

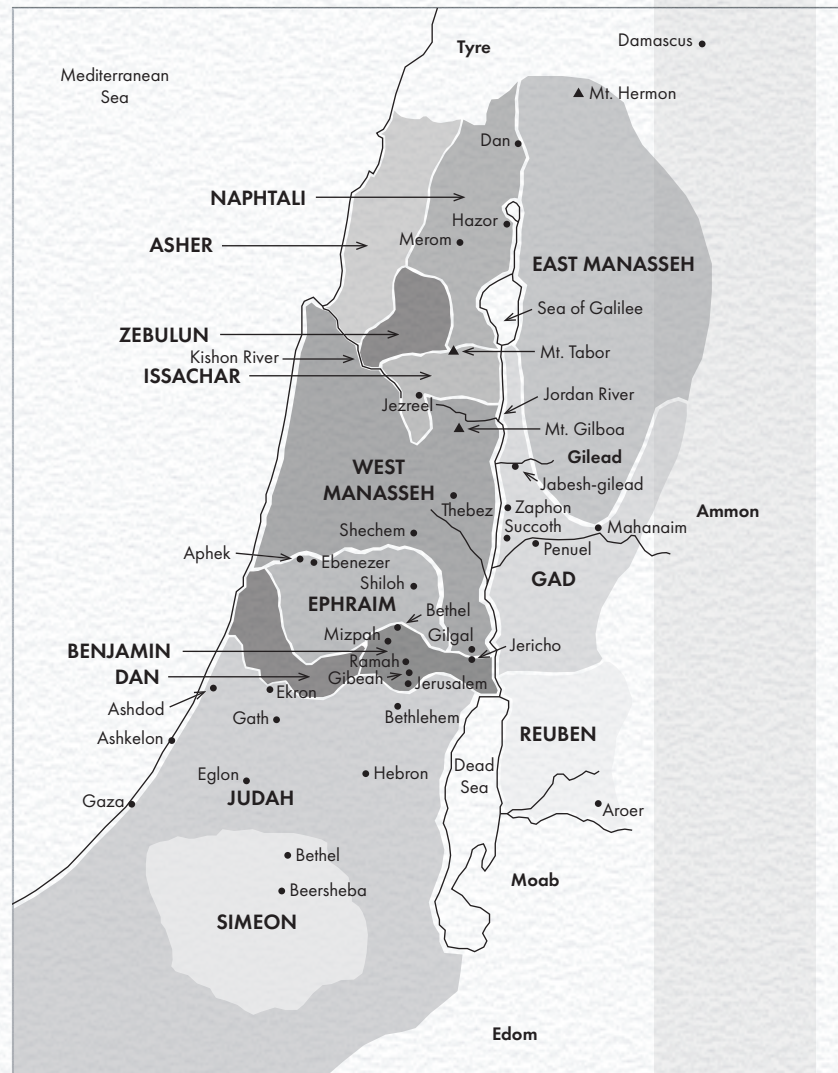
1 Samuel 4

WHEN

- The birth of Samuel is usually dated between 1100 B.C. and 1070 B.C.
- The events recorded in 1 Samuel 4 appear to have happened when Samuel was a young man.

WHERE

- The Tabernacle of God was in Shiloh during these days.
- When the Israelites fought the Philistines, the Israelites camped at Ebenezer and the Philistines camped at Aphek.



CHARACTERS

- **Samuel** – The last judge of Israel. He grew up in Shiloh serving the Lord at the Tabernacle and became a prophet of God.
- **Eli** – The 14th judge of Israel. He was a priest who served God at the Tabernacle.
- **Hophni and Phinehas** – Eli's sons who served at the Tabernacle with him. They were wicked men who continually disrespected God.
- **The Philistines** – The long-time enemies of Israel. They lived in the cities near the coast of the Mediterranean Sea (Gaza, Ekron, Ashkelon, etc.).

OUTLINE

- THE PHILISTINES TAKE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (4:1-11):

- + The Israelites went to battle against the Philistines, but they were defeated, and 4,000 Israelites were killed.
- + After being defeated, the elders of Israel concluded they needed to bring the Ark of the Covenant with them into the next battle and God would give them victory.
- + The Ark was brought from Shiloh and Hophni and Phinehas accompanied it.
- + When the Philistines heard the Ark of God was in the enemy camp, they were afraid because they knew the stories of how the God of Israel defeated the Egyptians in Moses' day.
- + Through their fear, they mustered their courage and met Israel on the battlefield.
- + The Philistines defeated Israel, killed 30,000 Israelites, including the 2 sons of Eli, and captured the Ark of the Covenant.

- THE DEATH OF ELI (4:12-22):

- + A Benjaminite man fled the battle and reported the results to the people of Shiloh.
- + When the townspeople heard the news, they all cried out in lament.
- + Then the Benjaminite found Eli, who at this point was blind and very old (98 years old, 4:15).
- + First, he told Eli Israel had been defeated.
- + Second, he told him his two sons had been killed.
- + Third, he told Eli the Ark of the Covenant had been captured by the Philistines.
- + When he heard about the Ark, Eli fell backwards in his chair, broke his neck, and died.
- + He had been a judge in Israel for 40 years.
- + When Eli's pregnant daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was told that her husband was dead, her father-in-law was dead, and the Ark of the Covenant had been taken, she went into labor.
- + She gave birth to a son, but she died after the delivery.
- + Before dying, she named her son Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the Ark of God has been captured."

APPLICATION

- God is not a good luck charm to keep in the closet and dust off when you have a need.
- Israel's spiritual leadership continuously blasphemed God, but when they found themselves in trouble, they wanted to use God's Ark as a talisman for victory.
- The modern equivalent is someone who disrespects God by ignoring His commands on a daily basis, and then wants the privilege of praying to Him when times get hard (only to later return to their disobedience).
- God wants to be our provider and protector (as He did for Israel), but He won't be disrespected by those who are only interested in Him when they need get into a sticky situation.