

# 1 Samuel 4:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

## Analysis

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The Philistine memory of Egypt shows how widely Yahweh's reputation had spread. Their summary is confused (plagues 'in the wilderness' mixes locations) but reflects genuine terror. The rhetorical question 'who shall deliver us?' anticipates no answer - they expect defeat. Yet God has purposed their victory for His own reasons. The irony is thick: pagans invoke Israel's salvation history while Israel treats the God of that history as a portable good-luck charm. The Philistines are about to become instruments of divine judgment.

## Historical Context

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The Exodus tradition spread throughout the ancient Near East. Rahab knew it (Joshua 2:10), as did the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:9). This widespread reputation gave Israel both advantages (enemies' fear) and responsibilities (representing Yahweh among the nations).

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does the Philistines' knowledge of Israel's history intensify the irony of their victory?
2. What does it mean for Israel's enemies to become instruments of divine judgment on Israel?

## Interlinear Text

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וְיָ	לָנוּ	אֵי	מִי	יִצִילֵנוּ	מִיָּד	הָאֱלֹהִים
<b>Woe</b>	H0	H4310	<b>unto us!</b>	<b>who shall deliver</b>	<b>us out of the hand</b>	<b>Gods</b>
H188			H5337	H3027	H430	
הָאֵלֹהִים	הַמִּכֵּי	הָאֱלֹהִים	אֵלֵינוּ	הָאֱלֹהִים	הַמִּכֵּי	אֵת
<b>of these mighty</b>	H428	H428	H1992	<b>Gods</b>	<b>that smote</b>	H853
H117				H430	H5221	
הַמִּצְרַיִם	בְּכָל	מַכָּה	בַּמִּדְבָּר:			
<b>the Egyptians</b>	H3605	<b>with all the plagues</b>	<b>in the wilderness</b>			
H4714		H4347	H4057			

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