

MISSING GOD'S GLORY & VISITATION

Intro – After reading an article in the news paper, I followed up by going on-line to check the most popular “baby names”. Emily was the most popular girl’s name (12 years running), while Jacob was the most popular boy’s name (9 years in a row). While not holding true for the girls, Biblical names were most popular for the boys, taking 6 of the top 10 spots, including the top 4 spots. While names have changed over the years, one name that I’ve never seen used to name a baby is – Ichabod. That’s certainly good since the name means: “The Glory Has Departed”. Speaking of “Ichabod”, that’s one name you never want God to attach to the church. How horrible it would be to hear him say, “The Glory Has Departed”. This morning we are going to examine the conditions that brought about naming a baby, Ichabod and see how, if paralleled in the church, it can bring Ichabod to the church as well.

1 Samuel 4:21 – “She named the boy Ichabod, saying, the GLORY HAS DEPARTED from Israel...”
Luke 19:41,44b – “He wept over it, ... because you did not recognize the day of your VISITATION.”

*WHY WAS THERE DEFEAT, DEATH AND DEPARTED GLORY?

1. BLIND

*1 Samuel 4:14-15 – “The messenger rushed over to Eli, who was ninety-eight years old and **blind**.”*

- BECAUSE OF SIN
- TO WHAT GOD IS DOING

Further Discussion:

1. In what way does sin have a blinding effect?
2. Share what was going on with Hophni and Phinehas (Eli’s sons).
3. How and why does sin blind a person to what God is doing?

2. OLD

*1 Samuel 4:18 – “When the messenger mentioned what had happened to the Ark, Eli fell backward from his seat beside the gate. He broke his neck and died, for he was **old** and very fat.*

- RUT: “A GRAVE WITH BOTH ENDS DUG OUT”
- TWO PRONG ATTACK: FRESH MOVE OF SPIRIT / CULTURALLY FRESH

Further Discussion:

4. How does a church or movement become “old” spiritually?
5. Explain how the two-prong attack prevents us from becoming old.

3. FAT

*1 Samuel 4:18 – “When the messenger mentioned what had happened to the Ark, Eli fell backward from his seat beside the gate. He broke his neck and died, for he was old and very **fat**.”*

- a. **FAT v. FAT CELLS**
- b. **STORE UP TO GIVE OUT**

Further Discussion:

- 6. **In what way does being spiritually fat kill us?**
- 7. **What is the remedy for spiritually fat individuals and churches?**

1 Samuel 4:17 – “Israel has been DEFEATED, thousands are DEAD, the ark of God is CAPTURED”

Conclusion: As a church, we want to stay fresh, spiritually lean, and have eyes to see what God is doing in the earth today so that we can be right in the middle of it all. Since the church is actually made up of all of us individual members, let’s ask God to touch each of us personally and then add our input to the whole.