

The Glory Departs

Lesson Scripture: 1 Samuel 4:2-7:2

Focus Scripture: 1 Samuel 4:12-22

Key Verse: *She (the wife of Phinehas) said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."* 1 Samuel 4:22

1 SAMUEL 4:12-22 (NRSV UE)

12 A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes torn and with earth upon his head.

13 When he arrived, Eli was sitting upon his seat by the road watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. When the man came into the city and told the news, all the city cried out.

14 When Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he said, "What is this uproar?" Then the man came quickly and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were set, so that he could not see.

16 The man said to Eli, "I have just come from the battle; I fled from the battle today." He said, "How did it go, my son?"

17 The messenger replied, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great slaughter among the troops; your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured."

18 When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate, and his neck was broken, and he died, for he was an old man and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

19 Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant, about to give birth. When she heard the news that the ark of God was captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed and gave birth, for her labor pains overwhelmed her.

20 As she was about to die, the women at-

1 SAMUEL 4:12-22 (KJV)

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: 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.

14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

16 And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?

17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

19 And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

20 And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for

tending her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have borne a son." But she did not answer or give heed.

21 She named the child Ichabod, meaning, "The glory has departed from Israel," because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

22 She said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it.

21 And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed 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.

KEY TERMS

- **Ichabod** – Means *no glory*.

- **Hophni** – *Pugnacious; strong; hard-fisted; a fighter.* Son of Eli (1 Sam. 1:3). He and Phinehas his brother were priests of Israel. Possibly also has an Egyptian origin.

- **Phinehas** – An ancient name commonly interpreted to mean *the Nubian*

or the *dark-skinned* one. Hebrew interpretation is mouth of brass or mouth of copper; derived from *peh* (mouth) and *nehoshet* (brass/bronze). Possibly also has an Egyptian origin.

INTRODUCTION

In 1 Samuel 4:12-22, the narrative

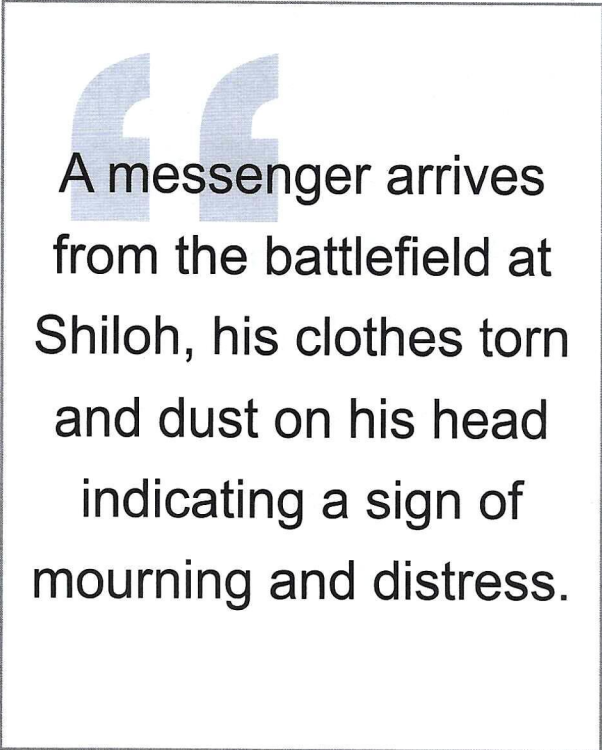
reaches a tragic climax for Israel and the house of Eli. The Israelites, having suffered defeat at the hands of the Philistines, experience the devastating

consequences of their misplaced trust and spiritual decline. A messenger arrives from the battlefield at Shiloh, his clothes torn and dust on his head indicating a sign of mourning and distress. He brings news that Israel has fled, suffered a great slaughter, and most significantly, that the Ark of God has been

captured by the Philistines.

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

This event fulfills the prophecy previously spoken by Samuel, warning that God's judgment would fall on Eli's household due to the corruption and



A messenger arrives from the battlefield at Shiloh, his clothes torn and dust on his head indicating a sign of mourning and distress.

irreverence of his sons, Hophni and Phinehas. The loss of the Ark symbolizes not just military defeat, but spiritual catastrophe. The presence of God has departed from Israel. The deaths of Eli's sons in battle confirm Samuel's words and underscore the severity of divine judgment. Eli's legacy suffers a final blow when he hears that the Ark is lost and his sons are dead. Overcome with grief, he falls backward

from his seat and dies, marking the end of his leadership and the fulfillment of God's warning. The chapter closes with Phinehas's wife naming her newborn son Ichabod, declaring, "The glory has departed from Israel." This phrase encapsulates the profound loss

experienced by the nation, not only in terms of military defeat but also in the loss of spiritual guidance and favor. The passage poignantly illustrates how the Israelites' reliance on ritual rather than true faith led to disaster, and how Samuel's prophecy was realized through the downfall of Eli's house and the departure of God's glory from Israel.

SANKOFA

"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

This proverb is a warning of overconfidence and arrogance, which can in turn lead to a person's downfall. The wisdom text is given to promote a spirit of humility, suggesting that even people

in high places may face the difficult and demeaning experience of demotion. Many people aspire to reach higher status in their careers, to have great success and be highly favored by the public. However, these advantages also present increased scrutiny and exposure.

Thus, the reason for

public officials and high-ranking officers to disclose business and financial records. Celebrities and athletes are frequently followed by the paparazzi or other media, with cameras in hand. Legal proceedings and case records are available for public inspection. Therefore, it is imperative for those who climb the ladder of

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success to strive to hold the highest standards of behavior and to discipline themselves accordingly. Otherwise, they may experience a shattered reputation. Oftentimes their family members also become victims and collateral damage. Although the privacy and protection of minor children is usually enforced, these same children grow to become adults and are susceptible to feel the pain and embarrassment of the adult members' mistakes. In addition, a child who has indulged in deviant activity may be protected as a youth, but there are no guarantees that these historical records will remain protected and sealed. Both positive and negative historical accomplishments can be recorded and passed down to future generations. The best way to manage the negative events of the past is to learn from them. Encourage the young to be wiser, and to avoid encountering the same mistakes. Allow transparency as appropriate since secrets can be equally if not more damaging. And be willing to forgive the past, not hold onto it. The losses need not be so great that they

consume future generations.

CASE STUDY

There are many aspects of life that can cause tremendous loss and hardship. They include sickness, financial fallout, and family and relationship disputes. This is compounded with the overarching inequities of social economic disparities in a polarized and racially charged society.

But one occurrence can do more damage than a serious illness or unfair job loss. The greatest concern is often the fear of a scandal, damage to one's reputation. A scandal often triggers a severe, multi-faceted crisis. For people or organizations of high status it can result in immediate reputational damage, the loss of



For people or organizations of high status it can result in immediate reputational damage, the loss of lucrative professional opportunities, and intense public scrutiny.

lucrative professional opportunities, and intense public scrutiny. Famous individuals such as Tiger Woods, Bill Cosby, Michael Jackson, Bill Clinton, and Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, formerly known as Prince Andrew (the Duke of York) are just a few of the ranking celebrities and political figures who fell from grace in the public eye. Despite efforts to

dispute the allegations against these and other notable figures, the consequences can still result in permanent damages and setbacks, a drastic loss in public trust, legal and professional fallout, and financial losses. But when a story of corruption or impropriety is alleged against the church, the impact can be even more devastating. Lawsuits abound in both Catholic and Protestant institutions

surrounding anything from child sexual abuse to mismanagement of funds. Those who are personally identified with ethical or criminal improprieties are not only causing devastating harm to their own personal reputation and livelihood but also to their families and the faith communities

and institutions they represent. The temptations that have plagued humans since the beginning do not stop at the church doors. Therefore, every clergy and lay person must be on guard to model a life that glorifies God and lifts the Gospel. As the course of sanctification occurs through each believer, may those who are in positions of leadership be diligent

in conducting ministry with a spirit of excellence, a position of integrity, and a heart of love.

LIFE APPLICATION

The story of Eli, the priest, and his sons is a reminder of the responsibility the church holds to model the image of Christ in all aspects of ministry and in the

personal lives of each leader. The church should be a place of healing and restoration, a space of worship to a loving and redemptive savior. It is paramount that the church ensures that adequate safeguards are in place to safeguard the welfare of others. The church must demonstrate processes and procedures that

maximize adherence to legal and ethical practices. When this occurs, it inspires others to conduct themselves in the same manner. Finally, when an individual representing the institution of the church is responsible for wrongdoing that causes harm to others, the church must strive to make the affected parties whole. That is



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how we love our neighbor as ourselves.

Prayed for Me”

Questions

1. What additional steps can your church take to promote a safe and healthy environment for its members and guests?
2. How familiar are you with steps outlined in *The Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church* which addresses local church structure, operational procedures, and handling church concerns?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Closing Hymn: *African American Heritage Hymnal* #505, “Somebody

Closing Prayer: Gracious and loving God, who answers us in times of trouble, hear our prayers and pleas for forgiveness, our call for consecration, and our desire to serve and please you. David wrote in Psalm 20, “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.” So, we call on you, Lord, to guide us and keep us and your sacred church on the right path that fulfills the mission of spreading good news. May your Holy Spirit give us victory over evil in this world, and may the love of Christ abound through our living, and give you glory. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

November 9-15

Monday	2 Peter 3:9-13 (Though We Sin, God Is Patient)
Tuesday	Colossians 2:8-15 (Avoid Worldly Entanglements)
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 20:1-9 (The Lord Gives You Victory)
Thursday	James 1:1-12 (Remain Steadfast Under Trial)
Friday	Psalms 34:15-22 (God Hears and Rescues)
Saturday	2 Chronicles 7:12-16 (God Will Hear and Forgive)
Sunday	1 Samuel 7:3-11, 15-17 (Cry to God for Deliverance)