

## *Promised Land 1 Study and Discussion Questions*

### *Lesson Eight: The Exile of the Ark and Samuel's Leadership – 1 Samuel 4 – 7*

Read 1 Samuel 4:1-11.

- 1) After the Philistines defeated the Israelites in battle (1 Samuel 4:2), what did the Israelites conclude had gone wrong and why would they have come to this conclusion (consider 1 Samuel 4:4 in light of God's words in Exodus 25:20-22, 29:42-46 and Israel's past experiences in Numbers 7:89, Joshua 6:6-11, 20-21)?
  
- 2) What do we know about the spiritual condition of the Israelites in the period of the Judges that offers insight about why their solution failed (compare Judges 2:19-22, 21:25 and 1 Samuel 3:1 with Deuteronomy 6:5 and 1 Peter 4:17)?
  
- 3) Reread 1 Samuel 4:6-9. The Philistines had a confused view about the God of Israel.
  - a) How was their view a reflection of what Israel had modeled to them (cross reference 1 Samuel 4:6-8 with Exodus 20:3-6, Judges 3:5-6, 6:24-25, 8:27, 33, 10:6, and 18:30-31)?
  
  - b) Are you modeling anything that might leave someone confused about the God you worship? If so, what?

Read 1 Samuel 4:12 – 5:12.

- 4) Recall and record the significance of the deaths of Hophni and Phinehas (see 1 Samuel 1-3).
  
- 5) Summarize the story in 1 Samuel 5.

- 6) God was not only concerned about the Israelites but also the Philistines.
- a) What opportunity did He give the Philistines to learn about and embrace Him?
  - b) What have you learned so far in *Promised Land 1* that indicates God has always been concerned about people of every culture? (If you have previous Bible study experience, you may include information from Genesis through Deuteronomy.)
  - c) Do you share God's passionate concern for people of all nations? How are you currently helping to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)?

Read 1 Samuel 6.

- 7) What experiment did the Philistines conduct? Which verse summarizes it?
- 8) 1 Samuel 6:19 tells us the Lord put to death seventy Israelites who looked into the Ark. What had they done wrong (see Numbers 4:5, 15, 20; Joshua 3:3; 1 Samuel 6:15; 2 Samuel 6:6-7, and secondarily, 1 Samuel 6:20)?
- 9) The Israelites at Beth Shemesh asked, "Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God?" (1 Samuel 6:20).
- a) How did the Philistines attempt to meet God's holy standard in their own way (chapter 6)?
  - b) How do people today respond to the idea that God has a holy standard?
  - c) According to Hebrews 11:6 and 10:19-22, what is the sole basis upon which one can approach and appease a Holy God?

- d) Which of your neighbors, co-workers, relatives, friends, or acquaintances is actively attempting to meet God's holy standard in their own way and needs to hear this good news?

Read 1 Samuel 7.

- 10) Under Samuel's direction, what did the Israelites do to show they were serious about recommitting themselves to the Lord?
- 11) Contrast the manner in which the Israelites attempted to defeat the Philistines under Hophni and Phinehas' leadership (1 Samuel 4) and the manner in which the Israelites fought the Philistines under Samuel's leadership (1 Samuel 7). Include the results of both.
- 12) *Ebenezer* means "stone of help." With what do you need the Lord your Rock to help you today (see 1 Samuel 2:2 Psalm 31:3, 46:1, 118:7, 146:5)?

Read 1 Samuel 4 – 7.

- 13) What do each of the chapters in this lesson (1 Samuel 4-7) reveal about the power of God?
- 14) List the ways in which chapter 7 indicates a reversal of the events of 1 Samuel 4-6.
- 15) Israel experienced reversals of former misfortunes under Samuel's godly leadership and as a result of their sincere repentance. What kinds of reversals have occurred in your life since you first repented of your sins? What specific change (reversal) will you ask the Almighty God to begin making within you today (Philippians 2:12-13)?