

Lucky Charm Theology (1 Samuel 4:1b-22)

- Ch. 3:21a is a line that the author of Samuel draws to conclude a section
- We will not hear of young Samuel until chapter 7; the focus has changed
- Chapter 4 falls into two main categories (vs.11-12) and (vs. 12-22)
- The first reports the battle and the second concludes with a notice of 2 deaths

I. The Myth of the Lord's People

- First battle Israel is struck down (v.3a). The elders asked the right question(v.3)
- If they thought it through, Scriptures would have warned them (Lev 26: 17)
- Instead they leaned on their own wisdom & called for the Ark of the Lord (v.3b)
- Ark of the Lord testified to the Lord's rulership & revelation (10 commands)
- The Ark of the Lord also testified to reconciliation as seen with the mercy seat
- So the Ark of the Lord spoke of the ruling, speaking & forgiving God
- Elders hoped with the Ark that the Lord would come among them to save them
- The assumption was if the Ark was there the Lord would be forced to save them
- With the Ark being there, God would have to deliver them, but He didn't (v.10)
- Not only were they defeated, suffering massive loses, the Ark was captured (v.11)
- As believers we can very easily presume upon God's mercies in the same way

II. The Fulfillment of the Lord's Threat

- They went to Shiloh to fetch the ark & it was in the care of Hophni & Phinehas (v4)
- Vs. 11 battle is summarized with the climax as the death of Hophni & Phinehas
- The irony of vs.1-11 is Israel plans to use the Ark to secure victory in battle
- Here we see God uses the Ark to fulfill/carry out judgment on Hophni & Phinehas
- The irony goes deeper: to all intents & purposes it looked like the Lord had failed
- On the basis of 2: 12-17; 22-25; 29-30, though it looked like God was dishonored, the Lord was, in fact, beginning to protect His honor & restore it.
- The Lord may be despised in Philistia, but He will be no more despised in Shiloh

III. The Tragedy of the Lord's Departure

- Eli sitting by road (v13,18) with a blank stare(v.15) he's blind & he's trembling (13)
- The dreaded news comes to him (vs.17) the ark is gone, his sons are dead (v.18)
- No sooner does he die, than his daughter-in-law gives birth (19) & dies (20) hearing the news; before she dies, she names her son Ichabod (v.21) "no glory/has departed