

## **Dr. Robert Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 3, 1 Samuel 3-4 – The Lord Chooses a Prophet, Defeat, Death, Departure**

### **Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

#### **1. Abstract of Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 3, 1 Samuel 3-4 – The Lord Chooses a Prophet, Defeat, Death, Departure, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Dr. Robert Chisholm's lecture focuses on 1 Samuel 3-4. He examines Samuel's calling as a prophet in chapter 3, emphasizing God's willingness to restore a broken relationship with Israel through those who honor Him. Chapter 4 shifts to a period of "Defeat, Death, and Departure," highlighting the fulfillment of God's judgment against Eli's house. The Israelites suffer a major defeat, lose the Ark of the Covenant, and Eli and his sons meet their demise, signifying a tragic decline. Ultimately, the lecture sets the stage for future restoration after the ark makes it back home.

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Chisholm, Session 3 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → 1 Samuel).**



**Chisholm\_Samuel\_S  
ession03.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 3, 1 Samuel 3-4 – The Lord Chooses a Prophet, Defeat, Death, Departure

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Robert Chisholm's lecture on 1 & 2 Samuel, specifically focusing on 1 Samuel 3-4.

#### Briefing Document: 1 Samuel 3-4

##### Main Themes:

- **1 Samuel 3: The Lord Chooses a Prophet:** This chapter focuses on God's selection of Samuel as a prophet to revive the relationship between God and Israel, which had been damaged by the failings of Eli and his sons. The key idea is: "The Lord is willing to revive his broken relationship with his people through those who honor him."
- **1 Samuel 4: Defeat, Death, and Departure:** This chapter depicts the tragic consequences of the judgment decreed against Eli and his family. It highlights Israel's defeat by the Philistines, the death of Eli and his sons, and the capture of the Ark of the Covenant. The key idea here is: "The Lord's decree of judgment...is certain of fulfillment, bringing tragedy in its path."

##### Key Ideas and Facts:

- **The State of Israel Before Samuel:** The word of the Lord was rare. There were not many visions." This indicates a spiritual decline and a lack of divine communication.
- **Samuel's Calling:** God calls Samuel to be a prophet. Samuel initially doesn't recognize God's voice and seeks guidance from Eli. Eli eventually understands and instructs Samuel to respond, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." This marks a shift in authority from Eli to God for Samuel.
- **Samuel's Prophecy:** God reveals to Samuel the impending judgment on Eli's house because Eli failed to restrain his sons' wickedness. Specifically, the NIV 1984 reads "His sons made themselves contemptible, and he failed to restrain them" but Chisholm believes a better reading based on other textual witnesses is that "his sons blasphemed God" or even "cursed God".

- **Eli's Reaction:** Eli accepts the judgment and does not attempt to intercede, recognizing the gravity of his and his sons' sins. He says, "He is the Lord. Let him do what is good in his eyes."
- **Samuel's Confirmation as a Prophet:** As Samuel grows, the Lord is with him, and none of his words "fall to the ground." This signifies that Samuel's prophecies are fulfilled, and all of Israel recognizes him as a validated prophet.
- **Israel's Defeat and the Ark's Capture:** Israel, facing defeat by the Philistines, brings the Ark of the Covenant into battle, viewing it almost as a good luck charm or idol. This is a misinterpretation of the Ark's significance.
- **The Death of Hophni and Phinehas:** Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, accompany the Ark, which foreshadows disaster because they are under God's judgment. The Philistines defeat Israel, capture the Ark, and Hophni and Phinehas are killed, fulfilling the prophecy.
- **Eli's Death:** Upon hearing the news of the Ark's capture, Eli falls backward and dies, symbolizing the end of an era and the consequences of his failures.
- **Ichabod's Birth:** Phinehas's wife gives birth to a son named Ichabod, meaning "no glory" or "where is the glory?" She declares, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured." This emphasizes the profound sense of loss and despair felt by the Israelites.
- **The contrast with Hannah:** Chisholm also points out a tragic contrast between the story of Ichabod's birth, and the story of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1-2. Where Hannah celebrates the birth of her son Samuel in anticipation of what he will do for Israel, the mother of Ichabod is dying and names him after the tragic loss of the ark and the death of her father-in-law and husband.

#### **Important Considerations:**

- **Symbolism of Setting:** Chisholm emphasizes the importance of setting in biblical narratives. For example, Eli's failing eyesight and his position "lying down in his usual place" are symbolic of the old, flawed Israel that is passing away. The lamp of God near Samuel symbolizes the hope for restoration through Samuel.
- **Paneled Stories:** Chisholm highlights the use of paneled stories in the Bible, where repeated elements build towards a climax. The story of Samuel's calling is an example of a four-paneled story.

- **Ancient Near Eastern Context:** Chisholm clarifies that the Philistines' belief that "a god has come into the camp" reflects a common ancient Near Eastern understanding of deities in battle, where a primary god may be accompanied by other divine figures or deities in a pantheon. He mentions the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Pharaoh Ramses II battle against the Hittites, and Assyrian annals as examples.
- **The Ark is not God:** Chisholm makes it clear that the ark is only a symbol of God's presence, and taking it away does not mean you control God.

**Looking Ahead (Based on the Lecture):**

- The Philistines will suffer consequences for capturing the Ark.
- The Ark will be returned to Israelite territory.
- Samuel will reappear in chapter 7 to lead Israel back to God.

This briefing doc captures the essence of Dr. Chisholm's lecture on these two significant chapters of 1 Samuel.

## 4. Study Guide: Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 2, 1 Samuel 3-4 – The Lord Chooses a Prophet, Defeat, Death, Departure

### 1 & 2 Samuel: Samuel's Call and Israel's Defeat - A Study Guide

#### I. Review of Key Concepts

This study guide focuses on 1 Samuel 3-4, covering Samuel's call to be a prophet and the tragic events of Israel's defeat by the Philistines. Key areas of focus include:

- **The significance of Samuel's call and role as a prophet:** Understanding how Samuel's prophetic role marks a shift from the corrupt leadership of Eli and his sons.
- **The symbolism and theological importance of the Ark of the Covenant:** Recognizing the Ark not as an idol, but as a symbol of God's presence, and understanding the dangers of treating it as a good luck charm.
- **The concept of contingent vs. unconditional prophecies:** Understanding that some prophecies are conditional and can be averted through repentance, while others are decrees that will certainly come to pass.
- **The contrast between Samuel and Eli/his sons:** Understanding the ways in which Samuel represents new hope for Israel in contrast to the moral failings of the old guard.
- **The historical and cultural context of the Ancient Near East:** This includes the cultural setting of gods in battle and the recognition of loss through mourning gestures like torn clothes and dust on the head.

#### II. Quiz (Short Answer)

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How does the rarity of visions in 1 Samuel 3:1 contrast with the end of the chapter, and what does this signify?
2. Explain the symbolic importance of the setting in 1 Samuel 3, particularly the weakening eyesight of Eli and the lamp of God.
3. What is the significance of Samuel's initial response, "Here I am," and how does it connect him to other important figures in the Old Testament?

4. Why does the narrator include the detail that Samuel did not yet know the Lord (1 Samuel 3:7)?
5. What is the significance of Eli's curse on Samuel in 1 Samuel 3, and what does this reveal about Eli's character?
6. What is the message God delivers to Samuel regarding Eli and his family, and how does it relate to events from chapter 2?
7. What are the Israelite elders' assumptions when they decide to bring the Ark of the Covenant into battle (1 Samuel 4:3), and what does this reveal about their understanding of God?
8. How do the Philistines' initial reaction to the Ark's presence in the Israelite camp reflect ancient Near Eastern beliefs about gods and warfare?
9. Why does the narrator point out that Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were with the Ark of the Covenant when it was brought to battle (1 Samuel 4:10)?
10. Explain the significance of Ichabod's name, as well as its connection to Hannah's song and the overall themes of 1 Samuel 1-4.

### **Quiz Answer Key**

1. At the beginning of 1 Samuel 3, visions are rare, but by the end, the Lord appears regularly to Samuel. This shift signifies a renewal of God's communication with Israel through Samuel, contrasting with the silence during Eli's corrupt leadership.
2. Eli's weakening eyesight symbolizes the fading spiritual leadership of the old guard. The lamp of God, still burning, represents hope and the Lord's intention to restore Israel through Samuel, even amidst the darkness.
3. Samuel's response, "Here I am," echoes similar responses from Abraham and Moses, placing him in a lineage of individuals receptive to God's call. It highlights his willingness to serve, even before he fully understands the call's nature.
4. The detail that Samuel did not yet know the Lord explains his initial confusion in recognizing God's voice. It emphasizes that he is still developing as a prophet and has not yet had a direct, personal encounter with God.
5. Eli's curse forces Samuel to reveal the prophecy of judgment against his own house. It reveals Eli's desperation and his awareness that the Lord's judgment is unavoidable, as well as his continued abuse of power.

6. God reveals that He will carry out the judgment against Eli's family due to their blasphemy and Eli's failure to restrain them. This reinforces the earlier prophecy from the man of God in chapter 2, emphasizing the certainty of divine judgment.
7. The Israelite elders believe the Ark will automatically save them, reflecting a superstitious understanding of God's presence. They treat the Ark as a good luck charm, failing to recognize the need for genuine repentance and a right relationship with God.
8. The Philistines believe a god has come to fight, and they recall the plagues on Egypt. This reflects the polytheistic context of the ancient Near East where gods were believed to participate in battles and had allies in the divine realm.
9. The presence of Hophni and Phinehas foreshadows the impending disaster, as their presence does not guarantee victory and reminds the reader of their sinfulness and their coming deaths as a sign of judgement.
10. Ichabod's name means "the glory has departed," symbolizing the loss of God's presence with the capture of the Ark and the death of Eli and his sons. This contrasts sharply with Hannah's song of praise for new life and restoration, highlighting the tragic consequences of Israel's sin and the fulfillment of prophecy.

### III. Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of Samuel's prophetic call in 1 Samuel 3, analyzing how it marks a turning point in Israel's relationship with God and contrasts with the leadership of Eli and his sons.
2. Analyze the portrayal of the Ark of the Covenant in 1 Samuel 4. Is it treated as a symbol, an idol, or something else? How do the Israelites and Philistines differ in their understanding of the Ark's power and significance?
3. Examine the theme of divine judgment in 1 Samuel 3-4, focusing on the prophecies against Eli's house and their fulfillment. How does this theme contribute to the overall narrative and theological message of the book?
4. Compare and contrast the characters of Samuel and Eli, highlighting their individual responses to God's call and their roles in shaping the destiny of Israel.

5. Explore the historical and cultural context of 1 Samuel 4, particularly the ancient Near Eastern beliefs about gods and warfare. How does this context illuminate the events and motivations of the characters in the chapter?

#### IV. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Prophet:** An individual chosen by God to communicate His will to the people, often through visions, dreams, or direct messages.
- **Ark of the Covenant:** A sacred chest containing the tablets of the Law, representing God's presence and covenant with Israel.
- **Shiloh:** The location of the tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant during the time of Samuel, serving as a central place of worship for Israel.
- **Ebenezer:** A place name meaning "Stone of Help," where the Israelites camped before their battle with the Philistines in 1 Samuel 4.
- **Aphik:** A place name that served as a Philistine military outpost and gathering point.
- **Hophni and Phinehas:** The corrupt sons of Eli, priests at Shiloh who abused their positions and were ultimately judged by God.
- **Ichabod:** A name meaning "the glory has departed," given to the son of Phinehas' wife to signify the loss of God's presence with the capture of the Ark.
- **Dan to Beersheba:** A phrase used to describe the entire land of Israel, from its northernmost to southernmost points.
- **Contingent Prophecy:** A prediction that is conditional, meaning its fulfillment depends on certain factors, such as repentance or obedience.
- **Unconditional Prophecy:** A prediction that is certain to be fulfilled, regardless of human actions or circumstances.

## 5. FAQs on Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 3, 1 Samuel 3-4 – Defeat, Death, Departure, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source:

### FAQ: 1 Samuel 3-4

- **What is the main theme of 1 Samuel 3, and how does it contrast with the situation involving Eli and his sons?**
- The main theme of 1 Samuel 3 is that the Lord is willing to revive his broken relationship with his people through those who honor him. This contrasts with the situation involving Eli and his sons, who were dishonoring God through their actions. God is rejecting Eli's leadership but not the entire nation of Israel. God chooses Samuel to be his prophetic instrument to restore this relationship.
- **How does the setting of 1 Samuel 3 contribute to the chapter's meaning?**
- The setting is symbolically significant. Eli, with his weakening eyesight and lying down in his usual place, represents the old, flawed Israel that is passing away and about to face God's judgment. The lamp of God burning near Samuel symbolizes hope and the Lord's intention to restore his people through Samuel, even though things will worsen before improving.
- **Why does Samuel initially not recognize the Lord's call in 1 Samuel 3?**
- Samuel doesn't recognize the Lord's call because he has not yet had a personal encounter with the Lord. He hasn't yet moved into his prophetic office. The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. He is still a young boy and under Eli's authority.
- **What significant change occurs in Samuel's life after the Lord reveals Himself to him?**
- After the Lord reveals himself to Samuel, there is a shift in authority. Previously, Samuel was under Eli's authority, but from that point on, the Lord becomes Samuel's master. Samuel is called to be a prophet, and his loyalty shifts to God.

- **What is the central theme of 1 Samuel 4, and how does it relate to the prophecy against Eli's house?**
- The main theme of 1 Samuel 4 is that the Lord's decree of judgment against Eli and his sons is certain of fulfillment, bringing tragedy. This chapter marks the beginning of that fulfillment, with the defeat of Israel, the death of Eli's sons, and the capture of the ark. This emphasizes that God's word is irrevocable and will come to pass.
- **What was wrong with Israel's thinking regarding the Ark of the Covenant in Chapter 4?**
- The Israelites treated the Ark of the Covenant like a good luck charm or an idol, thinking that simply bringing it into battle would guarantee victory. They failed to recognize that their relationship with God was strained due to the sins of Eli's sons. They thought that they could "cart God into the battle".
- **Why does the narrator mention that Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were with the Ark of the Covenant in 1 Samuel 4?**
- The narrator mentions the presence of Hophni and Phinehas to highlight that their presence with the Ark doesn't guarantee victory because they have already been targeted by the Lord for judgment. Their presence serves as a sign that the story will not have a happy ending, and the tragedy will occur due to the Lord's predetermined judgement.
- **What is the significance of Ichabod's name in 1 Samuel 4, and how does it connect with Hannah's song in 1 Samuel 2?**
- Ichabod's name, meaning "no glory" or "where is the glory?", symbolizes the departure of God's glory from Israel due to the capture of the ark and the deaths of Eli and his sons. This contrasts sharply with Hannah's song in 1 Samuel 2, which celebrates new life, restoration, and anticipation of God's blessings for Israel. Ichabod's birth represents death and tragedy, while Hannah's represents new life and hope.