

PROMISED LAND 1: Lesson Eight,
The Capture of the Ark and Samuel's Leadership
1 Samuel 4 - 7

Subject: Samuel leads the Israelites in revival after the Philistines capture and return the Ark.

Main Idea: We can sometimes win physical battles in our own strength and by our own wits, but spiritual battles cannot be not won this way.

Principles:

1. *Our religious acts or relics cannot manipulate God's power.*
2. *To accept God's omnipotence is to accept our own limitations.*
3. *Those who humble themselves before the Lord see His power at work on their behalf.*

Introduction

In recent years, superhero themes have made a comeback in novels, television, and movies. People have always had a fascination with power: powerful ideas, powerful politicians, power in nature, and especially, the power that is promised *to us* by religion. Some religions promise power through communion with nature, sensitivity to balancing forces, personal “enlightenment,” or merging into the impersonal “oneness.” Some promise power over death through reincarnation or through rites and deeds that are rewarded with eternal life.

1 Samuel 4-7 offers us a lesson about power through an up-close look at one particular battle that the Israelites fought in the period of the Judges. In terms of the immediate context, chapters 4-7 show how some of the prophecies of chapters 1-3 were fulfilled. They also prepare us for chapter 8, in which Israel asks Samuel to give them a king. Their request for a human king was ultimately a rejection of God, who had repeatedly proved Himself (as in the battle with the Philistines) to be their ideal King. In this sense, chapters 4-7 prepare us for the story of the Hebrew monarchy.

The greater story we've followed in this study concerns Israel's failure to fully possess the Promised Land. We've been considering that Israel's Promised Land is a picture of the abundant life offered to followers of Jesus Christ. In recent weeks, we've introduced the subjects of spiritual warfare, spiritual disciplines, and other means of warding off obstacles to possessing the full life in Christ and positioning ourselves for fuller possession of it. The chapters covered in this lesson are a reminder that when it comes to our daily battles with sin, ultimately, victory comes from God! Spiritual battles are won by *His* power! While physical battles are sometimes won in our own strength and by our own wits, spiritual battles cannot be won this way. He wants us to trust *in Him*.

I. The Ark Captured – 1 Samuel 4

A. Ark Misused – 4:1-11

- i. The Philistines Defeated the Israelites – 4:1-3: Every chapter in 1 Samuel 4-7 involves the Philistines. According to the book of Judges, the Philistines (who occupied the southern coast of Canaan) had become one of Israel’s chief enemies. Samson, Eli, Samuel, Saul and David all battled against them. The Philistines had five major city-states: Ekron, Ashdod, Gath, Ashkelon, and Gaza, each with a ruler (or “king”). After reminding us that Samuel was Lord’s mouthpiece to all Israel, chapter 4 begins with the Israelites camped at a place called Ebenezer. They went out to meet the Philistines in battle but were defeated. The elders of Israel met to ponder why this happened. Why had the Lord brought defeat on them?
- ii. The Philistines Defeated the Israelites Again – 4:4-11
 1. *The Elders’ Decision*
 - a. The elders decided to bring the Ark of the Covenant to their camp. Surely, they thought, the Lord fight on their behalf if His Ark was among them. The Ark of the Covenant was the gold-covered, rectangular box that was the most important furnishing in the Tabernacle. The Lord had (symbolically) put His presence between the two cherubim that were mounted atop the Ark’s atonement cover. “In ancient Near Eastern art a king was often pictured sitting on a throne supported on each side by a cherub (winged lions with human heads).”ⁱ Thus, the Ark symbolized the Lord’s throne and His presence.
 - b. In earlier days, the Ark had gone before the Israelites in their journey to Canaan. At Jericho, the Lord had commanded that the Ark be carried with them into battle (Joshua 6). Thus, the elders’ plan had some logic. Our first clue that something was amiss is found in verse 4, where we’re told that the Ark was being carried by the wicked, priestly sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas. This is a portent of disaster, since their judgment by premature death had already been foretold (2:34).
 2. *The Philistines’ Response*: When the Philistines heard the shout of joy in Israel’s camp over the Ark’s arrival, they were intimidated.
 - a. In the ancient Near Eastern, many gods were worshipped, but one was believed to hold *primary* influence over each land. God chose the Israelites to represent Him to all nations (Exodus 19:6). Instead of portraying Him as the all-powerful, sovereign, *one and only, true God of the universe*, they had adopted the viewpoint of the people around them.

- b. The Philistines' confusion about the nature of Israel's god(s) is evidence of Israel's failed witness. The Philistines recognized Him as the God who had struck the Egyptians with plagues centuries earlier (the expression of His power at the time of the Exodus had become widely known), but they saw the Israelites worshipping multiple gods and came to the wrong conclusion about the Lord's true nature.
3. *An Overwhelming Defeat*: The presence of the Ark in the Israel's camp did not grant the victory for which Israel had hoped. In fact, the Israelites suffered an even greater defeat. 4,000 Israelites were killed in the first battle but 30,000 were killed in the second! The sons of Eli were also killed, as the Lord foretold (2:34). Furthermore, the Philistines captured the Ark and carried it away.

B. Report of the Defeat – 4:12-22

- i. Eli's Death: News of the defeat was carried to Shiloh (Israel's worship center), where the elderly Eli sat waiting. Eli was informed of the death of his two sons. At the mention of the loss of the Ark, he fell backward off his chair and broke his neck. In a summarizing statement of his life in 4:18, he is identified for the first time as having been Israel's Judge.
- ii. The Death of Phinehas' Wife: When Eli's pregnant daughter-in-law heard of the deaths of her husband and father-in-law and the capture of the Ark, she went into labor prematurely and died in childbirth. Before she died, she named her son *Ichabod* (meaning "no glory"). She said, "The Glory has departed from Israel [literally, 'The Glory has gone into exile'], for the Ark of God has been captured" (4:22).

Summary Statement: God's power was at work, but not in the way Israel hoped. He had told Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle" (3:11), and that He did! But the Lord did not grant Israel victory.

Why were the Israelites defeated? The elders of Israel had themselves asked "Why?" (4:3). They had brought the Ark to the battle site, believing God's power would accompany it. Had God failed? His powerful judgments against Philistines and Israelites alike in chapters 5-6 will prove otherwise. Then why were the Israelites defeated when the Ark was present among them? Is there a lesson for us with regard to battling sin in our "promised land"?

Formerly, oppressions by Israel's enemies had ended when the Israelites repented and cried out to the Lord (Judges 3:9, 3:15, 6:6-7, 10:10). Apparently, no such change of heart accompanied their decision to send for the Ark. Superstitious thinking often accompanies idolatry and it appears that the Israelites viewed the Ark as a talisman that would bring them luck. They substituted a symbol of worship for the object of worship, the Lord Himself. They sought a formula to fight a spiritual battle rather than seeking the God to whom the battle belonged.

Principle: *Our religious acts or relics cannot manipulate God's power.*

In one sense, religion can be characterized as human attempts to harness God's power. John Woodhouse writes, "It is not uncommon for human beings to long for God's power. Even if we do not understand a great deal about religion, we know that God (by definition) must be powerful. If there is some way in which God's power can be made to work for me, that is very attractive. That, for many people, is the allure of religion." ⁱⁱ

We see this when people who would not normally consider praying ask God to heal them from a serious illness, pray for deliverance from business fiascos, or ask Him to enable them to pass exams. In no other way do they acknowledge God, except to try and harness some of His power on their own behalf.

Application: Professing Christians can be equally guilty of trying to manipulate God's power. Some trust that if they idolize relics, adhere to special prayer formulas, read the Bible, attend church, or give money God will surely grant them prosperity and peace. These too are attempts to manipulate God into granting us victory. Sometimes, we do this in private, secretly or even subconsciously believing we deserve His favor. Christians can also be guilty of trying to harness God's power corporately. For example, we may establish a board or committee, believing God will surely bless their mutually agreed upon projects, programs, and decisions, whether or not they have first wholeheartedly sought Him in the matter.

Where is our confidence? That is the real question. Is it in God or in spiritual disciplines (which we expect God to bless), religious activities, and our own efforts? Perhaps you began a battle against sin – gossip, food or another addiction, fits of anger, sexual impurity, or one of many others – in the power of the Lord, but somewhere along the way, as He gave you initial success, you begin to think, "I've got this under control," and your confidence gradually shifted to your own methods and strategies. We can sometimes win physical battles in our own strength and by our own wits, but spiritual battles are not won this way. God must show up. His power is *His* power and it cannot be manipulated. Our confidence must be fully in Him.

Transition: Israel was a poor representation of the power of the Lord, but the Lord was perfectly capable of representing Himself to the Philistines.

II. The Ark in Philistia and Its Return – 1 Samuel 5 – 6

A. The Lord's Judgment on the Philistines – 5:1-12

i. The Ark in Dagon's Temple

1. *Humiliation of a Defeated "God"*: Ancient Near Eastern peoples believed that the military defeat of one people by another reflected the superiority of one god over another. The victorious people group commonly placed the idols of their defeated enemies in the temple of their own deity.ⁱⁱⁱ The Philistines mistakenly believed Dagon had proved his superiority and Yahweh's Ark belonged in a position of subservience to Dagon. They carried the Ark from Ebenezer to Ashdod and placed it alongside a statue of Dagon inside his temple.
2. *Dagon's Humiliation*: Yahweh proved Himself as omnipotent on foreign soil as in His own land. Early the following morning, Dagon's worshippers found him on his face before the Lord's Ark. Ironically, Dagon needed their help getting back into his previous position (5:3). The following morning, not only was he on his face before the Ark, his hands and head were broken off, "reminiscent of grisly military execution."^{iv}

ii. The Lord's Judgment on the Philistine People – 5:6-12

1. The Lord's judgment on the Philistines' god was followed by His judgment on their people. First, He inflicted the people of Ashdod with tumors. When the Ark was relocated to Gath, the suffering multiplied: in addition to being afflicted with tumors, the people suffered emotionally (5:9). When the Philistines moved the Ark to a third location (Ekron), death immediately started filling the city. Those who were not directly stricken dead were inflicted with the tumors. The Lord had also sent rats or mice (6:4) to destroy the land (probably carrying the disease that caused the tumors and also destroying the crops). The people were in a panic.
2. The Philistines believed they had had the victory at Ebenezer but, to their surprise, Yahweh proved Himself unconquerable. In the words of Robert Bergen, their apparent military victory at Ebenezer was merely the Lord's "divine ruse... to gain even greater opportunities to display His unparalleled majesty."^v

B. The Philistines' Plan Concerning the Ark – 6:1-12

i. The Diviners' and Priests' Advice

1. *Consultation of Diviners*: Seven months after the Ark was carried into Philistia, the Philistine rulers decided to send it back. They called their diviners and priests for help in determining how to do this without further angering Israel's God. Divination, sorcery, and witchcraft are dangerous occult practices. Without doubt, demons have been the "gods" behind idols throughout history. The Israelites were forbidden from consulting diviners (Deuteronomy 18:10, 14).
2. *Syncretistic Advice*: The similarity of the Lord's heavy hand of judgment on the Philistines to His better-known judgment by plagues on the Egyptians at the time of Israel's exodus was not lost on the Philistines. The priests and diviners urged the Philistines to learn from history and act accordingly, urging them to send a guilt offering to the Lord. Israel's enemies clearly had some knowledge of the Mosaic Law, but ultimately, the diviner's advice was based on a syncretistic blend of ideas.
 - a. As a guilt offering, they advised the Philistines to make gold models of the tumors and rats the Lord had sent. This betrayed their true ignorance since, according to the Mosaic Law, such things were considered "unclean." Any evidence of physical decay (such as a tumor) constituted "uncleanness" in God's sight (Leviticus 12-15) and rats were among the animals classified as "unclean" (Leviticus 11:29).
 - b. Finally, a test was proposed to determine whether Yahweh was actually responsible for the plagues or they had occurred by chance. They advised that the Ark be returned on a wooden cart (a means of transporting it that the Law expressly forbid [Numbers 7:7-9]), hitched to cows that had never been yoked and who had recently given birth. The yoking together of inexperienced cows made their ability to pull the cart in a unified direction unlikely. In addition, their maternal instincts would naturally lead them to return to their calves rather than into Israelite territory. Against all odds, if the cows successfully guided the cart back to Israel, this would be considered proof that the Philistines' difficulties were indeed evidence of Yahweh's power.

- ii. The Philistines' Rejection of Yahweh and Return of the Ark: It has always been God's plan to bring people of every tongue, tribe, and nation into His family. He disproved the Philistines' notion that He is anything like their gods, with dominating influence in only one territory. He is Lord of all the Earth! Although they had witnessed His supreme power over nature, human life, and their own deity firsthand, they ultimately rejected Him and returned the Ark. This hardness of heart was surely the reason the Lord had brought judgment on them. The five Philistine rulers (who had, themselves, been victims of the plague [6:4]) watched as the cows moved into Israelite-controlled territory in a straight line, stopping in the town of Beth Shemesh.

C. The Israelites' Abuse of the Ark – 6:12-21

i. The Mosaic Law Ignored by the Levites

1. Beth Shemesh was one of the cities given to the Levites for their occupation (Joshua 21:16). Time and again, the biblical record in the period of the Judges indicates the Israelites' ignorance concerning the Mosaic Law. Even the priests and Levites acted in ignorance or defiance of the Law. When the people of Beth Shemesh (presumably Levites) saw the Ark, they chopped up the wood of the cart and used it to sacrifice the cows as a burnt offering. The Law dictated that only male animals were to be sacrificed (Leviticus 1-7). This constituted their first breach of the Law.
2. According to Numbers 4:5-6, no Israelites except Aaronic priests were to see even the *exterior* of the Ark or touch it. The Ark was always to be covered before it was removed from the Tabernacle. Poles were to be inserted for transportation to prevent any direct contact with it. However, the residents of Beth Shemesh presumed upon God's holiness by daring to look *inside* the Ark.

ii. God's Judgment on the Beth Shemeshites and the Ark's Relocation

1. God put to death the seventy individuals involved in these violations of His holiness. Not unlike the Philistines, instead of mourning their sin, the citizens of Beth Shemesh mourned their losses (6:19). Then, like the Philistines, they decided to get rid of the Ark.
2. The Ark was moved to Kiriath Jearim. Why not to Shiloh? Psalm 78:60 and Jeremiah 7:12, 14; 26:6, 9 speak of Shiloh's destruction, and archaeological evidence suggests that it occurred during this period of history, perhaps by the Philistines. If so, this probably explains why Samuel is never again mentioned as serving or residing in Shiloh (7:15-17).

Summary Statement: 1 Samuel 4-6 compares the Israelites spiritual state to that of their enemy, the Philistines. Although the Israelites had the Law (and therefore greater accountability), they and the Philistines were equally spiritually dense. The Israelites attempted to harness God’s power and the Philistines sought to deny it.

Principle: *To accept God’s omnipotence is to accept our own limitations.*

Modern philosophies that deny God’s existence and omnipotence have left millions of “well-educated” individuals hungry for the supernatural. How much easier to deny the existence of an all-powerful Being than to accept our limitations and bend our knee to the Almighty? We crave to know the power of the Divine, all the while working to deny His existence. Reason tells us that we cannot have one without the other. If God is infinite and self-existent, then He must also be all-powerful. Here then is the choice every human being faces: we either accept His omnipotence, bow our knees, and worship Him here and now, or we experience the full weight of His power, one day, in judgment. The Philistines chose the latter.

Application: To accept God’s omnipotence is to accept our limitations. Over what or whom might you be placing too much confidence in your own control? Many of our arguments with spouses, siblings, coworkers, and neighbors are actually battles for control. Our determination to control outcomes is ultimately a denial of God’s supremacy. With what or whom do you need to trust God more completely? It is an illusion to believe we fully control anything. Yet so often, we prefer to trust in our own sense of control than to wait on God and trust Him to show up. We can sometimes win physical battles in our own strength and by our own wits, but spiritual battles are only won by His power.

Transition: Victory was finally gained when the Israelites’ submitted themselves humbly to the God of all power. The answer was in relationship.

III. The Israelites’ Victory – 1 Samuel 7

A. Samuel’s Leadership – 7:1-6

i. Twenty Years – 7:1-2

1. Up to this point in the book of Samuel, we have been given some sense of timing. In chapters 1-3, Samuel was born and approximately three to four years later, brought to Shiloh. While he was still young, but old enough to communicate effectively (possibly a teenager), Samuel was recognized by all Israel as a prophet. The events of chapters 4-6 (in which the Ark was captured, returned, and transferred from Beth Shemesh to Kiriath Jearim) appear to have occurred over a year’s time. Suddenly, in 7:2, we are told that twenty years passed. Except that the Ark remained at Kiriath Jearim, we learn nothing about what took place.

This blank statement concerning the passage of twenty years is reminiscent of the stretches of time repeatedly recorded in the book of Judges after which God had delivered Israel from an enemy and during which the Israelites prostituted themselves to foreign gods. Such periods ended when oppression by Israel's enemies intensified and the Israelites finally cried out to the Lord. That is exactly what 1 Samuel 7 describes: the intensification of Philistine domination and Israel's resulting repentance.

2. Either gradually over the twenty years or at the end of that time, Samuel sensed that the Israelites' hearts were changing. Change of heart, evidenced by obedience, was the illusive key to victory the Israelites had sought. Their sin was the reason for all their suffering. God promised unconditionally to give them the Promised Land, but His blessing in the land was conditional on love for Him, as expressed in submission to His Lordship. The Israelites' sin in rejecting the Lord and worshipping foreign gods was the root of all their trouble.
- ii. Samuel's Leadership Contrasted with that of Eli's Sons – 7:3-6: In previous chapters, Samuel acted as a prophet and apprentice priestly assistant. In Chapter 7, he is presented as Israel's Judge (verse 6). His leadership stands in sharp contrast to that of Eli's sons. They had attempted to harness God's power through the misuse of the Ark. Samuel brought Israel victory by pointing the people to the Lord.
1. *Revival*: The great spiritual revivals that have occurred around the world in modern history have always begun when God's Spirit has moved individuals to serious consideration and burden over their sin. Like-minded people have assembled for corporate fasting, confession, and prayer. This is exactly what was happening in Israel in Samuel's day.
 2. *Putting away Idols*: Repentance is more than just feeling sorry for what we have done; it is turning away from those things. Visible changes take place when we repent. *We do something* about our sin. We change our ways. Samuel told the Israelites that if they were serious about returning to the Lord, they needed to get rid of their idols.
 3. *Corporate Fasting and Confession*: Next, Samuel gathered the Israelites at Mizpah to formalize the renewal of their covenant commitment to the Lord. Fasting, confession, and prayer were important parts of their recommitment. Samuel poured water out before the Lord (perhaps a symbol of the people's willingness to even deny themselves water or, at the very least, a symbol of the sorrow pouring out of their hearts). Samuel was a man of prayer.

Every place we read of him in the Scriptures, there is some reference to interaction with the Lord in prayer.

- B. The Philistine Threat** – 7:7-9: When the Philistines heard of the large Israelite religious gathering, they assumed it was a perfect opportunity to attack. The Israelites were not equipped for battle; they had gathered for prayer! When they learned the Philistines were approaching to attack them, they begged Samuel to intercede with the Lord on their behalf. What a striking difference to their response to the Philistine threat 20 years earlier! At that time, they had called for the Ark, confident they could harness God’s power by their own program. They had expected God to honor His covenant without ever considering their own unfaithfulness to it. However, on this occasion, they turned their hearts to the Lord and understood that beseeching Him was their only hope.
- C. The Lord Fights for Israel** – 7:10-14: Samuel interceded on the Israelites behalf and offered the Lord a sacrifice. Hophni and Phinehas had shown contempt for their role as Israel’s priests. By contrast, Samuel understood the importance of it. In response, the Lord answered him (7:9).
- i. Philistine Panic – 7:10-11: Hannah’s prophetic prayer (chapter 2) portrayed the Lord as a powerful deliverer who “will thunder from heaven” (2:10). Just as Samuel’s sacrifice was being offered, the Philistine army arrived. The Lord met their threat and answered Samuel’s prayers with loud thunder from heaven. Ancient Near Eastern people believed that human military battles also involved a battle between the gods. The loud thunder was an ominous sign that threw the Philistines into panic. Emboldened by their flight, the men of Israel pursued and slaughtered them as they fled.
 - ii. Ebenezer – 7:12: Samuel memorialized the important victory by setting up a stone somewhere between Mizpah (where the Israelites had gathered for prayer) and Shen. He called it *Ebenezer*, which means “Stone of Help,” declaring, “Thus far the Lord has helped us” (7:12). It is interesting that *Ebenezer*, the name of the memorial, is the same name the writer of 1 Samuel ascribed to the location in which Israel had previously been defeated and the Ark carried away (4:1, 5:1). The writer possibly used the name anachronistically in chapters 4 and 5, so we would know the defeat and victory of chapter 7 occurred at the same location. The other possibility is that the locations were different. Samuel may have named the second location after the first. In either case, the repetition of the place name is one of several indications that chapter 7 portrays a reversal of the events of chapters 4-6, reversals that followed the Israelites’ change of heart.

iii. Reversal of Events – 7:13-17

1. One important reversal was that the Philistines stopped invading Israel and the Israelites experienced a season of peace. Even the Amorites sought to live at peace with them. As we discover in the following chapters, Philistine imperialism had not ended, but after Israel's revival, a season of peace ensued.
2. Second, the towns that had been captured by the Philistines twenty years earlier were restored.
3. Third, Samuel's leadership was a reversal of the poor leadership of Eli's sons. Samuel served the Lord and continued as Israel's Judge all the days of his life (although his political role somewhat changed after Saul was anointed king). With Shiloh apparently no longer as Israel's worship center, Samuel travelled circuitously and held court in four different cities. One of these, Ramah, was the hometown of his parents and the place Samuel made his home.

Summary Statement: Samuel called the Israelites to repentance and they experienced revival. Attempts to harness or deny God's power get us nowhere. But when we confess and turn from sin, and live under God's rule, we can expect the God of all power to show up.

Principle: *Those who humble themselves before the Lord see His power at work on their behalf.*

In Ephesians 1:19-20, Paul prays that we will know the Father's "incomparably great power for us who believe." "That power," he says, "is the same as the mighty strength He exerted when He raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms." The Lord told His disciples, just before He ascended into heaven, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

Christians do not always agree about the limitations and proper usage of the power that the Lord Jesus delegated to us, especially with regard to demons and miracles. While we do not want to minimize the promise, we must also guard against falling into the error of the elders of Israel in Eli's day and attempting to misuse it. On one occasion, the Lord's disciples sought to cast a demon out of an individual. They had been given His authority to do so, yet they failed. Why? They did not pray (Mark 9:28-29). We must remember that God is a personal Being. His power is *His* power and is granted by *His* authority. We are wholly dependent on Him for power.

Pursuing and using power for our own purposes is always dangerous. Our hunger for power can only be properly satisfied, and its use only safely exercised, through Spirit-filled living. Jesus said we would receive power *when the Holy Spirit comes on us* (Acts 1:8). The Spirit-filled Christian is one who is a clean channel: he or she has confessed all known sin, is conscious of their need for ongoing and prayerful dependence to be delivered from those sins, and humbly studies God's word in order to recognize any other sin that need to be confessed.

Application: Those who humble themselves can expect to see God's power working on their behalf. How do we most often see evidence of God's power in our lives?

- First, we will see evidence that *He is saving us* daily. We experience deliverance from temptation, from trials, and sometimes, from circumstances.
- Second, we see evidence that *He is transforming us*. We will see new life in the formerly dead spaces of our hearts. Like a cactus that produces the most intricate and lovely blossoms, we will see beauty in our lives, where once there was ugliness. Occasionally, we will see His transformational power in bold and sudden changes in us, like lightning and thunder. More often, we will experience quiet and ongoing transformation, like the steady impact of small waves lapping against a shoreline. Others will also notice the changes.
- Third, we will see evidence that *He is sustaining us*. We may experience long periods in which we feel dry and barren, but these are like the soil and the seeds that must rest through a long winter in preparation for new growth in the spring. At any given moment, we may wonder how we will have the strength to endure, but looking back, we will see that He sustained us, just as He promised (Psalm 55:22), and continues to do so.

How awesome is God, that He is willing to work so powerfully in us!

Conclusion

When was the last time you confessed all known sin to the Lord, trusted Him to save you from those specific sins, turned from them and asked Him to fill you anew with His Spirit? Putting sin to death is a requisite for living the abundant life in Christ. The Lord has given us many means by which we can position ourselves for victory, but ultimately, in the words of Scripture, we must, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength" (Isaiah 30:15). "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith" (Hebrews 12:2). "Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who hope in me will not be disappointed" (Isaiah 49:23). We can sometimes win physical battles in our own strength and by our own wits, but for spiritual battles, our hope must be in Him.

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- ⁱ Youngblood, Ronald F. (1994). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Old Testament Abridged Edition (p. 387). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Corporation.
- ⁱⁱ Woodhouse, J. (2008). *1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader* (p. 85). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Payne, David F. (1994). *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (4th ed., pp. 301–302). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.
- ^{iv} Bergen, R. D. (1996). *1, 2 Samuel* (Vol. 7, p. 97). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- ^v Bergen, R. D. (1996). *1, 2 Samuel* (Vol. 7, p. 97). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.