# What Went Wrong?

*1 Samuel 4*

Pastor Alan Feere · Sunday Morning · October 4, 2026

**INTRODUCTION**

Failure is always an option. God is always faithful and true to His Word… the failure is not His but ours.

In just 10 verses Israel lost 34,000 soldiers (vv. 2, 10), though they had God's Word behind them and were acting in God's will.

So what went wrong? Even in the positive, they missed the lesson…

## I. The Presumption of _____ (v. 3)

**1 Samuel 4:3** *…Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines?…*

Israel correctly understood that God had smitten them, but they thought they could devise how He would deliver them!

- We know that God is sovereign… yet rely on our own strength
- Miss the judgment of God, and the lesson He is teaching
- Blame another for our own struggles

### A. The Acknowledgment of God's _____

They asked why God had smitten them without genuinely examining their own spiritual condition.

**1 Samuel 2:6–7**

When adversity comes, our first response should be to seek His face, examine our hearts, and submit to His will.

### B. The Absence of Spiritual _____

Israel asked the right question but failed to seek the right answer.

**Haggai 1:5** *Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.*

Not "Why is God allowing this?" but "What is God trying to teach me through this?"

## II. The Problem of _____ (v. 3)

A strategy based on presumption rather than obedience.

### A. The Reliance on a Religious _____

They wanted the benefits of God's presence without walking in God's ways.

### B. The Replacement of Repentance with _____

They wanted to change their circumstances without changing their hearts.

**1 Samuel 7:3** *…If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts… and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.*

### C. The Presumption of Guaranteed _____

Their confidence was in a method rather than in the sovereign God.

**Proverbs 14:12** *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

## III. The _____ of Sin (v. 4)

Israel's defeat was not a military failure. It was a spiritual tragedy.

### A. The _____ of Spiritual Leadership

**1 Samuel 2:12** *Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.*

### B. The _____ for God's Holiness

**1 Samuel 2:30** *...for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.*

God is holy, and He will not be treated casually or manipulated.

### C. The _____ of Unconfessed Sin

**Galatians 6:7–8** *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

We must deal with sin God's way before its consequences multiply.

## Conclusion

- God is Sovereign... "he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it" (Philippians 1:6)
- I am Insufficient... our plans come to nothing if not from the Lord
- Sin is Destructive... the wheels fall off because of sin

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**TAKE IT HOME**

*Israel wanted God to fight their battles while living the way they wanted to live. They were seeking the power of God without repenting and seeking God!*

**MY NOTES**