

1 Samuel 4:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

Analysis

The battle's outcome devastates Israel: complete rout ('they fled every man into his tent'), catastrophic casualties ('thirty thousand footmen'), and the unthinkable - the Ark captured. The phrase 'Israel was smitten' uses the same language as verse 2, but now sevenfold worse. God has not merely permitted defeat but actively judged His people. The Ark's capture fulfills the prophecy: 'thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation' (2:32). What Israel trusted to save them becomes the means of their humiliation.

Historical Context

The loss of thirty thousand soldiers would represent a significant portion of Israel's fighting force. The subsequent capture of the Ark meant that Israel's central religious symbol was now in enemy hands - an unprecedented theological crisis.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does the Ark's capture reveal about God's willingness to allow His own symbols to fall into enemy hands?
2. How does this outcome challenge assumptions about God's protection of religious institutions?

Interlinear Text

וַלָּחֶם וּ	פְּלִשְׁתֵּי יָם	וַיִּזְגַּר	מִשְׁכָּאֵל	וַיָּסוּ	אֵשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל
fought	And the Philistines	was smitten	and Israel	and they fled	every man
H3898	H6430	H5062	H3478	H5127	H376
לְאֹהֶל יוֹ	וַתֵּהָיֶה יְ	הַמִּצֵּה הַ	גָּדוֹל הַ	מְאֹד	וַיִּפֹּל
into his tent		slaughter	great	and there was a very	for there fell
H168	H1961	H4347	H1419	H3966	H5307
מִשְׁכָּאֵל	שְׁלֹשִׁים יָם	אֶלֶף	בְּגָלִי:		
and Israel	thirty	thousand	footmen		
H3478	H7970	H505	H7273		

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 28:25 (Parallel theme): The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

2 Kings 14:12 (References Israel): And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to their tents.

1 Samuel 4:2 (References Israel): And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

Leviticus 26:17 (Parallel theme): And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.

2 Samuel 18:17 (References Israel): And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.

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