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The Capture of the Ark
First Samuel 4: 1b-22



No sooner did **ADONAI** reveal **His Word** to **His people** than **the enemy** showed up to attack **them** (**to see link click Af – Isra'el and the Philistines**). **The Philistines** are mentioned in Scripture as early as the days of **Abraham (Genesis 21:32**, also see **10:14**), and the books mention **them** over 150 times. **They** were originally a seagoing people from the Aegean region who invaded the territory along the Mediterranean coast (Phoenicia) and sought to control all the land we know today as the Gaza strip. Relationships between **the Philistines** became strained almost immediately. Already in the time of the judges, **the Philistines** attacked **Isra'el's** territory, and had occupied some of it so successfully that **the tribe of Dan** had to migrate to the north **(Judges 18:1-31)**. **Their** aggression dominated the background and the military events during the reign of **Samuel** and **Sha'ul**. It is likely that this particular battle was **Isra'el's** response to one of those **Philistine** invasions.[112]

At that time **the Tabernacle** was located at **Shiloh** (see **Ae – The Tabernacle at Shiloh**), with **the Ark** of the covenant in the Most Holy Place. **The Ark** symbolized

the Presence and power of **ADONAI**: yet, it seems that **the Israelites** had begun to treat **it** like a good-luck charm that would ensure **them** victory over **their** enemies. Thus, we see that they began to confuse the *symbol* of **God's Presence** with **His** *actual* **Presence**. In doing so, **their** understanding of **YHVH** resembled that of **their** main enemy, **the Philistines**. Now we will see what happened when **the Israelites** made the rash decision to remove **the Ark** from **the Tabernacle** and take it with **them** into battle. We will follow the story as **it** moves into enemy territory and see what happened as a result. We will also examine the sad end of **'Eli's** life and the lives of **his** two **sons**, whose wicked behavior reflected **his** own tragic failures.[113]