

Ichabod!

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[0:00] 1 Samuel chapter 4, we read about Ichabod.

! 1 Samuel chapter 4, from verse 21, we read,! 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.

And she said, The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken. Ichabod, Ichabod, where is the glory?

The glory is departed, the glory is gone. The background here is Ichabod, he was the son of Phinehas. He was born on the day that the Philistines took the ark from God's people.

His mother went into labour when she heard the news at the shock of hearing that her husband and her father-in-law had died, and that the ark had been captured.

[1:10] She saw that the presence of God had gone. Shortly after giving birth, she named the child Ichabod, and she died.

This is a historic account where Israel had battled against the Philistines. The history here is that 4,000 of God's chosen people died.

The battle was lost. And those who remained, they asked, Why did the Lord bring defeat upon us today before the Philistines? Why, O Lord? And the leaders, the elders, the leaders of Israel then thought, Hey, what about this idea?

Let's go take that ark out of the Holy of Holies and take it down to the battle site, and I'm sure the Lord will give us victory over the enemy. I thought it was a good idea at the time.

And what happened then? They lost 30,000. They lost again. And the messenger brought word to God's man, Eli the priest, the religious leader of Israel, and told him, The battle is lost again.

[2:25] And what's more, your two sons have died. And the treasured ark of the covenant has been captured by the pagan Philistines. And the news shocked this old man such that he fell down dead.

The people have been unfaithful. They've gone astray from God. They've gone astray from his word. The leaders, the elders, have been astray from God's word. They weren't seeking God's will. They weren't seeking God's way. Then the Philistines had captured the ark. Well, they didn't really enjoy it that much because then God struck the Philistines with horrible sores and they fell down dead.

And the idol Dagon fell headfirst in front of the ark and then broke up. And God brought down his wrath upon the Philistines.

And they eventually took the ark back in humility and with offerings to the Lord God. But Eli here, the grandfather of Ichabod, he was not the godly man that he should have been.

[3:31] He was the high priest but he'd stopped rebuking and restraining his sons for their sins. And in fact, he had the ministering in holy office, as it were.

He was not delivering the word of God to the people like he should have done. He was out of order. He was in disobedience. And Phineas, the father of Ichabod, he was one of those leaders who was abusing the ark of God.

He helped to lead the people to desire the ark just so they might win the battle. To use the ark, this holy vessel that should have been dedicated for some holy purpose.

Phineas was using it and the people were using it just to get God on their side. Just as it were, some kind of genie, some kind of good luck charm. They were misusing the holy things.

A very unholy purpose for the ark of the covenant. It was like to when in the book of Daniel we see a king using the holy temple vessels and having a drunken feast with them.

[4:37] And then he saw the handwriting on the wall. Judgment was to fall upon the nation. The judgment of God. Thankfully, 20 years after Eli's

death, Samuel preached and the children of Israel returned to the Lord. They put away the sensual worship of the false gods and the idols. And there was a repenting and a revival and a worship of the true God. And the next time the Israelites went into battle, God blessed them with victory, with favour.

As they walked with God in faith. When we do things God's way, God blesses with his glory, with his blessing. It's like when Jericho fell.

Why did it fall? The people of God were obedient to God's plan. They walked around seven times the city blowing trumpets and shouting. And God blessed when they did things God's way.

Samuel killed 1,000 men with the jawbone of a donkey. It was God's way. It was God's will. And God blessed. God gave victory to Gideon with 300 men.

[5:47] Not the 32,000 that Gideon had wanted to fight with, but with the 300 men that God said to fight with. When we do things God's way, we see God's blessing.

We see the glory. God's presence was among them. As long as they were obedient to the Lord, they won the victory over the enemy. But when Israel had sinned, the presence of God left.

The glory of God is the presence of God. God showed up with Moses in that burning bush. And God said, my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

Exodus 33, 14. The person of God, the presence of God was there. Ichabod. Ichabod was the name the mother gave to this child.

Ichabod. The glory is departed. The glory is gone. And Ichabod is a picture of the majority of the Western church today.

[6:51] You could say in many quarters. What a tragedy. No glory. No glory. The glory is gone. An Ichabod church. God forbid.

An Ichabod church. The glory gone. Something missing. Something wrong. The glory of God is gone. The will of God is missing. The worship of God is missing.

God's glory, brothers and sisters. Don't we want it? Don't we want the glory to be His? The glory of His person. The glory of His presence.

In our midst. In our fellowshiping. In your midst. In your life. As you would be a living temple. As you would be a living container. For the glory of God. There used to be glory.

Now there isn't. In Israel. And you could say. Sadly. The glory is gone. In some circles.

[7:48] I read this lately. Of the other day. A church invited teenagers to come to church. To play an ultra violent PlayStation 3 game.

I'm not familiar with it. But Halo 3. Whatever it was or is. An ultra violent video game. They used this as a draw card. To bring them in.

To get the kids in. To get the youth in. Hoping this would do something. That somehow by this means. They would then love coming to church. This is modern day evangelism.

For you. Modern day evangelism. It's called connecting with the youth. In the name of Jesus.

Another church. Was offering flat screen TVs.

Another offered a Harley Davidson motorcycle. Or a car. To first time visitors. Now if you're a first time visitor. This morning. I can't give you a Harley Davidson. I'm sorry about that.

[8:46] But friends. It shouldn't be that we would resort. To such tactics. To such tacky tactics. To bring them in. To get first time visitors.

To get someone. To accept Jesus into their hearts. You know. Accept Jesus into your heart. And we'll give you some kind of prize. Out of the kitty somewhere.

I saw a recent video. In fact yesterday. Where there's one church. And they have a raffle. They have a raffle. And the preacher gets up. And holds up this bucket. And he draws out the seat number.

Under your chair. And you could win \$500. Is that what we have to do? Brothers and sisters. Does that bring the glory? Or does that make the glory go?

Is that what we must do? To bring them in? God forbid. God forbid. The glory is gone. Ichabod. Ichabod. Where has the discernment gone?

[9:47] Where has the glory gone? Where has the faithful preaching gone? Ichabod. It's gone. It's the story of judgment. The story of Ichabod.

Judgment that must begin at the house of God. The church at Ephesus needed to repent. Back in Revelation 2. They needed to get back. To do the first works. To return to the first love.

The Shekinah glory. The glory that filled the temple of old. Of Jerusalem. The place where God resided.

The glory was there. When God was honoured. When God was praised. When God was the centre.

The glory shone at the burning bush with Moses. The glory shone when the angels came.

To announce the birth of Christ the Saviour to the shepherds. The Ark of the Covenant held the glory. In that proper place in the Holy of Holies. And whenever the Ark was not in the temple.

[10:45] The temple was said to be Ichabod. The glory gone. The glory missing. It was just an empty building. Because the essence. The glory had gone.

God forbid. Brothers and sisters. That this. Gathering. That you. As those holy vessels. That you are meant to be. That it could be said.

The glory is gone. God forbid that. That instead we should. Seek his face. That we should seek to be. Those faithful ones. To see the glory of God.

His power. His evident power. Not in some conjured up. Magical. Hypnotic. Effort of man. But the power of God.

In reality. In the preaching of the gospel. In that relationship with him. In that wonder of Calvary. The wonder of Christ. The glory of God. Shining through us.

[11:42] Shining in your hearts. Shining through your lives. That your lives might be. A manifestation of the glory. That the glory might go with you. It's not that you come.

To a building to get the glory. But the glory is within you. Amen. As his living temples. As those dwelling places. Of the Holy Spirit. Those living containers.

Those living carriers. Of the glory. And there was no glory in Israel. Because God. Had been left. God's approval had been withdrawn. As the people disobeyed.

When God leaves you. It's Ichabod. Ichabod. Rather that we think. The church has in Ephesians 5. Ephesians 5. That he might present it to himself.

A glorious church. Not having spot or wrinkle. Or any such things. But that it should be. Holy. And without blemish. That he might present it to himself.

[12:37] A glorious church. Someone has put it. That the true glory. Of a church. Consists in the purity. Of its members. In its spiritual progress.

In the unity. Of its fellowship. In the spiritual children. Born into the household of faith. In its self-sacrificing spirit. Towards others. In the prayer life.

Of the whole group. When a church is in a healthy condition. Hypocrisy will be limited. Progress in purity. Will be constant. Strife and discord. Will disappear.

Sympathy for the lost. Will seek means for their rescue. Recruits will outnumber the losses. From backsliding. Removal and death. Private devotion. Will be a pleasure.

Family religion. A joy. And public worship. A sought delight. Yet. The glory has gone. The glory has gone.

[13:33] Brother. Sister. Seek his face. Seek him afresh. That we might see. His glory. The touch of God. The touch of God. In our lives. The evident.

Working of God. Amongst his people. Ian Paisley. The old preacher. Put it. Such that he told a story. About another preacher. A man called Pearson.

In the US. In 1876. It was a very fashionable. Presbyterian congregation. And he writes. The building was a beautiful edifice. But it was completely unsuitable.

For evangelism. And soul winning. And one night. This preacher went to the building. And then he went home. Broken hearted. At the formalism. At the deadness.

Of the church. And he said. Oh Lord. Set my church on fire. That night. The Lord literally answered. His prayer.

[14:29] The church went on fire. And was burnt to the ground. And as he stood in the ashes. He said. Lord. I didn't mean it that way. But the Lord did a mighty thing.

They hired us. They were building. Their new building. An old opera house. And he records. In the 16 months. That they were. Temporarily there. In the other place. There were more souls saved. There. Than in the past. 16 years. Of his ministry. Because he said. Not only did the church. Catch fire. But the members. Moved with love. And moved with the circumstances.

Started to pray. And when the church. Starts to pray. The fire is not far away. A glorious church. A glorious church. The glory of God.

When a church. Will water down. The gospel message. Of sin. Of righteousness. Of judgment. And try to. Have some. Spectacle. Some. Entertainment.

[15:29] You know. You hear of some churches. Where. The pastor offers. To. Swallow some goldfish. If there's a certain number. Of. People. In the. Gathering. And.

All kinds of. Crazy. Antics. And. Friends. The glory. Will go. The glory. Will go. When we go to those. Lands. The glory.

Will depart. And yet. In Ephesians 3:21. It says. Unto him. Be glory. In the church. Unto him. Be glory. In the church. By Christ Jesus.

Throughout all ages. World without end. The glory. The glory. Let's pray for the glory. Let's pray for him to be glorified in us, through us, with us, not with lip service but with true hearts, ablaze in worship, in prayer, in repentance as we go back to God, as we restore the things, as we refresh that first love, as we do the first works.

Lives radically change. That's the glory. That's the glory. Lives where God is glorified, where everything we do, that's 1 Corinthians 10:31, all that we do, we do unto the glory of God, 1 Corinthians 10:31, and we can be that glorious church that we will be.

[16:51] We're still on the way. We've not arrived yet. And secondly, a glorious church, secondly, a glorious gospel. A glorious gospel must be preached. 2 Corinthians 4 verse 4 talks of the world in whom the God, of this world, have blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Minds are blinded all around us. God wants the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, to shine unto them. And the gospel must be proclaimed.

The gospel must be declared. Paul writes, I've not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. We need forthright preaching.

Preaching against sin. Preaching of judgment. Preaching of righteousness. Preaching of truth. Preaching of holiness. Friends, the whole counsel of God.

The gospel, the message of the cross, needs to be soundly declared. And it, most of all, lived out in our lives. The gospel, it's an offence. It's an offence.

[18:00] And it can bring a conviction. It was said of Moody of old. That Moody of old, in the days of Moody, they had some kind of price that was paid for the seats.

Now, I don't know how much you've paid for your seat this morning, but back in Moody's day, they used to hire out the seats. You had to pay for your seat. Okay? It's a wonder they don't bring that into the modern church too.

And Moody decided he was going to hire the whole pew. He wanted to hire the whole pew. And the preacher said, you don't need a whole pew.

You can't sit in the whole pew. Just rent one seat. Oh, says Moody, I'm renting the pew, a big one. I want a big pew. The preacher says, you must be very proud.

Moody says, you'll see how proud I am. And the first day Moody had that pew, he filled it. He filled it from end to end with the toughest people of the streets of Chicago.

[19:04] Hallelujah. He filled it with souls. He filled it with lives. He filled it with hearts. He filled the pew. And he prayed until every one of them was saved that was sat in that pew.

And then he made every one of them hire a pew and fill a pew. And soon the church that was sleeping was awakened. What an account. What a blessing. The glory of God in the church.

The glorious gospel. This man Moody, he just sold shoes. He was just a shoe seller. Just a shoe seller, you could say. Just a man. Just a man of little ability.

But God came in and God used Moody. God used Moody. He said, I couldn't speak to all the people. I'll speak to the children. So he started a Sunday school.

He built a Sunday school. So it had almost 2,000 members. And what a Sunday school. He said, what a din on a Sunday afternoon. Because the place was filled with 2,000 children.

[20:07] And then he knew every child. He knew every home they came from. And he loved them. And he prayed for them. Answer the arms of Jesus. The gospel. The gospel.

The glorious gospel. It ought to be cherished. It ought to be proclaimed. It ought to be lived out. Give yourself to the Lord. Friends, just one more reference here.

William Booth said this. In the context of the glorious gospel, William Booth said this. Go stand by the gates of hell. And hear the damned.

The damned. Entry. Beckon. Call. Cry. To you. To go. To go to their father's house.

And bid their brothers. And sisters. And servants. And masters. Not. Come here. And then look Christ. In the face.

[21:05] His mercy. You have professed to obey. And tell him whether you will. Join heart. And soul. And body. And circumstances. In the march.

To publish his mercy to the world. Join. In this course. Join. Join. In this gospel effort. The glory of God. The glorious church.

It can be glorious. When God is honoured. When God is obeyed. The glorious gospel. It ought to be professed. Proclaimed. Acted upon. Is God within you.

Is God in you. Is God. His glory. His presence. His person. About your life. Or are you. Ichabod. Ichabod. The glory has departed. Are you not where you ought to be. Are you not where you once were. Do the first works. Return to the first love.

[22:04] Follow the cloud. The glory. Go where the glory is. The glory has departed. Friends. God forbid. That the glory would be lost from your life. From our. Gathering together.

That the glory would be. Evident. In the lives changed. In the lives touched. In Eli's day.

There was disobedience. There was disobedience. To the order. There was disorder. There was abuse. There was misuse. As Eli's sons.

Were unfaithful. Disregarding of the holy things. Disobeying God's directives. Dishonouring God's will.

God's way. Are you an Eli? Am I an Eli? God forbid. Rather that we be a Samuel. That we be a Samuel.

[23:01] Samuel came 20 years later. After Ichabod was born. Samuel. He heard the voice of God. He acted upon it. He proclaimed the word. He lived the word.

He called the people to repent. Let's be a Samuel. Let's be a Samuel. Let's be a church. That brings him honour. That brings him obedience.

That brings him regard. That obeys his directors. That has regard for the holy things. Not disregard. That has honour for the holy. Not dishonour.

Let's not be an Ichabod church. You can regain the glory. To close a scripture in Isaiah 66. Thus saith the Lord. Look. The heaven is my throne.

And the earth is my footstool. Where is the house that you build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things have my hand made. And all those things have been saved.

[23:59] Been saved the Lord. But to this man will I look. But to this man will I look. But to this man will I look.

Even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and that trembleth at my word. That is poor. That is of a contrite spirit that trembleth at my word.

That is the glory. That is the glory. That is the glory. Poor. Realising your inadequacy. Realising your lack. Realising your unworthiness.

Poor. Contrite. Realising where you ought to be. Where you were. Where you need to regain. Where you need to refresh. To repent.

And that trembleth at my word that regards the holy things. That esteems that which is holy. That loves the holy. Friends that glory. Today it's in earthen vessels. It's in you.

[24:59] And me. It's in these pieces of skin. Sitting in these chairs this morning. That's where the glory is. That's where the glory is. You are his vessel. You are his container.

Be that humble heart. That humble heart. That lowly heart. That can be his container. That can be that dispenser of the glory. The humble heart.

Is God's dwelling place. Let us pray. Lord we give you glory. Unto you be glory. In your church. Lord unto you be glory.

In this fellowship of your people. In this gathering of different ones. In each heart. In each life. Lord let us not be unwise. Let us not be as Eli.

That was not faithful. That had a disregard for what was going wrong. In his family. He did not correct it. That was going wrong in the nation. He did not speak against it.

[25:55] Lord let us be forthright. And declare your word. Let us return. To the order. Of the word. Let us as a church. Be led by your spirit. That we might be ordered. As your word would have us to be ordered.

That our lives would be ordered. As your word would have our lives to be ordered. Our families to be ordered. That our house would be in order.

That our hearts would be in order. Lord that you would be honoured and glorified. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen. I love to tell the story.

Of haunting things above. Of Jesus and his glory. One Samuel chapter 4 from verse 21.

One Samuel chapter 5 from verse 21.