

Watch The Lord Reveal His Holiness

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[0 : 00] If you would please remain standing and turn in your copy of God's Word to 1 Samuel 4.

God tells us in 1 Timothy 3 that all scripture is spirit-breathed. In Hebrews 4, God tells us that his Word is living, powerful, and piercing. I'll read aloud to you as you follow along.

When I finish this reading, I will say the Word of God for the people of God. If you receive God's Word by faith this way, then please respond by saying thanks be to God. 1 Samuel 4.

And I'm going to start in the middle of verse 1 here. Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle and camped at Ebenezer, while the Philistines camped at Aphek. The Philistines lined up in battle formation against Israel.

And as the battle intensified, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who struck down about 4,000 men on the battlefield. When the troops returned to the camp, the elders of Israel asked, Why did the Lord defeat us today before the Philistines?

[1 : 09] Let's bring the Ark of the Lord's Covenant from Shiloh. Then it will go with us and save us from our enemies. So the people sent men to Shiloh to bring back the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of Armies, who is enthroned between the cherubim.

Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were with the Ark of the Covenant of God. When the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord entered the camp, all the Israelites raised such a loud shout that the ground shook.

The Philistines heard the sound of the war cry and asked, What is this loud shout in the Hebrew's camp? When the Philistines discovered the Ark of the Lord had entered the camp, they panicked.

A God has entered their camp, they said. Woe to us! Nothing like this has happened before. Woe to us! Who will rescue us from these magnificent gods? These are the gods that slaughtered the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness.

Show some courage and be men, Philistines. Otherwise you will serve the Hebrews just as they served you. Now be men and fight. So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated.

[2 : 14] And each man fled to his tent. The slaughter was severe. Thirty thousand of the Israelite foot soldiers fell. The Ark of God was captured and Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

That same day, a Benjamite man ran from the battle and came to Shiloh. His clothes were torn and there was dirt on his head. When he arrived, there was Eli sitting in his chair beside the road watching because he was anxious about the Ark of God.

When the man entered the city to give a report, the entire city cried out. Eli heard the outcry and asked, Why the commotion? The man quickly came and reported to Eli.

At that time, Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes didn't move because he couldn't see. The man said to Eli, I am the one who came from the battle. I fled from there today.

What happened, my son? Eli asked. The messenger answered, Israel has fled from the Philistines and also there was a great slaughter among the people. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are both dead and the Ark of God has been captured.

[3 : 19] When he mentioned the Ark of God, Eli fell back in his chair by the city gate and since he was old and heavy, his neck broke and he died. Eli had judged Israel forty years.

Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and about to give birth. When she heard the news about the capture of God's Ark and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband, she collapsed and gave birth because her labor pains came on her.

As she was dying, the women taking care of her said, Do not be afraid, you've given birth to a son. But she did not respond or pay attention. She named the boy Ichabod, saying, The glory has departed from Israel, referring to the capture of the Ark of God and to the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband.

The glory has departed from Israel, she said, because the Ark of God has been captured. The word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of the Lord stands forever.

Luke 1, no word from God shall be void of power. Will you pray with me? Lord, please make your word.

[4 : 51] The word of life, the gospel word, the word of our redemption, the living word of God and the word that became flesh. Make your word precious among us today.

We ask for your glory. Amen. A famous president said this quote, Do something.

If it works, do it more. That was the advice of President FDR. Do something. If it works, do it more.

While this may be a good rule for most causes and effects, isn't it true that we often wrongly associate unrelated and sometimes bizarre actions with desirable results?

Tiger Woods always would wear a red shirt on Sundays. The golfer, the football player, Brian Urlucker, would always eat two cookies before a game.

Wayne Gretzky would always put baby powder on his hockey stick. Now, here's one that maybe we do need to reform. I looked up. Why is it that people say knock on wood? Well, the Scots Irish who immigrated to the USA, they had this ancient belief in the Druids that lived in the forest, like these pagan spirits that lived inside the wood of the trees.

[6 : 13] So it's a way to get some Irish luck on something is to knock on wood. So we should stop being pagans by doing that. We'll see the Israelites have this same tendency.

If something works, do it more. The Lord had told Joshua and the people of Israel, take the arch and march around the walls of Jericho. The walls came a-tumbling down. So the Israelites and their wise, you know, council of elders, let's do more of that.

That was their whole battle strategy. But the Lord wants to train the people of God in something much more important. He wants to reveal his holiness.

I think that's what we have on display in our chapter for today, 1 Samuel chapter 3. And this is exhibition number one of Hannah's wonderful poem and prayer.

Do you remember what she said? Would you look there? Probably just a page or two back. 1 Samuel chapter 2, verse 2. Hannah declared, There is none besides you, nor is there any rock like our God.

[7 : 24] For you are holy, and no one is holy like you, Lord. What does it mean that God is holy? To refresh your memory, Anselm of Canterbury said, The holy God is he of which nothing greater can be conceived.

Holy means that God is absolutely above, much more magnificent, supremely other than anything else in all the cosmos.

There's a strong distinction between the creator and creation and everything else. What I see in this chapter is the Lord revealing to his people and to the Philistine enemies that he is a holy God.

So as we move through this passage, I invite you to watch with me and see how the Lord reveals his holiness. First, to whom does he reveal his holiness?

Well, even to those who love this world more than his glorious face, the Lord reveals his holiness. He reveals his holiness even to sinners who love this world more than his glorious face.

[8 : 35] Look at verse 1 for context. Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. Who are the Philistines? You can picture them like a Viking warrior people.

They're from the Mediterranean Sea and the island of Crete off the coast of Greece. So that's where they're originally from. And they became ambitious and wanted to try to conquer more lands touching their great seas.

They attempted to take over all of Egypt. This is how mighty and fierce they were. Now they weren't able to secure the Egyptian land facing the Mediterranean ocean.

So they went instead to the Asia, you know, the part where Israel's southern kingdom was being established. So along the southern coast touching the Mediterranean Sea, these Philistines now came over, took over villages, enslaved the people that used to live there and began to dominate the entire region.

We saw how powerful they were in the book of Judges with even the mighty Samson giving up his life to kill many of them, but never to subdue the conquest of the Philistine army.

[9 : 41] The Egyptians called them the sea people. But now they're well established on land because they had this big Navy. They were able to then do trade all across the Mediterranean Sea.

That's why they wanted the coast is they have access to iron.

And with that iron, they can build up a mighty military that's going to dominate this entire region. Well, the Philistines, they encamped in Aphek and the Israelites, they encamped next to a big mountain.

Verse one says beside Eben Ezer. Eben means stone and Ezer means help. So the big mountain right next to the Israelite camp is called Ebenezer, the stone of help.

And the Philistines encamped on the field. Which is called Aphek. It's one of the earliest fortified royal Canaanite cities. It was near the source of the river Yarkon.

So here comes spring water. We've got all the water we're going to need to feed all these thirsty soldiers. And it's on this open field. Now remember with this iron that they're importing, they're able to maneuver their chariots and strike an awe of fear at anyone who would try to come near their fortified city.

[10:58] The field was their home turf advantage. If you come down onto this field, get ready to be slaughtered by the mighty Philistines. Verse two, we're told that the Philistines put themselves in battle array.

Well, without more details, we can picture ancient warfare. It's hand to hand combat. They've got their iron armory on their bodies.

They've got their chariots being pulled by horses on the field. You can picture most likely these big flags and banners and drums and everything that would be used to display like a peacock. The might of their empire.

The result is exactly what you would expect. The Israelites go to war. This plain and share plain of Sharon is the battlefield.

It's an obvious mismatch. And the result is that 4000 Israelites die. In verse three, we read when the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, now pay attention to the wording in verse three.

[12:02] Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines? Doesn't that sound backwards? Doesn't it sound like you would read it? Why is it that the Philistines defeated us before the Lord?

The phrase in the Hebrew Bible that the church has adopted is, you know, let your face shine upon me.

You know, the face of the Lord is what you want to be living in front of. You want to be living all of your life. Coram Deo, before the face of God. And yet the elders, the leaders of the Israelites are more worried about what the Philistines see.

What does this tell you about their view of God? God was obviously distant from them, and he's the one who now defeated them, put them to shame and embarrassment before this mighty worldly empire.

I think of a child. No child wants to be disciplined in front of their rivals, put to shame. So the feeling of the people is that, well, we lost our honor.

[13:13] Why did the Lord embarrass us? They're more concerned for what the Philistines think of them, it seems, than for what Yahweh thinks of them. I need to confess, this is such a temptation in my flesh as well.

That we get to be part of the kingdom of heaven, but here on earth, it's so small and simple and humble. And it's so tempting in my flesh to want to be more like the world with this battle array, you know?

Strike awe and fear on the enemy. But no, the way of God's people is humble, and he's only pleased, and he's only with those who are contrite and who care more about his face than what the world sees.

Whose face do you care most about? That's why I think this line from the hymn resonates with so many of us Christians. We're prone to wonder. Lord, I feel it.

Prone to leave the God I love. But listen to the encouragement from Scripture. And I purposefully limited this encouragement to passages that could have encouraged the people of God at this time.

[14:24] Or the audience that would have been reading these books. Psalm 105, verse 4. Look to the Lord and his strength. Seek his face always.

2 Chronicles 7, verse 14. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven.

I will forgive their sins and I will heal their land. See, Hannah was right. No one is holy like the Lord. 1 Samuel 2, verse 2. For there is none besides you, nor is there any rock like our God. Even though the Israelites love the world more than they love the glorious face of God upon them.

The Lord calls us to return to him once again. He reveals his holiness to them. And that's what he's doing in this story. Who else does the Lord reveal his holiness to?

[15:24] Number two. Even to unrepentant, proud manipulators, the Lord reveals his holiness. Even to unrepentant, proud manipulators.

Let's see how the Lord reveals his glory to this group. Well, after the slaughter of these 4,000, rather than repenting, confessing that God has not been our king all along, we're living, doing whatever we want to.

Whatever seems right in our own eyes. The strategy they come up with is instead to try to manipulate God. You can almost hear their logic. Since Yahweh did not defend our honor, let us be put to shame.

Let's drag his honor into the war. Look at verse 3. Here's their great plan. Let's bring the ark of the covenant of Yahweh from Shiloh to us. When it comes to us, it will save us from the hand of our enemies.

Look closely at verse 3. To what are they attributing salvation? When the ark comes to us and is among us, the ark may save us.

[16:36] Not the Lord. Not Yahweh. Not the host. The king of the host of the armies of heaven. Then, they're attributing it to the symbol, this ark of his covenant.

In other words, they're thinking like this. We can manipulate the holy God. Bring the ark. Because everyone knows, including the Philistines, the ark is associated with our God. Then we can force God's hand to defend his honor.

And we can win this war. They think that this sacrament or this symbol that God has given is a good luck charm or something with which we can manipulate God.

Are we any better than this ancient people? In our flesh, we are not any better. We can be much worse. You'll notice this now that I point it out. If you're driving on the main road through our little town here, there's a sign in front of one of the biggest, most beautiful buildings.

And it says, drive through ashes. Think about that. Drive through your car. Pastor Barbara or whatever her name is will put ashes on your forehead.

[17:50] You don't need to really be under the word or understand like what is the Bible ministering here. Just come get your ashes and we'll do a drive through for your convenience. Can manipulate God.

It's not any better. Or here's another one. Many have the TV on at home and they have the Bible open. It seems like a Christian message. They're telling you, just repeat these words or claim that this thing happened and you'll be blessed.

And they're seeking the blessing rather than the fount of every blessing. God himself. Our flesh wants to put our hope in a metal crucifix rather than on the one who was crucified.

Some believe there is power in an atmosphere that man can manipulate through music or lights or fog machines. But our only true hope is in the holy God.

And he is no creature. He's the creator. He will not be manipulated. Amen. Well, look at verse four. The narrator's voice.

[18:56] Adds a detail. While the elders are flippant about the Ark of the Covenant, it's it's a tool to be used to manipulate God. Look at verse four.

The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of hosts. There's that glorious name of God, the king of the armies of heaven who dwells between the cherubim.

See, he does have a kingdom. He does have a throne and his holiness is guarded and protected by the cherubim. These fear striking celestial warriors.

This is who we're really talking about. Now, Exodus chapter 25, verses 21 and 22 describe the Ark of the Covenant and the purpose of this Ark for God's people as they gather to worship him.

See, this is the design and the intended purpose of the Ark of the Covenant.

[20:10] There's a throne on top of the Ark of the Covenant called the mercy seat that gets sprinkled with blood. And there's angels whose wings shoot away anything unholy from the mercy seat.

Does that remind you of the Garden of Eden where the angels are brought in to keep anything impure out of the garden? And inside the Ark of the Covenant, the moral law is kept and sealed. The Ten Commandments, which are a covenant between God and his people. I hope that you see even in these shadowy form, the Ark of the Covenant represents the redemption of God by grace. God himself keeping his moral law and his covenant to graciously save a people. But he doesn't compromise his holiness. The wings of the cherubim, the host of angels' armies are protecting God. Well, he doesn't need their protection, but they're separating sinful man from holy God. That's the purpose of the Ark of the Covenant. It's to mediate and minister and remind sinners you get to be in fellowship and communion with God on God's terms.

[21 : 24] Because God is the one who keeps his covenant to you. And he says, this is my symbol to you of my presence. And God, in a created display of glory, fills the tabernacle.

And he fills this area, bringing his presence into communion with his people. And this is why it's called the Ark of God's presence. The Ark is a visible word to God's people.

And it's sacred. It's the word of the Lord of hosts. And it represents his heavenly throne come down to earth among his people. But then verse 4 also drops in two names that are taking us back in our mind to what we've already heard prophesied.

Look at verse 4. The two sons of Eli hear the two names, Hophni and Phinehas. They're listed and associated with the Ark of the Covenant in verse 4.

So the stage is set. God's people, their hearts are prone to wonder. And it's really the world that has their hearts.

[22 : 34] They want the Lord to come and stir up the battle and make it be their victory for their own honor. But instead, God's reminding them he is on the throne.

And what was the last word given about Hophni and Phinehas? They will be judged. God is on his throne. He will carry out his judgment. He will keep his word. You see how God is truly holy.

There is no God holy like our God. There is none besides him, nor is there any rock like our God. But it's to these very unrepentant manipulators who proudly think they can twist God's arm to protect their own honor.

It's to these people that God is coming to reveal his holiness because he is a gracious God. Well, that's to whom he reveals his glory.

But how does he do it? This is just amazing. I'm still in awe of how God does this. In a completely holy way. Unlike how any other man or false gods would do it.

[23 : 41] That's how the Lord reveals his holiness. In a completely holy way. Look at verse five. When the Ark of the Covenant came into the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the earth shook.

The Philistines say in verse eight, who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods?

Remember, these are the gods that destroyed the mighty Egyptian empire that we couldn't even take over.

And these gods did it for them. Now they think it's gods because that's their only concept of God. It's a bunch of pagan gods made in their own image. So the Philistines are more consistent with their theology.

And they came up with a man centered, worldly way of winning the battle. Look at verse nine. Be strong and conduct yourself like men, you Philistines. In other words, their gods are really a symbol to them.

What their true might comes from is being a Philistine and fighting like a man. It's a worldly solution. He says, if we don't win this battle, we'll become slaves to these Israelites.

[24 : 43] Remember, this is the mighty God who delivered them from the Egyptians. We'll be next. So let's go out and fight with all we got. Now, the big question is, will God deliver them or not?

Was their manipulation something God would overlook or not? Would God keep his word about Hophni and Phinehas or not? And the result we read in verse 10 is that the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated.

The survivors fled. It was a very great slaughter. 30,000 Israelite foot soldiers dead on the ground. Remember, Ebenezer means rock of help.

But in 1 Samuel 4, these proud, sinful people of God, they found no help from God. For the few to whom God's word was precious, there was a gracious reminder, even in this massive defeat, that Yahweh will be faithful to his word.

Because we're told that the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died. Just as the man of God prophet had said would happen. Just as Samuel, even as a boy, had to stand and preach to Eli. [26 : 03] Deuteronomy 19, verse 15 says, By the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word of the Lord shall be established. So what God was doing that day is proving to all of Israel, his word has returned to Israel.

What God said would happen has happened. And God cares more about that, showing his covenant faithfulness and holiness, than in sparing his people their honor.

The prophecy came true. Because no one is holy like the Lord, there is none besides him, nor is there any rock like our God.

Well, in 1 Samuel 4, Ebenezer became the hill of greatest loss. He became a hill covered in the blood of judgment.

We read in verse 11 that the ark of God was captured. You see, the Lord allowed his name to be shamed. The Lord allowed his reputation to suffer this dishonor in the eyes of man.

[27 : 13] Why did he do that? With all that the ark of the covenant represents, he did it to reveal that he is holy. Here's what I see in the rest of this chapter.

When the Lord reveals his holiness, the weight of his glory moves everything to its proper place. When the Lord reveals his holiness, the weight of his glory moves everything else into its proper place.

Watch this happen. In verse 12, a man from Saul's tribe, Benjamin, that's what's coming up next. He came running with his clothes torn and dirt on his head.

He ran about 20 miles all the way to Shiloh. In verse 13, Eli was sitting on the seat by the way, watching. Even though he's blind, he's eager.

He's watching, waiting to hear news of this great battle. The ark got carried off with his two sons leading the procession. The elders of Israel thought this was our big turning point.

[28 : 17] Now we're going to finally see God defeat the Philistines. And all the village, all the daughters of Shiloh, the daughters of Israel are all waiting around, all who didn't go off to war. What will the news be?

But notice this wonderful description in verse 13. Why was it that Eli was on the edge of his seat, even though he's blind, he's trying to look in the direction from where the news will come.

Verse 13 says, It's because Eli's heart trembled for the ark of God. Remember, just right before this, Eli had made that wonderful profession to Samuel.

He had said, It's Yahweh. May he do what seems best to him. Well, in verse 13, the news arrives from the runner and the whole city cries out.

Remember how all the soldiers shouted so loudly when the ark arrived at the battle scene. And now the news of the ark being captured arrives and they all shout out once again, two shouts for two very different reasons.

[29 : 23] In verse 14, we're reminded that Eli by this point is blind, 98 years old, and he hears this fourfold bad news. It keeps getting worse. Number one, Israel fled before the Philistines.

So we didn't win? No, we are running to save our lives. Number two, it was a great slaughter. How bad? Last one was 4,000.

Was it any worse? 30,000. Number three, your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, both died on the same day. That wording would have reminded Eli of God's word to him.

The Lord establishes his word. Remember, his heart was trembling for the ark of the Lord. And we're told, the ark of God has been captured.

Well, the whole crowd that stayed back at home shouts and weep. And Eli, when he heard this news, we're told that he fell backward off of his seat.

[30 : 25] He broke his neck and died for the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel 40 years. And then Phinehas, his wife, who was with child, do any moment when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured and that her father-in-law now and her husband, they had all died.

She bowed herself and gave birth for her labor pains came upon her. And in verse 20, about the time of her death, the women who stood by her said, do not fear for you have a son.

But Phinehas, Phinehas, his wife didn't even answer, nor did she regard the son that she just gave birth to. She muttered, Ichabod. Ichabod, the glory of God has departed for the ark of God has been captured.

My richest gain, I count, but loss and poor contempt on all my pride. The holiness of God revealed settles everything into its proper place.

We only repent when God opens our eyes to see how holy he is. She declares the glory of God has departed.

[31 : 42] Ichabod. One person pointed out that Phinehas, his wife spoke more truth in her death than her husband probably did in his whole life. Now, Eli, while the Bible doesn't give us an answer on the state of his soul, and it's not our job to uncover that, I think the reason it's left hanging and worded a certain way is for us to ponder deeply.

What about this priest? What goes on Eli's gravestones, so to speak? Well, if we were to get what we deserve on our gravestone, it would be very embarrassing and very humbling.

And without grace, if Eli had been left to himself, it would have been fair, but he could have had this message, which probably would have been one of the worst to put on a gravestone. In verse 18, the man was old and heavy.

That's what we can say about that one. But the Lord is holy. There is no God like our God. He is a rock like any other. And there's a linguistic link here between verse 18 and verse 22.

Verse 18, the man was old and heavy. And the word heavy, it can also be translated as glory and vice versa. That's why the New Testament describes the weight of God's glory.

[33 : 09] In verse 22, the glory has departed from Israel. It's the heaviness. The heavy glory of God is what has departed. It's the same word. For the ark of God has been captured.

So here's what, as I've pondered that link, here's what I've, I've come to appreciate. Eli's heavy fatness. It represented his fat loving indulgent sin of his sons and his household.

But in God's redeeming irony, this point of greatest shame and embarrassment for Eli. God has turned around to bring glory to himself.

Isn't that how God loves to work? When we read in the Bible of Peter and Paul, you and me, it's those very flaws, those very ways in which we were most misguided, that God turns around.

And then we tell that as our testimony because it gives glory to God. So it's possible because God did not leave Eli to himself. And Eli declared it's Yahweh.

[34 : 09] Let Yahweh do what seems best in his eyes. That Eli would get a different gravestone, which is verse 13. And this is the best gravestone I can imagine from this chapter.

That his heart tremble, trembled for the presence of God. This is who he was, but this is now by God's grace, who he is a man whose heart trembled for the presence of God.

He wanted nothing more. When the Lord reveals his holiness, the weight of his glory moves everything else into its proper place. Well, we've looked at this deep, heavy, weighty chapter, but we're not quite done.

Because the reason we're given this chapter is to point us to God's full arc of redemption. We need to next see the wondrous way in which the Lord has revealed his holiness.

Eli's heart trembled for the arc of God. I wonder what would be some of those memories as Eli sat there waiting to hear the news of the battle, the memories of the arc of the covenant.

[35 : 19] Remember, he ministered for 40 years as high priest. He would have been the one to carry out on behalf of all of God's people, the commandment in Exodus 24, that once a year on the day of atonement, Yom Kippur, after reading the law to the people, the high priest would be the one to sprinkle the blood of sublimation.

He would have been the one to do with the blood of the covenant. You know the significance of this work, don't you? The ark is God's guarantee that he will pardon sin by the blood of a perfect substitute, a sacrifice in the place of sinners who deserve God's judgment and wrath.

Hebrews 9.22 says that according to the law, things are purified with blood and without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. And while it would have remained cloudy, what is God doing right now in redemptive history to these people of God?

We can look back on the light of the finished work of Jesus Christ, and we can see the glory of the gospel, even in God allowing his name, his honor, his reputation to be dragged down, allowing his ark to be captured.

Eli had preached to his sons, you're sinning against the Lord, who will intercede for you? And God himself became the only mediator, the only one who can mediate and intercede between the holy God and sinful men.

[36 : 57] Jesus Christ took on flesh. He became the embodiment of the ark of the covenant. It was his blood, he says, that he shed for the new covenant, a covenant of grace.

He's the lamb of God who sits on the throne, the mercy seat of King Jesus, the lion lamb. He sits in throne surrounded by the host of angels armies.

As they pictured the ark of the covenant, we picture Jesus Christ enthroned in heaven. And we see the parallels between this passage and the account of Jesus, accomplishing this wonderful work to reveal the holiness of God to his people.

In this passage, first the people shout when the ark shows up, thinking that they can manipulate God and they're going to win the war. Then later, when the news comes back, the whole city of Shiloh cries out and they shout again.

And despair. We have two shouts in the gospels. First in Matthew 21, 19, the multitudes who went before and those who followed, they cried out saying, Hosanna to the son of David.

[38 : 11] But all of their expectations about how God would save them were wrong. In John 18, the Lord revealed how holy he is. The detachment of troops arrested Jesus.

Peter wants to take out the sword and Jesus says, that's not how I reveal my holiness. They bound Jesus. They led him away because one man would need to die for all the people.

And then that same multitude cried out a different shout. We read of that in Luke 24, 13. The ones who once said, Hosanna to the son of David, our, our King, they now shall crucify him, crucify him. God allowed his honor to be shamed. Why did he do this? God, the son arrested, carried away, humiliated, spat upon, flogged to die a cursed death of a slave.

It's to reveal the holiness of God to sinners. That's what I think we see foreshadowed in this glorious little chapter. It's preparing God's people to survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died.

[39 : 34] In 1 Samuel 4, Ebenezer was the hill of greatest loss, covered with the blood of judgment. Calvary became the hill of greatest loss, covered in the blood of judgment, the blood of Jesus, to cover your sins and mine.

Ebenezer means rock of help. And 1 Samuel 4, proud, sinful man felt, they found no help from God. And so Jesus took the place of those proud, sinful men, and of you and me.

He could have had the help of the host of angels from heaven coming down to take him off of the tree, but instead he refused the help he could have brought. And he did that to redeem a people so that he could become the rock of help for all those who will put their faith in him.

You see how we're no better than the Philistines or the Israelites. But Jesus sought you and me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God, and he, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.

So we can sing, O to grace, how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be, and let thy grace now, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee. The people of Israel cried out, the glory of God has departed.

[41 : 08] So there's the irony there, in the land God promised, the land God gave, but if God's not with them, who wants it? What hope is there without the Lord? Jesus Christ secured the kingdom that has no end, that will not be shaken, and his glory is on full display in heaven right now.

When you and I take our last breath and our souls leave our bodies, we're joined to the host of angel army around the throne, the mercy seat with Jesus, the lion lamb of the tribe of Judah.

And he's advancing his kingdom now, but it's, it's an age of captivity. It's the overlap of the ages. It's by faith. We're humble, we're weak, we're poor, we're needy.

But one day, he will come, and his glory will be set on full display. No Philistine army, no worldly ideas or manipulations could even compare to this battle array of the kingdom of heaven when it comes to earth.

We get to be part of that. And it's a joyful work for Jesus to do this. This was, this is the same God, you know, the same God whose name got allowed, attached to the ark to be captured and drug away as a slave to the Philistines.

[42 : 26] It's the same God. It's his joy, his delight all along to reveal his holiness. That's why Jesus prayed. Ralph read it to us this morning. John 17, 24.

Father, I desire that they also whom you gave me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which you have given me. For you loved me before the foundation of the world, and I have declared your name to them, and I will declare it, that the love with which you have loved

me may be in them, and I in them.

That's the work that Jesus is doing. He's applying it with power by the work of his Holy Spirit. So we sing, and as we will in a moment, here I raise my Ebenezer, Jesus Christ, my rock of help, the holy God who redeemed me.

Hither by thy help, I've come, and I hope by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home. Amen?

Well, let's pray, and thank our holy God for his wondrous work.

Amen.