

1 Samuel 04 - Israel's Two Battles with the Philistines; Philistines Capture the Ark; Death of Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas

I. Transition from the house of Eli to Samuel (1:1—4:1a)

(3) Samuel eclipsed Eli as the divine spokesman (3:1—4:1a)

(D) Samuel confirmed as God's prophet (3:19—4:1a)

II. The Ark's travels (4:1b—7:17)

(1) Israel loses the Ark (4:1b-22)

(A) Philistines defeat Israel (4:1-4)

(B) Philistines re-defeat Israel and take the Ark (4:5-11a)

(C) Israel's loss of blessings as a result of the Ark's departure (4:11b-22)

(a) Death of Eli's sons (4:11b)

(b) Death of Eli (4:12-18)

(c) Phinehas' wife dies while begetting Ichabod (4:19-22)

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(D) Samuel confirmed as God's prophet (3:19—4:1a)

II. The Ark's travels (4:1b—7:17)

(1) Israel loses the Ark (4:1b-22)

(A) Philistines defeat Israel (4:1-4)

1 So the word of Samuel came to **all Israel**. Now Israel went out to meet the **Philistines** in battle, and they camped beside **Ebenezer**, while the Philistines camped in **Aphek**.

1 Thus the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle and camped beside Ebenezer while the Philistines camped in Aphek.

1 What Samuel had to say was directed to all Israel, and Israel went out to engage the Philistines in battle. The Israelis were camped at Ebenezer, while the Philistines were camped at Aphek.

1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

- "...all Israel" - no longer "divided" as in the time of the Judges...Samuel was a prophet to all of Israel

- Note that there is no mention of seeking the Lord prior to engaging in this battle

- "...the Philistines" - as already noted in Judges, they were Israel's primary enemy to the west at this time. For generations, conflict had marked the relationship between the Philistines and the patriarchs (Gen 21:32-34; 26:1-33).
- After Joshua's death, the Philistine's advanced iron weapons (13:19-23) allowed them to dominate Israel for all but brief periods (Judges 3:31; 13:5; 14:1-16:31)
- They were a sea people who settled along the Mediterranean coast around 1200 BC, about 100 years prior to the events in this chapter. They established five major cities, from which they spread inland.
- These people maintained a military advantage from the time of Samson until the age of David, due to the fact that they were the only ones in the area who knew the secret of working iron. Their iron weapons were far superior to any weapons of the poverty-stricken Israelites.
- This advantage was not lost on the Philistines as they prohibited anyone else from garnering this technology so they could maintain their weaponry advantage
- "...Ebenezer" - a city in Israel, just inside the border with Philistia
- "...Aphek" - a city about 25 miles west of Shiloh, just on the Philistine side of the border with Israel; 11 miles east and just north of Joppa (modern Tel Aviv). Called Antipatris in the NT (Cf. Acts 23:31).

2 Then the Philistines drew up in battle formation to meet Israel. When the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield.

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2 The Philistines deployed their forces to meet Israel, and as the battle spread Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield.

2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

- Humanly speaking, war with the Philistines could only bring disaster. It's no wonder that, in the first battle mentioned in this section, Israel was defeated with about 4,000 men killed on the battlefield.

- Between this encounter and the second (where 30,000 Israelites were killed, v10), the Israelites went to Shiloh to retrieve the Ark. Israel turned to a formula instead of turning to the Lord.

— What human formula, concocted in your mind, are you employing in order to somehow gain favor from the Lord?

During the long period of the judges, the Israelites as a whole adopted an increasingly pagan attitude toward God. They felt that they could satisfy Him with simply formal worship and that they could secure His help with offerings rather than humility. They were treating the Ark the same way they treated God; they believed the Ark's presence among them in battle would ensure victory.

3 When the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let's take the ark of the covenant of the LORD from Shiloh, so that He may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies."

3 When the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us take to ourselves from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that it may come among us and deliver us from the power of our enemies."

3 When the people came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why did the LORD defeat us today when we fought the Philistines? Let's take the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD from Shiloh, so it may go with us and deliver us from the power of our enemies."

3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, 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, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

- The leaders asked a good question, but did not wait for God's answer or help. They seemed to think the Ark's presence on the battlefield would automatically give them victory, but nothing obligates God to serve our plans.

- The Ark represented the presence of the LORD in battle (Num 10:35; Joshua 3:14-17; 6:6-16), but only when the people carried it in faith and by divine leading

— Perhaps the elders had in mind the way the Ark was with Israel in the wilderness, and during the conquest of Canaan (crossing the Jordan, Jericho, et al)

— Moses even said whenever the Ark was ready to travel, "Arise, LORD, to scatter your enemies, so that whoever hates you will flee from your presence." (Num 10:33-36).

— In sending for the Ark, the Israelites lost sight of its true meaning. They wanted the Ark to serve as a magical talisman (good luck charm). Somehow God's presence was thought of as tied to the Ark. If the Ark were with them in battle, God must be with them as well.

— The Ark, rather than symbolizing the holiness of God, was used to manipulate God into providing a battlefield victory. Israel treated the Ark similar to the way the pagans might treat it...like some sort of pagan artifact that had special powers or brought good luck.

They looked to the Ark, not to God.

- There is no evidence in the text that God instructed them to bring the Ark to the battlefield, and no evidence that they put the question to God or sought God's leading to

confront the Philistines in prayer beforehand.

— They decided to put something of extreme value out in front, thinking there was no way God was going to allow the Ark, where His presence resided, to be defeated or taken. For if Israel lost, the Ark would be lost! This was a blatant attempt to manipulate God!

— What big decisions are you making arbitrarily without spending adequate time in prayer? Many Christians don't pray at all about big decisions that *aren't* explicitly spelled out in His Word, and pray too much about decisions that *are* explicitly spelled out in His Word.

4 So the people sent *men* to Shiloh, and from there they carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD of armies who is **enthroned above the cherubim**; and the two sons of Eli, **Hophni and Phinehas**, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

4 So the people sent to Shiloh, and from there they carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts who sits *above* the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

4 So the people sent word to Shiloh and took away from there the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD of the Heavenly Armies, who sits above the cherubim. Now the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, were there with the Ark of the Covenant of God.

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

- "...enthroned *above* the cherubims" - a frequent identifier of the Living God (note the "s" is redundant: the "im" implies the plural)

- "...Hophni and Phinehas" - in keeping with their character, they showed little concern for the ark; this was sacrilege of the first order

— The Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle was not to be entered by anyone except the high priest (in this case, their father Eli), and only once per year

— Eli, their father, was a godly man, but he had two sons who were losers

— Samuel was also a godly man, 2nd to Moses in the OT in many regards, yet he also had sons who were losers

— It's an interesting discussion for a small group on the reasons why these two godly men had losers for offspring

The Ark of the Covenant

God planned the tabernacle to give the people a physical representation of His dwelling among His people. (Ex 25:8). The most important part of the tabernacle was the ark, God's symbolic dwelling place. God's purpose in redemption is to dwell with His people, so the ark was central to God's plan for Israel and the world. When the tabernacle was finished,

the glory cloud of God visibly filled the tabernacle and settled on the ark (Ex 40:17-21,34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-13).

The ark was:

- A large, rectangular box (about 3¾ feet (1.1 m) long by 2¼ feet (0.7 m) wide and high)
- Made of acacia, a dense hardwood overlaid with pure gold
- Filled with the tablets of the law God gave Moses, as well as a jar of manna and Aaron's staff (Ex 16:34; 25:21; Num 17:8-10; Heb 9:4)
- Designed with rings and poles to carry without touching it
- Set in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle (Ex 26:31-34)

The lid of the ark was the Mercy Seat. On the lid:

- Two cherubim (a type of angel) of hammered gold faced one another at opposite ends of the lid
- The cherubim knelt with outspread wings, looking down at the box
- God was enthroned symbolically above the cherubim (Ps 99:1; Is 37:16)

God told Israel exactly how to handle the ark (Num 4:5,15,20):

- The priests covered it before traveling
- Specific Levites carried the ark on poles which always remained in place
- Even Levites could not look at it, on pain of death
- Only the high priest approached the ark and then only once a year
- On the annual Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur, Lev 16) to cover the people's sins, the high priest sprinkled the blood of a goat on the lid of the ark

God gave precise directions because of the supreme importance of what the ark represented: God's determination to redeem and live with His people. The tablets of the law within the ark pictured God's holiness and His judgment. The blood sprinkled on the atonement cover showed God's mercy. In this, the ark foreshadows the cross, where God judges sin and forgives sinners through the death of Jesus Christ. Is it any wonder God refused to allow anyone to treat the ark casually?

(B) Philistines re-defeat Israel and take the Ark (4:5-11a)

5 And as the ark of the covenant of the LORD was coming into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth resounded.

5 As the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth resounded.

5 When the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel gave a great shout and the earth reverberated!

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.

- The shout of the Israelites when the ark arrived in Ebenezer may be another indication that they were hoping to duplicate the victory at Jericho (Cf. Joshua 6:20)

— Likewise, the fear of the Philistines (v6-7) recall Rahab's revelation of how the Canaanites feared Yahweh (Joshua 2:9-11)

- Israel lost 4,000 men in the first battle, and this should have been evidence to them that God was displeased. But did they repent and turn to God in prayer and confession? No! Instead they resorted to superstition and took the ark of the covenant to the battlefield.

They could not take the Ark out in faith because God had not commanded them by His Word. They were acting by chance, not by faith. Because the Ark had gone before the nation in the wilderness and had marched in victory around Jericho, they thought its presence would assure them victory over the Philistines. Instead of revering the Ark as the symbol of God's presence, they turned it into a religious relic! See Num 10:35ff. Israel's act also revealed a pagan view of God. When the Philistines heard Israel shouting gladly when the Ark was brought into their camp, these pagan peoples said "a god [had] come into the camp."

How tragic that Israel had no more spiritual perception than the idolatrous Philistines.

Neither saw beyond the symbol to realize that God is God of the whole earth, whose presence cannot be captured in any material object. And how revealing that Israel thought God could be manipulated by placing His Ark in their vanguard.

6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What *does* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the **Hebrews** *mean*?" Then they understood that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp.

6 When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What *does* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews *mean*?" Then they understood that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp.

6 When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they asked, "What is this noise coming from shouting in the camp of the Hebrews?" Then they realized that the Ark of the LORD had come into the camp,

6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp.

- The shout was heard 3 miles away

- "...Hebrews" - an ethnic term (Cf. Gen 14:13); "Israelite" is a religious and political designation

7 So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp!" And they said, "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before.

7 The Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp." And they said, "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before.

7 and the Philistines were terrified. "God has come into the camp," they said. "How terrible for us, because nothing like this has ever happened before!

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.

- The reaction of the Philistines when they realized the ark had come near was the same reaction as the Israelites (v5)

— It's interesting the Israel's spiritual discernment was at the same level as the Philistines—neither saw God Himself beyond the symbol of the Ark

8 Woe to us! Who will save us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all *kinds of* plagues in the wilderness.

8 Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who smote the Egyptians with all *kinds of* plagues in the wilderness.

8 How terrible for us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the desert.

8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

- The Philistines were terrified when they knew the Ark was in the camp of Israel, for they had heard about its association with Israel's mighty gods who had brought that people out of Egypt more than 300 years before

— Though the Philistines thought of the Lord as one among many gods, they knew of God's mighty miracles (Num 22:2-3; Joshua 2:10-11; 9:3-4,9-10)

9 Take courage and be men, Philistines, or you will become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been slaves to you; so be men and fight!"

9 Take courage and be men, O Philistines, or you will become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been slaves to you; therefore, be men and fight."

9 Philistines, be strong and be men, or you will become slaves to the Hebrews just as they have been slaves to you! Be men and fight!"

9 Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

10 So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent; and the defeat was very **great**, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell.

10 So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent; and the slaughter was very great, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers.

10 The Philistines fought and Israel was defeated; each of them fled to his own tent. It was a very great slaughter, and 30,000 soldiers of Israel died.

10 And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

- Israel went to battle with the Philistines a second time, again with no preparation in prayer or guidance from God, but with the Ark. The result: 30,000 dead, the Ark taken (v11), and Hophni and Phinehas dead (v11).

- "...great" - *makkah*, devastating slaughter; much worse than their previous defeat (4,000, v2). This proved that victory did not come from the Ark, but from the Lord.

— Their defeat was due to sin in the camp, most notably Hophni and Phinehas (Cf. 2:25)

— Israel had suffered defeat at Ai about 300 years earlier for the same reason: sin among the people (Cf. Joshua 7:11). Trying to duplicate previous spiritual victories by going through the same procedures is no substitute for getting right with God (Cf. Judges 16:20; Matt 23:25).

- The Philistines were first afraid, then determined; even if the God of Israel were in the camp, they were going to behave like brave soldiers! Since God had forsaken His people, the Philistines had an easy victory.

— Ps 78:56-64 is a vivid description of this tragedy

— Israel should have known that God's presence with them depended upon their obedience to His Word. Hophni and Phinehas were ungodly priests; their presence brought judgment, not blessing.

(C) Israel's loss of blessings as a result of the Ark's departure (4:11b-22)

(a) Death of Eli's sons (4:11b)

11 Moreover, the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

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

11 The Ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

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

- God will allow us to lose what we believe most precious so we learn that He never ignores sin

- Bad news and good news, in a sense: the elimination of Hophni and Phinehas could be considered addition by subtraction. God promised Eli that He would remove the priestly privilege from Eli's descendants eventually (2:34).

God did not record the destruction of the tabernacle at Shiloh, but some writers assume the Philistines razed it after they captured the Ark. The town probably did suffer destruction then (Cf. Jer 7:12,14; 26:6). However, the writer of Chronicles mentioned that the tabernacle still stood in David's day (1 Chr 21:29) and when Solomon began to reign (2 Chr 1:3).

THE TWO TABERNACLES AND THE ARK		
Moses' Tabernacle at:	The Ark at:	David's Tabernacle at:
Gilgal (Josh 5:10; 10:15, 43)	Gilgal (Josh. 6:12)	
Shiloh (Josh. 18:1, 9-10)	Shiloh (Josh. 18:10)	
Bethel (Judg. 20:18-28; 21:1-4)	Bethel (Judg. 20:27)	
Shiloh (1 Sam. 1:3)	Shiloh (1 Sam. 4:3)	
	Ebenezer (1 Sam. 4:4-5)	
	Ashdod (1 Sam. 5:1)	
	Gath (1 Sam. 5:8)	
	Ekron (1 Sam. 5:10)	
	Bethshemesh (1 Sam. 6:12-14)	
	Kiriath-jearim (1 Sam. 7:1)	
Mizpah ? (1 Sam. 7:9-10)		
Gilgal ? (1 Sam. 10:8; 13:8-10; 15:10-15)		
Nob (1 Sam. 21:1-9; 22:9-19)		
Gibeon (1 Chron. 16:39-40; 21:29; 1 Kings 3:4; 2 Chron. 1:3)		
	Perez-uzzah (2 Sam. 6:2-11; 1 Chron. 13:5-14)	
		Jerusalem (1 Chron. 15:1)
	Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:12-17; 1 Chron. 15:2—16:6, 37-38)	

(b) Death of Eli (4:12-18)

12 Now a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes torn, and dust on his head.

12 Now a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes torn and dust on his head.

12 That very same day, a man who was a descendant of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh, with his garments torn and dirt on his head.

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 When he came, behold, Eli was sitting on *his* seat by the road keeping watch, because his heart was anxious about the ark of God. And the man came to give a report in the city, and all the city cried out.

13 When he came, behold, Eli was sitting on *his* seat by the road eagerly watching, because his heart was trembling for the ark of God. So the man came to tell *it* in the city, and all the city cried out.

13 When he arrived, Eli was sitting there on a seat beside the road, watching because his heart trembled for the Ark of God. The man went into the town to give the report, and the whole town cried out.

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.

- Eli, the 98-year-old blind priest, was sitting by the wayside when the messenger arrived in Shiloh with the sad news. But the messenger ran right past him and announced his message to the city.

— These verses graphically describe how blind and irrelevant the elderly priest had become

14 When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, "What *does* the noise of this commotion *mean*?" Then the man came hurriedly and told Eli.

14 When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, "What *does* the noise of this commotion *mean*?" Then the man came hurriedly and told Eli.

14 Eli heard the sound of the cry and asked, "What is the meaning of this commotion?" Then the man quickly came and told Eli.

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.

- The uproar in the city aroused Eli's curiosity, for no doubt he was expecting the fulfillment of Samuel's prophecy (2:34-35; 3:11-14)

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

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

15 Now Eli was 98 years old, and his vision had failed.

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

16 The man said to Eli, "I am the one who came from the battle line. Indeed, I escaped from the battle line today." And he said, "How are things, my son?"

16 The man said to Eli, "I am the one who came from the battle line. Indeed, I escaped from the battle line today." And he said, "How did things go, my son?"

16 The man told Eli, "I've just come from the battle line, and I escaped from the battle today." He asked, "What happened, my son?"

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 Then the one who brought the news replied, "Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has also been a great defeat among the people, and your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas are also dead; and the ark of God has been taken."

17 Then the one who brought the news replied, "Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has also been a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been taken."

17 The messenger answered, "Israel fled from the Philistines and the people suffered a great defeat as well. Moreover, your two sons, Hophni and Phineas, are dead, and the Ark of God was captured."

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.

- Note how the messenger gives the four pieces of bad news in order of their importance to the messenger:

1. Israel is fled
2. Many have been slaughtered
3. Eli's two sons are dead
4. The Ark has been captured by the enemy

18 When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and **heavy**. And so he judged Israel for forty years.

18 When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy. Thus he judged Israel forty years.

18 When he mentioned the Ark of God, Eli fell off the seat backwards by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, since he was old and heavy. Eli had judged Israel for 40 years.

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.

- The writer is careful to note that it was the news that the Philistines captured the Ark, not the death of his two sons, that shocked Eli and caused him to die (v18). To his credit, Eli's primary concern was the welfare of Israel.

- Now we see sorrow upon sorrow: Eli falls down in a state of shock, breaks his neck, and dies; and his daughter-in-law likewise loses her life as she delivers a son (v19-20)

— The Battle of Aphek occurred in 1104 BC, so Eli must have been born in 1202 BC

- "...heavy" - *kabed*, see note on v21

(c) Phinehas' wife dies while begetting Ichabod (4:19-22)

19 Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was pregnant *and about* to give birth; and when she heard the news that the ark of God had been taken and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she kneeled down and gave birth, because her pains came upon her.

19 Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas's wife, was pregnant and about to give birth; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she kneeled down and gave birth, for her pains came upon her.

19 Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phineas, was pregnant and ready to give birth. When she heard the report about the capture of the Ark of God and that her father-in-law and husband were dead, she crouched down and gave birth, because her labor pains suddenly began.

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.

- Like Eli, it was the loss of the ark, not the deaths of Phinehas (her husband), her father-in-law (Eli), and her brother-in-law (Hophni), that Phinehas' wife was concerned about

20 And about the time of her death the women who were standing by her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son." But she did not answer or pay attention.

20 And about the time of her death the women who stood by her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son." But she did not answer or pay attention.

20 As she was about to die, the women standing around her said, "Don't be afraid! You've given birth to a son." But she did not respond or pay attention.

20 And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it.

21 And she named the boy **Ichabod**, saying, "The **glory** has **departed** from Israel," because the ark of God had been taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

21 And she called the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," because the ark of God was taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

21 She had named the boy Ichabod, saying, "Glory has departed from Israel," because the Ark of God had been captured and because her father-in-law and husband were dead.

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.

- "...Ichabod" - means "no glory" or "Where is the glory?" (Cf. Ex 40:34ff)

- "...glory" - *kabod*, see note below

- "...departed" - may be translated "gone into exile." Israel's history is a story of receiving and then losing the glory of God.

There is a word play in the Hebrew text that helps us understand the significance of the departure of God's glory. The Hebrew word for "heavy" (v18) is *kabed*, and the word for "glory" (v21) is *kabod*. Rather than Israel enjoying glory from God's presence through Eli's priesthood, Eli himself had received the glory, as his heavy weight implies. Eli's apparent self-indulgence was responsible for the departure of God's glory from Israel and from his line of priests.

22 So she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, because the ark of God has been taken."

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

22 She said, "Glory has departed from Israel, because the Ark of God has been captured."

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

- To the pagans it was conceivable that gods could be taken into exile (Is 46:1-2), but the Israelites should have known that their omnipresent God could not be taken away from them. How heathen Israel's perception of God had become!

— Her words reflect a pagan viewpoint to some extent: her words imply that because the Philistines had stolen what represented *Yahweh*, the Lord had abandoned the nation.

However, in view of God's promises and revealed plans for Israel, she should've known that this was not completely the case (Gen 12:1-3,7).

- Scripture never mentions worship at the tabernacle in Shiloh again. Jeremiah used Shiloh to warn those in his day who thought they could continue to sin, because God would have to protect His temple (Ps 78:59-64; Jer 7:12-15; 26:6)

Most of the Israelites evidently thought that since Israel had lost the Ark, she had lost God. However, because the people had not lived in proper covenant relationship with Him,

Israel had only lost God's blessing, not His presence. They were disregarding God's Law, so God's glory had departed from Israel (v22; Cf. Ex 19:5-6; Ezek 10). His people could not enjoy fertility. In the following chapters (1 Sam 5-6), God demonstrated His glory in the land of Philistia.