450 years later they call to mind what the LORD did to destroy Pharaoh and his armies.

The wilderness referred to here would be that desert place where Pharaoh and his military hosts attempted even so far as to cross the Red Sea. But for this the LORD completely destroyed them. But some were not so fearful. They said ...

9 ***Be strong,***
Encourage, Fix, Strengthen yourselves!

and quit yourselves like men,

– be, ‘act’ –

Quit, i.e., to do away (with this sense of woe) as men should.

be strong, Hithpael (reflexive act.) imper. of the verb חָזַק, also tss. *to be sore, to prevail, to be courageous, to confirm, to establish, to be*

stout, to strengthen, to harden, to fasten, to retain, to seize, to take hold of, to be valiant, to hold, to be mighty.

O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews,
lest ye become slaves

as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.
– Be then as men – prevail

fight, Niphal (simple pass.) pret. of the verb אָחַז, tss. to eat, to fight, to devour, to prevail, to war, to overcome; v.10 is Niphal fut.

10 ¶ And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled
put to the worse

every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter;
blow, wound, v.8

Qal fut. of נָפַל
for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.
died, lay along, fell down

Israel's ceremony did them no good at all. 30,000 men were slain in battle.

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

– died, v.17 –

were slain, Qal pret. of the verb מָוַת, tss. to die (v.17), to be slain, to be a dead body.

Obviously the LORD allowed the ark of the covenant to be taken away by the Philistine.

12 ¶ And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came
from lines, ranks, v.2, 16

to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with **אֲדָמָה** *earth* upon his head.
torn ground, land
(dirt)

rent, Qal part. Paul of the verb קָרַע, also tss. to tear, to cut out, to rend.

A note on the English noun *dirt*

The word '*dirt*' is found only three times in the Bible. The first time it refers to dung, excrement.

dirt, פְּרֶשֶׁת־נֶהָ, par-sh^e-doh-nah, only this once in the OT, meaning 'dung, fundament.' See פֶּרֶשׁ, peh-resh, *dung*.

Dictionary – 1. a. excrement.

The other two times it means *mire, clay*; translated from the Hebrew טֵט, teet. (cf. Ps.18.42; Is.57.20.)

This Benjamite came with mourning and reported to Eli. Parallel to this is the account of the defeat which Israel suffered at Ai on account of the sin of Achan.

Jos.7.7 And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

8 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear [of it], and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

10 ¶ And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them:

But at the moment Israel didn't have the sense of repentance at all.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching:
beside the way being a watchman

a seat, כִּסֵּא, a masc. noun tss. a throne, seat, stool. 1.9; 2.8; 4.13, 18

watching, Piel (intensive act.) part. of the verb צָפַח, also tss. to overlay, to cover, to garnish, to be a watchman.

for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told [it], all the city cried out.

caused it to be reported

trembled, the adj. יָרָד, tss. afraid, tremble.

*and told, Hiphil infin. of the verb נָגַד, also tss. to declare, to profess, to shew, to denounce, to report; **told Eli, v.14.***

cried out, Qal fut. of the verb יָעַק, also tss. to cry.

14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What [meaneth] the sound

noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.
multitude made speed and came in reported [it](to)

tumult, of the masc. noun רִמּוֹן, also tss. many, multitude, noise (v.14), store.

hastily, Piel (intensive act.) pret. of the verb מָהַר, also tss. to carry headlong, to be rash, to be fearful, to be quickly, to haste, to be swift, to fetch quickly, to make speed.

בֶּן־

15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim,
(a son of)

were dim, Qal pret. of the verb קוּם, also tss. *to be established, to be assured, to stand, to arise, to rise up, to be confirmed, to be stirred up, etc.*

that he could not see.
and he was not able to

he could ... see, Qal pret. of the verb יָכַל, also tss. *can, prevail.*

16 And the man said unto Eli, I [am] he that came out of the army,
who from line, rank, **vss.2, 12**

הַדָּבָר

and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?
the matter

fled, Qal pret. of the verb נָס, also tss. *to be abated, to flee away;*
vss. 10, and they fled (Qal fut.); 17, is fled (Qal pret.).

17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines,
bringer of tidings

messenger, Piel part. of the verb בָּשַׂר, tss. *to bear tidings, to preach, to publish, to carry tidings, to preach good tidings, to shew forth, the messenger, the bringer of good things.*

and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people,

slaughter, a fem. noun מַגִּפָּה, tss. *plague, a slaughter, a stroke;* the verb of this is נָגַף, **vss. 2, 10, was smitten; 3, hath smitten.**

and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

1Sa 2:34 (The LORD speaking to Eli ...) *And this [shall be] a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.*

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God,

when he made mention of, Hiphil (causative act.) infin. of the verb זָכַר, tss. *to remember, to be mindful, to make mention.*

that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died:

was broken

a seat, כִּסֵּא, a masc. noun tss. *a throne, seat, stool.* 1.9; 2.8; 4.13, 18

gate, a masc. noun שַׁעַר, also tss. *door, cities, porter.*

brake (break), Niphal (simple pass.) fut. verb tss. *to break, to crush, to tear, to quench, to break off.*

his neck, of the fem. noun מִפְּרֶקֶת, only this once in the OT; the verb form of this is פָּרַק, is tss. *to break, to rend, to be rent, to break off, to redeem.*

for he was an old man, and heavy.

weighty

heavy, Qal pret. of the verb כָּבֵד, tss. *to be rich, to be a sore (battle), to be heavy (weighty), to be chargeable, to be glorified, to be honorable.*

1Sa.2.31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm (the death of Eli's sons), and the arm of thy father's house (the death of Eli), that there shall not be an old man in thine house.

And he had judged Israel forty years.

(Septuagint is wrong to record 20 years.)

Eli being 98 years of age and judging Israel for 40 years tell us that he was 58 when he began serving in his office as judge.

The following record of enemy oppression and judges is taken directly from the KJV Bible and is absolutely agreed with the account of the apostle Paul in Ac.13.20.

Ac.13.20 And after that he gave [unto them] judges about (we don't know the duration of Shamgar's judgeship) the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

(This proves that, in this case, Paul followed the Hebrew text rather than the Septuagint (LXX, Greek OT Scriptures).

Mesopotamian oppression (v.8)	8 years	(Jud.ch.3)	8
*Othniel peace (v.11)	40		48
Moab's oppression (v.14)	18		66
*Ehud's peace (v.30)	80		146
*Shamgar (unknown)	---		
Canaanite's oppression	20	(ch.4)	166
*Deborah's peace	40		206
Midian oppression	7		213
*Gideon's peace (v.28)	40	(ch.8)	253
Abimelech's treachery	3	(ch.9)	256
*Puah's peace	23	(ch.10)	279
*Jair's peace	22		301
Philistine oppression	18		319
*Jephthah's peace	6	(ch. 12)	325
*Ibzan's peace	7		332
*Elon's peace	10		342
*Abdon's peace	8		350
Philistine's oppression	40	(ch.13)	390
*Samson's peace	20	(ch.16)	410

*Eli	40	(1Sa.4.18)	450
Samuel	<hr/> until Samuel the prophet (Ac.13.20)		
Total	450 years		

- Noting the judges.

Note: Caleb was 85 when he went to battle against Hebron and took it, killing the three sons of Anak, Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi. (cf. Nu.13.22; Jos.14.10; 15.14; Jud.1.10)

19 ¶ And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, [near] to be delivered:

daughter-in-law, of the fem. noun בְּלֵאָה, tss. *daughter-in-law, bride, spouse*.

was with child, of the fem. adj. הָרָה, tss. *with child, with child, to conceive, to be great* (of conception).

to be delivered, Qal infin. of the verb יָלַד, tss. *to bring forth a child, to deliver, to bare, to begat, to travail (v.19)*.

and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken,
news

tidings, of the fem. noun שְׂמוּעָה, tss. *report, tidings, rumour, fame, news, doctrine*.

and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

delivered sorrows turned

and ... she bowed herself, Qal fut. of the verb כָּרַע, also tss. *to stoop, to couch, to bow down, to sink, to be feeble, to be brought low, to be subdued*.

pains, of the masc. noun צֵיַר, tss. *ambassador messenger, hinges, pangs, sorrow.*

came, Niphal (simple pass.) pret. of the verb הָפַךְ, tss. *to turn, to overturn, to turn again, to overthrow, to turn back, to come.*

The sorrows for the deaths of her father-in-law, husband, the ark of the covenant being taken, and of childbirth turned upon her suddenly and she died.

20 And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her,

that stood, Niphal (simple pass.) part. of the verb נָצַב, tss. to stand, to settle, to be set, to erect, to set up, to set over.

Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not,
delivered responded

she answered, Qal pret. of the verb עָנָה, tss. to speak, to answer, to testify, to shout, to bear, etc.

neither did she regard [it].

did regard, of the Qal pret. שָׂית, to appoint, to regard, to lay, to shew, to lay up, + לֵב heart.

אֵי-כְבוֹד כְּבוֹד

21 And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed
carried away into captivity

Ichabod, אֵי-כְבוֹד, Where (אֵי) is the glory, the honor (כְּבוֹד)?

is departed, Qal pret. of the verb גָּלָה, also tss. to depart, to shew, to reveal, to advertise, to open, to uncover, to discover, led away captive, etc.

from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.

22 And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.

Israel without the glory of the LORD is nothing but another nation among nations. For the next twenty years Israel shall continue in sin until Samuel the prophet directs them to repent of their idolatrous practices. (cf. 1Sa.7.1) Let us serve the LORD with all our body, soul, mind and strength. What is the Lord's service without our hearts? Just dry, religious ceremony.