

Psalms 78:61

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.

Analysis

And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. This verse describes the ark's capture—called **his strength** (uzzo, חֹזֶק) and **his glory** (tifareto, תִּפְאֶרֶת). The ark symbolized God's powerful presence and covenant glory. Its capture by uncircumcised Philistines (1 Samuel 4:10-11) represented devastating humiliation for both Israel and, seemingly, for Yahweh Himself.

Delivered...into captivity (vayyitten lashevi, וַיִּתֵּן לַשֵּׁבִי) shocks—God actively gave up His own glory-throne. This wasn't divine defeat but judicial abandonment. God allowed His sanctuary symbols to be profaned to demonstrate that external religious forms without heart faithfulness mean nothing. Israel's superstitious trust in the ark as magical talisman proved hollow.

Yet even in judgment, God's glory couldn't be truly captured. The ark brought plagues on Philistia (1 Samuel 5), forcing its return. This anticipates the crucifixion—Jesus' apparent defeat actually accomplished victory over sin, death, and Satan (Colossians 2:15). God's strength looks like weakness to human eyes.

Historical Context

The battle of Aphek (1050 BC) saw Israel's crushing defeat, Eli's sons killed, and the ark captured. Eli died upon hearing the news; his daughter-in-law named her

son Ichabod ('no glory'), saying 'The glory is departed from Israel' (1 Samuel 4:21). This crisis prompted Israel's demand for a king.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do believers sometimes treat church attendance or religious symbols superstitiously, like Israel trusted the ark?
2. What does God's willingness to let His 'strength' be captured teach about His priorities for heart devotion over external forms?
3. In what ways did the cross look like God's 'glory delivered into enemy hands' but actually accomplish victory?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּתֵּן	לְשֹׁבֵי	עָזָו	וּתְפָאֶרֶת	בְּיָד	צָרָה
And delivered	into captivity	his strength	and his glory	hand	into the enemy's
H5414	H7628	H5797	H8597	H3027	H6862

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 132:8 (Parallel theme): Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.