

„ARE YOU ELI OF OUR TIMES?“

When we were studying the story of Uzzah, it was necessary to mention that the Ark of the Covenant fell into the hands of the Philistines. This sad event was the background to Uzzah's story and the conclusions we drew from it. It also inspired me to analyze more deeply the reasons **why** the Ark of the Covenant got into the camp of God's enemies. I started to read about it in the Spirit of Prophecy and I understood that it is a very important and current issue that needs to be deeply analysed and remembered again. It should be dusted off and made pivotal, because the way we accept this issue in our hearts will determine our fate ...we can either lose or gain eternity.

If we do not understand properly what happened to Israel during Eli's lifetime, and if we do not draw profound conclusions from this story, especially now, in the years when the era of sin on this earth is ending and God's judgments are to visit the earth and Jesus is to come for His people, **let us be careful and be very vigilant** so that due to sentimentality and humanism which are deeply rooted in us, we would not be judged and sentenced to death. Let us give God the right to ourselves and let us show that we have His character and we are ready to fulfill His will, **even if it is very difficult for us**, because it involves choosing God over our closest family members when they do not want to follow Jesus Christ – our Saviour.

Now I will quote quite extensive passages from the Spirit of Prophecy's book titled "*Patriarchs and Prophets*" by *Ellen G. White* first from the chapter titled "Eli and His Sons" pp. 575-581 and only later from the following chapter titled: „The Ark Taken by the Philistines“. While we will be reading these passages, please think of yourselves and apply the facts from Eli's story to your own lives. You can even read this story replacing Eli's name with your own ... think more than once about the following words.

In square brackets I've placed my comments which update this story and allow us to transfer its events and conclusions into our present, everyday, practical and pious lives. Let's start:

SOP: "Eli was priest and judge in Israel. He held the highest and most responsible positions among the people of God. As a man divinely chosen for the sacred duties of the priesthood, and set over the land as the highest judicial authority, he was looked up to as an example (...)" {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 575.1}

[My comment: Today **it is the fathers who are** the heads of families, (especially those from the Seventh-day Adventist Church and from those who call themselves believers,) **and they are** priests and judges who should be the example for their neighbors and the whole society about how the house of God should be governed, **so that** God approved their homes. How many such families governed by devoted to God fathers do you know?]

SOP: "(...) (Eli) wielded a great influence over the tribes of Israel. But although he had been appointed to govern the people, he did not rule his own household." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 575.1}

[My Comment: Does it ring a bell in us? Isn't it a sad reality around us that many fathers do not rule their own households? How many husbands who call themselves believers are not allowed by their wives to come to our place for the Feast of Tabernacles? Many of them. How many cannot organize a Saturday service meeting in their own homes because their wives do not let them do it? Quite a few! How many husbands are afraid to reprimand their wives wrong habits or are afraid to ask them to do something for them because as an answer they will hear: "No!" Please, think of it! Ask yourselves if you are the ones who can rule your own households.]

SOP: *"Eli was an indulgent father. Loving peace and ease, he did not exercise his authority to correct the evil habits and passions of his children. Rather than contend with them or punish them, he would submit to their will and give them their own way."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 575.1}

[My comment: Do these words describe the course of conduct in your household? Is your attitude similar to Eli's? Think of it deeply...]

SOP: *"Instead of regarding the education of his sons [My comment: read: children] as one of the most important of his responsibilities, he treated the matter as of little consequence. The priest and judge of Israel had not been left in darkness as to the duty of restraining and governing the children that God had given to his care. But Eli shrank from this duty, **because it involved crossing the will of his sons, and would make it necessary to punish and deny them.** Without weighing the terrible consequences that would follow his course, he indulged his children in whatever they desired and neglected the work of fitting them for the service of God and the duties of life.* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 575.1} (...) *Eli allowed his children to control him. The father became subject to the children.* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 575.2}

[My comment: Strong words, aren't they!? Do these words describe our own families? Do you know such wrongly governed families among your friends, acquaintances, brothers and sisters in your church? Do these words refer only to fathers? Don't they refer to mothers as well?

SOP: *"The curse of transgression was apparent in the corruption and evil that marked the course of his sons. They had no proper appreciation of the character of God or of the sacredness of His law. His service was to them a common thing. From childhood they had been accustomed to the sanctuary and its service; but instead of becoming more reverent, they had lost all sense of its holiness and significance."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 575.2}

[My comment: When children observe the hypocritical and unfaithful to True God conduct of their parents' lives full of ordinary pseudo religious, traditional and formal activities - instead of them being a true temple of **the Living God**, then the children become accustomed to defacing of God's laws and such a behaviour becomes for them a norm, a habit, and they lose all sense of holiness. In such homes there is no real contact with the Savior and no fear of God].

SOP: *"The father had not corrected their want of reverence for his authority, had not checked their disrespect for the solemn services of the sanctuary.* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 575.2}

[My comment: Read: Parents are tolerant of their children's neglect towards their daily duties of their practical non-existent at that moment piety. Moreover, it is parents who neglect the daily duties related to **their** practical piety therefore children have no role models in them. Parents do not even know what their duties in God are since they do not read nor study the Spirit of Prophecy and they pretend that everything is fine].

SOP: *"...and when they reached manhood, they were full of the deadly fruits of skepticism and rebellion.* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 575.2}

[My comment: At present times many become priests or pastors in churches, others evangelize but are completely unsuitable for this service because they have no personal, true, living connection with God and they are not men of faith but rather followers of dry tradition.]

SOP: *"The Lord had given the most specific directions in regard to offering sacrifices"* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 576.1}

[My comment: We also have been given precise, detailed, practical instructions in the Spirit of Prophecy on how to be pious in our daily lives but like Eli's sons and Eli himself we ignore the Spirit of Prophecy's words and we disregard them because we simply don't read them and we do not put them into practice. We hardly realize that our life sacrifices and denial of sin **are the sacrificial system of present times!** Before Christ's death on the cross, people were to participate in the whole sacrificial system but today after Jesus made a sacrifice of Himself, the only thing we are to do is to accept Him being an offering and to deny sin by saying „No” to temptation in the authority of Jesus, the Son of the Living God! In the Spirit of Prophecy God left us detailed instructions of what might tempt us and what we need to avoid. But we do not take these detailed and precise instructions seriously and in this way we do not know **and we do not want to know** what to offer to God in our everyday lives!]

SOP: *“but these wicked men carried their disregard of authority into the service of God, and did not give attention to the law of the offerings, which were to be made **in the most solemn manner.** 576.1 (...) The sons of Eli, instead of realizing the solemnity of this symbolic service, only thought how they could make it a means of self-indulgence.” {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 576.2}*

[My comment: Aren't we also too shallow in our approach to spiritual matters today? Aren't we too dismissive of matters concerning our daily piety and spirituality? Do we explore God's character by pondering for at least an hour a day on the last moments of Jesus' life? Do we read books like "The Desire of Ages" and "Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing" day after day to explore the character of Jesus who revealed the Father to us? Do we today, though we call ourselves believers, please our low passions in diet, clothing, vocabulary, opinions, political views, reactions - completely rejecting the advice of the Spirit of Prophecy regarding the just mentioned aspects of life? How often do we identify with the ungodly people, the so called „celebrities” on social networks and copy and repeat their pseudo "golden thoughts"?)

SOP: *“(…) These unfaithful priests also transgressed God's law and dishonored their sacred office by their vile and degrading practices; Many of the people, filled with indignation at the corrupt course of Hophni and Phinehas, ceased to come up to the appointed place of worship. Thus the service which God had ordained was despised and neglected because associated with the sins of wicked men, while those whose hearts were inclined to evil were emboldened in sin. Ungodliness, profligacy, and even idolatry prevailed to a fearful extent.” {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 575.2}*

[My Comment: Are your families the role models and examples of holiness for other people? Does the True Living God walk in your homes and shows Himself in your wives, husbands, mothers, fathers and children? Can your neighbors learn from you how God leads people? Are pastoral homes an example of the gospel order? Can Jesus walk in their homes? Actually catholic priests and bishops should not participate in the service for God because they have no wives nor children, at least officially, and therefore should not be qualified for this service at all, as it is written in the

1 Timothy 3:1-5 “This is a trustworthy saying: “If someone aspires to be a church leader, he desires an honorable position.” So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?” NLT (New Living Translation)

SOP: *“Eli had greatly erred in permitting his sons to minister in holy office. By excusing their course, on one pretext and another, he became blinded to their sins;” {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 577.1}*

[My comment: How often do you find excuses for the sin of your beloved ones: your children, wife, parents because you are simply afraid of the consequences that would arise if you began to truly admonish them?]

SOP: *"but at last they reached a pass where he could no longer hide his eyes from the crimes of his sons. The people complained of their violent deeds, and the high priest was grieved and distressed. He dared remain silent no longer. But his sons had been brought up to think of no one but themselves, and now they cared for no one else. They saw the grief of their father, but their hard hearts were not touched."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 577.1}

[My comment: Although it would have seemed that Eli at last undertook some action in order to stop crimes of his sons ... his actions had no effect in and on them. Why was it so? Eli reproached his sons with no effect. Perhaps you also sometimes speak to the consciences, hearts and reasoning of your beloved ones with no effect. Is this complete insensitivity to spiritual matters also manifested in your household? Why is it so? Here is the answer of the Prophetic Spirit:

SOP: *"They heard his [Eli's] mild admonitions, **but they were not impressed**, nor would they change their evil course though warned of the consequences of their sins."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 577.1}

[My comment: Do you also live with someone who has been mocking God for years and has been treating lightly God's matters and does not want to change his/her lifestyle despite your **shy and mild** reproofs and admonitions?]

SOP: *"Had Eli dealt justly with his wicked sons, they would have been rejected from the priestly office and punished with death."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 577.1}

[My comment: Eli, as you all should know, did not have the moral strength shown by the Levites at Mount Sinai when Moses called them to kill their beloved ones who dared to make a golden calf and dared to give it glory. Do **you** have this moral strength which having its source in God, would give you the power to resist evil in your own home and would make you set limits and conditions for your children, wife, husband, mother or father? Do you have the courage that is consistent, decisive and firm and can bear the burden of possible unpleasant consequences? Or, like Eli, have you been ignoring and neglecting your responsibilities to Your Heavenly Father for years, putting your spoiled family members before Him?]

SOP: *"Dreading thus to bring public disgrace and condemnation upon them, he sustained them in the most sacred positions of trust. He still permitted them to mingle their corruption with the holy service of God and to inflict upon the cause of truth an injury which years could not efface. But when the judge of Israel neglected his work, God took the matter in hand."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 577.1}

[My comment: Eli continued to abide in evil. Are you also copying his way of life? Do you tolerate evil? Do you look at the members of your family every day and still only **shyly ask** them for change instead of demanding pious behaviours just because you are so afraid of negative and unpleasant consequences that their rejection of your pleading might bring? You'd better reform and organize in God's order your household before God will have to take your matters into His own hands, because then there may be no mercy for you, too. After all, we read in the Letter to the Hebrews that:

„It is a fearful and terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God [incurring His judgment and wrath].“ Heb.10:31 Amplified Bible AMP

SOP: *"Eli had permitted the offering appointed by God as a blessing to Israel to be made a thing of abhorrence."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 578.1}

[My comment: Many people who observe the spiritually split marriages of believers find the institution of marriage repulsive. Where do these people who observe our lives are to find hope for a happy and blessed marriage since even the marriages of believers are not happy, and the children in these marriages are wayward and disobedient and often depart from God in their adolescent lives because they prefer worldly life in the city and this what their peers do in the world rather than offering God a sacrifice of themselves.]

SOP: *"Those who follow their own inclination, in blind affection for their children, indulging them in the gratification of their selfish desires, and do not bring to bear the authority of God to rebuke sin and correct evil, make it manifest that they are honoring their wicked children more than they honor God. They are more anxious to shield their reputation than to glorify God; more desirous to please their children than to please the Lord and to keep His service from every appearance of evil."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 578.1}

[My Comment: The short-sightedness of those parents is incomprehensible! Behaving in this way they show that **they do not love their children, neither they love each other nor they love God!** Be careful not to follow their footsteps!]

SOP: *"God held Eli, as a priest and judge of Israel, accountable for the moral and religious standing of his people, and in a special sense for the character of his sons"* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 578.2}

[My comment: To us, who are or at least should be continuators of Israel's spiritual heritage and who carry deeply in our hearts the message sent to the pioneers of the Seventh-Day Adventism who were God's chosen instrument to bring God's light to the world, God entrusted the standard of moral and religious condition not only of our families but our whole nation and all nations on the earth! Are we aware of this? Are we aware that our characters should reflect Jesus' character? I guess we keep forgetting about it and this is why we often rise with pride against our heads i.e. our superiors, supervisors, husbands, employers, authorities and in this way we refuse to reveal to the world the humble character of Jesus in us. I guess we are not aware of our mission when we reject the voice of God's Spirit uttered to us by someone else's mouth or from the Spirit of Prophecy books.]

SOP: *"He should first have attempted to restrain evil by mild measures;"* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 578.2}

[My Comment: We are not that bad at this stage of undertaking „mild measures" or "gentle persuasion" as this is the only action undertaken by some believers and it usually ends there and leads nowhere. It is "our specialty" because as believers **we believe** that only gentleness, mildness and patient endurance of someone else's bad behavior befits us. And what the Spirit of Prophecy tells us is that we do not distinguish between passivity, helplessness, lack of our spiritual commitment, lukewarmness, tolerance towards sin and the prevailing evil, cowardice

from **mildness, gentleness and patient, consistent endurance of our neighbor's weaknesses not sin but weaknesses!**

and we confuse these notions with each other, wrongly judging and misinterpreting somebody's behaviour. We mix laziness with disability and quite often we let the laziness win with our "mild measures". And in this way we let the evil spread. Meanwhile:]

SOP: "(...) if these did not avail, he [Eli] should have subdued the wrong **by the severest means.**" {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 578.2}

[My comment: And this is the stage which almost none of the today's men of God is able to accomplish. Generally we lack God's Spirit therefore it is impossible for most of us to enforce any change of behavior in ourselves and make others choose between God and satan. We are unable to make our beloved ones repent. We are afraid of showing firmness, determination and consistency in our behavior. Firmness, determination and the lack of compromise with sin in many of God's men today does not exist! Husbands are too submissive towards their wives. But God's Word says it should be the other way round; God's husbands are passive, powerless towards their wives' attitudes, even the wives who are seemingly very pious. This causes many husbands to slowly accumulate frustration which in turn makes them **suddenly become uncontrollable and explode with bad emotions**, and this in turn makes their wives lose their respect and fear towards their husbands even more! Other husbands do not explode with their emotions but are simply passive and become alienated from their families and gradually lose sight of the correct direction to God's goal and their wives complain that there is no real man at their homes, although they themselves do not help their husbands to become mature and grow to male perfection. Every woman needs to have a husband as her head and wise guidance. Pious lonely women who obey God's will also need a wise guide and protectors in their husbands. Therefore, they should humbly ask God for a husband. I have written many articles about the necessity of returning to the Biblical faith in which a woman is submissive to her husband. God's Word says that this is the only correct type of behavior for a woman. But now I strongly feel God's command that as a woman I should make men of God aware of the great need for them to start **ruling in their own** homes, giving their wives and children a clear message that it is God who appointed them as the heads of their families. Fathers must feel at home comfortable enough to be able to tell their wives everything they want and ask for or even demand godly manners and that they won't hear the words like "No" or "But I don't think so!" Pious, believing and humble in God husbands should be able to do this firmly and decisively in a way that knows no opposition, always keeping their head immersed in Jesus Christ. A wife who does not allow her husband to rule in herself shows that she is not a wife; that she does not give her husband the right to herself and that she forbids her husband to rule in herself. Children who do not listen to their parents and do not allow their parents to speak to them firmly and decisively reject their own parents and show disobedience thus denying them. This quite frequent nowadays pseudo "respect" shown by God's husbands to their wives, which forbids husbands to talk to their wives freely and unconditionally because this kind of talk may hurt their wives or may make them misunderstand something actually allows the wives to show pride and even helps them to nurture their bad condition. Unfortunately, although I have been calling for years and writing about wives being submissive to their husbands, it is you – the husbands who will ultimately have to take responsibility and explain to God why you've let your wives fall into sin. Unfortunately, it is you who will ultimately be held responsible for the indulgence you have shown to your wives and children about spiritual matters and let them forgetting to do God's will; you will be responsible for the failure to recognize and condemn sin in your homes as well as for the failure to punish sinners. If you have features of Eli, who was very attracted to spiritual and God's matters but was not able to decisively and consistently act for his beloved ones in terms of their eternity, because he might have to admit that he would lose his sons - then in the end you will lose them as he did, because by your indulgence you will lead your wives, children and yourself to eternal death. If you are only satisfied with life of poor quality on a day to day basis with your family and do not care about the eternity... then you only prove that your hearts do not belong to God the Father. Unfortunately, this was the case with Eli].

SOP: "He could not be depended upon to keep Israel pure. Those who have too little courage to reprove wrong, or who through indolence or lack of interest make no earnest effort to purify the family or the

church of God, are held accountable for the evil that may result from their neglect of duty.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 578.2}

[My comment: Let us remember the above words when we will try to justify evil in our family by looking around for the guilty ones. Let’s remember about these words when we wave our hand at something indulgently or with resignation because we do not have the moral strength to set conditions to stop the flood of evil in our homes and churches].

SOP: *“We are just as responsible for evils that we might have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority as if the acts had been our own. Eli did not manage his household according to God’s rules for family government. He followed his own judgment.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 578.3}*

[My comment: Today answer the question: Do you run your home according to God's rules or do you follow your own judgment? If you are guided by your own judgment, you'd better start to follow God's rules immediately before they judge you and before your beloved ones die].

SOP: *“The fond father overlooked the faults and sins of his sons in their childhood, flattering himself that after a time they would outgrow their evil tendencies.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 578.3}*

[My comment: Doesn't that remind you your own wrong way of thinking? Isn't it this constant false consolation that the children will grow out of something wrong because when they are older, they will understand more, or it will be easier to talk to them?].

SOP: *“Many are now making a similar mistake. They think they know a better way of training their children than that which God has given in His word. They foster wrong tendencies in them, urging as an excuse, “They are too young to be punished. Wait till they become older, and can be reasoned with. Thus wrong habits are left to strengthen until they become second nature. The children grow up without restraint, with traits of character that are a lifelong curse to them and are liable to be reproduced in others.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 578.3}*

[My comment: What a typical thought pattern is described in the above quoted words! Isn't it your pattern too? Do you, like a barrel organ, repeat on and on thinking clichés that the child will grow out of this or that without your participation?]

SOP: *“There is no greater curse upon households than to allow the youth to have their own way.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 579.1}*

[My comment: Are you lenient with your children?]

SOP: *“When parents regard every wish of their children and indulge them in what they know is not for their good, the children soon lose all respect for their parents, all regard for the authority of God or man, and are led captive at the will of Satan. The influence of an ill-regulated family is widespread and disastrous to all society. It accumulates in a tide of evil that affects families, communities, and governments.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 579.1}*

[My comment: In one of my husband's lectures during the Feast of Tabernacles we had the opportunity to hear how profound and blessed is in turn the influence of one well-organized, well-disciplined, and in God's order governed family! Here in the Spirit of Prophecy we read about Eli's household as a completely opposite experience: the bad influence of the behavior of one badly organized family. We read that it affects society as a whole. What is your family like? Whose witness are your family members? At whose side are they?]

SOP: *"Because of Eli's position, his influence was more extended than if he had been an ordinary man. His family life was imitated throughout Israel. {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 579.2}*

[My comment: Us- people who say that we are believers, that we read the Bible, other people start to listen more carefully. They start to watch and survey our lives. We do not even realize how closely they are watching us, judging and considering whether it would be worthwhile for them to believe in God and consequently march through life against the common and popular trends and current. What answer do they give themselves when they look at your family? Do they think then that it is worth following Jesus or not? Do they come up to a conclusion that following Jesus means a more valuable life? Better life? In what sense better? Or do they conclude that there is nothing to fight about and put their whole lives upside down?].

SOP: *"The baleful results of his negligent, ease-loving ways were seen in thousands of homes that were molded by his example. If children are indulged in evil practices, while the parents make a profession of religion, the truth of God is brought into reproach." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 579.2}*

[My comment: Does the conduct of your own household and your personal conduct towards your household members question God's Truth and bring ruin to your family? You need to answer these questions today and talk to Jesus...you need to face the Truth and ask Jesus for help. He will always find a way out!]

SOP: *"The best test of the Christianity of a home is the type of character begotten by its influence. Actions speak louder than the most positive profession of godliness. If professors of religion, instead of putting forth earnest, persistent, and painstaking effort to bring up a well-ordered household as a witness to the benefits of faith in God, are lax in their government and indulgent to the evil desires of their children, they are doing as did Eli, and are bringing disgrace on the cause of Christ and ruin upon themselves and their households {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 579.2}*

My comment: No comment...no comment necessary! These words speak for themselves.

SOP: *"But great as are the evils of parental unfaithfulness under any circumstances, they are tenfold greater when they exist in the families of those appointed as teachers of the people. [My comment: read: the believers; The Adventists of the Seventh Day Church] When these fail to control their own households, they are, by their wrong example, misleading many. Their guilt is as much greater than that of others as their position is more responsible. {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 579.2}*

"The promise had been made that the house of Aaron should walk before God forever; but this promise had been made on condition that they should devote themselves to the work of the sanctuary with singleness of heart and honor God in all their ways, not serving self nor following their own perverse inclinations. {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 579.3}

[My comment: So God's promises **are conditional** after all! Let's not be too confident! The fact that a marriage has been joined and bound by God does not mean that it will win the battle against temptation if the spouses do not cultivate God's love based on the principles laid down in God's Word! If a husband does not love his wife as Christ loved His church, and the wife does not respect her husband, even if they are joined by God, they will not stand the test of love].

SOP: *"Eli and his sons had been tested, and the Lord had found them wholly unworthy of the exalted position of priests in His service. And God declared, "Be it far from Me." He could not accomplish the*

good that He had meant to do them, because they failed to do their part.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 579.3}

[My comment: Do you also fail to do your part for God?]

SOP: *“The example of those who minister in holy things should be such as to impress the people with reverence for God and with fear to offend Him.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 580.1}*

[My comment: Do these words relate to you? Is it a description of your attitude? Is there reverence and fear to offend God in you? Do we respect God and other people? Let's be honest: most of us have no fear of God!]

SOP: *“When men, standing “in Christ’s stead” (2 Cor 5:20) to speak to the people God’s message of mercy and reconciliation, use their sacred calling as a cloak for selfish or sensual gratification, they make themselves the most effective agents of Satan.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 580.1}*

[My comment: Do you indulge in the sensual pleasures of laziness, spiritual laziness, lack of responsibility for others, overeating unhealthy and healthy food, disobedience, disregarding God's commands, directions, advice, anger, exaltation? Do you let pride rule in you? Does your carnal nature take over at different times in your life? Let God examine your kidneys, liver, heart, mind ... and you will learn the Truth ... may it not be too late!]

SOP: *“Like Hophni and Phinehas, they cause men to “abhor the offering of the Lord.” They may pursue their evil course in secret for a time; but when at last their true character is exposed, the faith of the people receives a shock that often results in destroying their confidence in religion. There is left upon the mind a distrust of all who profess to teach the word of God. The message of the true servant of Christ is doubtfully received. The question constantly arises, “Will not this man prove to be like the one we thought so holy, and found so corrupt?” Thus the word of God loses its power upon the souls of men.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 580.1}*

[My comment: May we not be the cause of others to stumble!]

In the first part of this article I cited the reasons why God decided to use very drastic methods to punish Eli's bad behavior towards his corrupted two sons and consequently, towards the entire nation and neighboring nations. God decided to stop this rebellion and disobedience of humanity, which always leads to destruction and demoralization. If we were to summarize these reasons in a few words, we would say that Eli's failure revealed itself in his neglect towards his sons' indulgence in their bad behavior and in tolerating their disregard for God's detailed advice and guidance regarding practical, daily, godly life. Where did his neglect come from? It must have come from the fact that Eli did not have very deep personal and based on the true, faithful, emotionally stable and permanent **Love** for his personal Savior. He simply lacked the foundation of God's character, which is love. **The** love that would give him the moral strength to resist the evil in his sons. His relationship with Jesus was shaken because it wasn't based on deep and profound love towards His Saviour. If his Love was deeply rooted in God, Eli would have overcome all his weaknesses and would have become God's instrument to do justice in his home and in the whole nation. Eli did not trust that God would be his helper, his confidant, friend and his solid foundation in this difficult task of punishing the bad behavior of his sons. It was easier for Eli to lose his holy relationship with God than with his sons. He chose to lose his relationship with God rather than oppose his sons. He and the whole nation paid bitterly for it. Let's listen to some more extensive fragments from the chapter entitled "The Ark Taken by the Philistines"

from the book "Patriarchs and Prophets" by Ellen G. White - pp. 581-591. This time concerning the consequences that were to fall on Eli for not stopping the evil in his house in time.

SOP: *"Another warning was to be given to Eli's house. God could not communicate with the high priest and his sons; their sins, like a thick cloud, had shut out the presence of His Holy Spirit. But in the midst of evil the child Samuel [we know that he was Ann's son. I will analyse Ann's prayer in one of the next articles]remained true to Heaven, and the message of condemnation to the house of Eli was Samuel's commission as a prophet of the Most High."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 581.1}

*The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; that the Lord called Samuel. "Supposing the voice to be that of Eli, the child hastened to the bedside of the priest, saying, "Here am I; for thou calledst me." The answer was, "I called not, my son; lie down again." Three times Samuel was called, and thrice he responded in like manner. And then Eli was convinced that the mysterious call was the voice of God. The Lord had passed by His chosen servant, the man of hoary hairs, to commune with a child. This in itself was a bitter yet deserved rebuke to Eli and his house. {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 581.2}*

*No feeling of envy or jealousy was awakened in Eli's heart. He directed Samuel to answer, if again called, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth." Once more the voice was heard, and the child answered, "Speak; for Thy servant heareth." So awed was he at the thought that the great God should speak to him that he could not remember the exact words which Eli bade him say. {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 581.3}*

*And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever." {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 581.4}*

*Before receiving this message from God, "Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him;" that is, he was not acquainted with such direct manifestations of God's presence as were granted to the prophets. It was the Lord's purpose to reveal Himself in an unexpected manner, that Eli might hear of it through the surprise and inquiry of the youth. {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 582.1}*

*Samuel was filled with fear and amazement at the thought of having so terrible a message committed to him. In the morning he went about his duties as usual, but with a heavy burden upon his young heart. The Lord had not commanded him to reveal the fearful denunciation, hence he remained silent, avoiding, as far as possible, the presence of Eli. He trembled, lest some question should compel him to declare the divine judgments against one whom he loved and revered. Eli was confident that the message foretold some great calamity to him and his house. He called Samuel, and charged him to relate faithfully what the Lord had revealed. The youth obeyed, and the aged man bowed in humble submission to the appalling sentence. "It is the Lord," he said: "let Him do what seemeth Him good." {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 582.2}*

"Yet Eli did not manifest the fruits of true repentance. He confessed his guilt, but failed to renounce the sin." {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 582.3}

[My comment: In my ears these are the most frightening, puzzling and amazing words of all that appear in this article. These are the words that make you stop immediately and examine your own heart if sometimes we do not only confess our guilt, but we do not feel repentance at all; we do not renounce the sin!? Why? Why do we do this? After all, Eli was touched by what God was like. He loved Samuel, the son of Anna, whom he raised, and who was God's, so why did he not repent? After all, he was sensitive to God's voice. He **heard** God's voice but still he lived and let the sinful condition of his sons develop. He knew that they were doing evil and disgraced God – His heavenly Father! And yet he DIDN'T SHOW REPENT?!! How is this possible??? Not only that, he confessed his guilt! But ... he did not renounce his sin! He was still incapable of operating in God's Spirit! Why? Why so?

Now let's think about ourselves, don't we quite often confess our faults, but still cherish sin in our hearts? We do not correct our mistakes!? We do not make amends for the wrongs we have committed! We repeat the same patterns, almost as if unable to improve ... why? ... Is it because we would have to change too much, give up too much, deny our ego ... and we do not want it. We prefer to have control over our own lives and we want to govern ourselves and go our own way... so we prefer to pretend that something may change by itself. That maybe family members will grow up on their own, will mature just like that without our participation?]

SOP: *"Year after year the Lord delayed His threatened judgments."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 582.3}

[My comment: And God is patiently waiting ... giving us a chance ... still waiting ...]

SOP: *"Much might have been done in those years to redeem the failures of the past (...)"*{Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 582.3}

[My comment: Are we making good use of this time?]

SOP: *"...but the aged priest took no effective measures to correct the evils that were polluting the sanctuary of the Lord and leading thousands in Israel to ruin."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 582.3}

[My comment: And do you take EFFECTIVE MEASURES in your families to be faithful to God in the smallest matters ??? Do you see the blessed effects of your actions? Do you lead your loved ones to repentance? Do you lead them so they would need to choose clearly if they are following God or satan? Are you ready to accept and respect their decision if they choose evil?]

SOP: *"The forbearance of God caused Hophni and Phinehas to harden their hearts and to become still bolder in transgression. The messages of warning and reproof to his house were made known by Eli to the whole nation. By this means he hoped to counteract, in some measure, the evil influence of his past neglect."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 582.3}

[My comment: As we read, Eli still undertakes certain actions, certain steps - he reveals God's words of warning and rebukes to the whole nation. It would seem that such honesty is true and effective... but it is not. Eli uses this method only as a smokescreen whose aim is to remove from **Eli** the requirement to deal with matters in his family by himself. He is waiting for something from the outside; for that something from the outside which will help him to stop the evil. He is waiting for some external circumstances which will be helpful and will start to operate once he does something halfway ... Eli is aware that the evil that engulfed his sons, once exposed - most likely will not lead to the change of hearts in his sons ...]

SOP: *"But the warnings were disregarded by the people, as they had been by the priests. The people of surrounding nations also, who were not ignorant of the iniquities openly practiced in Israel, became still bolder in their idolatry and crime. They felt no sense of guilt for their sins, as they would have felt had the Israelites preserved their integrity." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 582.3}*

[My comment: You do not even realize how many people are watching you and on the basis of your example and your family' example make a decision whether they want to choose True God or should I say: reject True God!]

SOP: *"But a day of retribution was approaching." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 582.3}*

[My comment: The day of the Lord is approaching! Be careful and be faithful!]

SOP: *"God's authority had been set aside (...)" {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 582.3}*

[My comment: If it happens in your life or in the life of your family that the authority of God is rejected, then there will be no rescue for you if you do not confess your sins and repent. Therefore, convert and do everything out of love for your family members in decisive and consistent action to even compel and urge [Luke 14:23] them to choose God who is their Protection, their Savior and the Rock on which they should build a True home ...]

SOP: *"and His worship neglected and despised (...)" {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 582.3}*

[My comment: Do not neglect the personal service and worship of God; do not neglect the opportunity to meet other faithful God's servants during, for example, the Feast of Tabernacles in Glinik Zaborowski, do not despise the services, the worship of God that take place once a month in our house, every first Saturday of the month, because] -

SOP: *"it became necessary for Him to interpose, that the honor of His name might be maintained. {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 582.3}*

[My comment: Because the end of times has come and the honor of God's name will be maintained therefore do not be deluded that there will be no consequences for your sins.].

SOP: *"Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek." This expedition was undertaken by the Israelites without counsel from God, without the concurrence of high priest or prophet. {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 583.1}*

[My comment: They continued to do wrong and made some unfavorable decisions themselves. The time for reckoning came to them. You don't even know when it will be one bridge too far and you go too far **in your** indulgence, in your wrong judgment, in your spoilt decisions and there will be no turning back ...no salvation...]

SOP: *"And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men." As the shattered and disheartened force returned to their encampment, "the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines?" The nation was ripe for the judgments of God, yet they did not see that their own sins had been the cause of this terrible disaster." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 583.1}*

[My comment: This hardness of heart is astonishing! Even at the closeness of death they are unable to admit their faults !!! And they do not stop to wonder why their failure is happening, but they say:]

SOP: *“Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.” The Lord had given no command or permission that the ark should come into the army; yet the Israelites felt confident that victory would be theirs, and uttered a great shout when it was borne into the camp by the sons of Eli.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 583.1}*

[My comment: The insolence and boldness of those people and other believers is astonishing. They still dare to talk about God, refer to Him and seek protection in Him despite the fact that they are unfaithful to Him, that they mock His will and disregard His instructions, admonitions and advice expressed in Prophetic Spirit and spoken through the mouth of God's servants. My husband often recalls the message entitled "Rest in Nature" preached two years ago during the Feast of Tabernacles. Delivering this message I said that our God's vaccine and protection against diseases, plagues and everything that haunts this world today is faithfulness to God's rules, including dietary rules. How we eat does not only concern biological or chemical processes in our body, but it is a sign of our obedience to God. It is also showing abstinence towards what we may like to eat, but what God does not like us to eat nor drink. And can we require God to protect us when the plagues are in the world when we have been ignoring God's rules and advice concerning diet for years? The attitude of those Israelites is astonishing. They do not associate their sins and their sinful attitude **with** the consequences that begin to fall on them. Aren't we also showing such a mindless lack of skill of associating facts ?] Let us continue:

SOP: *“The Philistines looked upon the ark as the god of Israel. All the mighty works that Jehovah had wrought for His people were attributed to its power. As they heard the shouts of joy at its approach, they said, “What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid; for they said, God has come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 583.2}*

*„The Philistines made a fierce assault, which resulted in the defeat of Israel, with great slaughter. Thirty thousand men lay dead upon the field, **and the ark of God was taken**, [now you know how it happened!] the two sons of Eli having fallen while fighting to defend it. Thus again was left upon the page of history a testimony for all future ages—that the iniquity of God's professed people will not go unpunished. {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 583.3}*

[My comment: God did not treat them differently because of the knowledge they had had about Him for years ... God's justice and infallibility was revealed. Still it is sad that such shame was done to God by **His people** in front of the Gentiles.]

SOP: *“The greater the knowledge of God's will, the greater the sin of those who disregard it.” {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 583.3}*

[My comment: We know that it was the Seventh-day Adventist Church that received an enormous awareness of God's will and we also know how enormously it buried this awareness and began to speak in a strange voice]

SOP: *"The most terrifying calamity that could occur had befallen Israel. The ark of God had been captured, and was in the possession of the enemy. The glory had indeed departed from Israel when the symbol of the abiding presence and power of Jehovah was removed from the midst of them. {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 584.1}*

[My comment: Today **this ark** is our mind and heart! And we must know if our hearts and minds belong to God's Son's spirit. Are we faithful to God? We often underestimate something as long as we have it, but when it is taken from us, just like Esau's birthright was taken away from him because he didn't appreciate it, we tearfully strive for it, but if we do not truly repent, we will not get anything back. We often cannot imagine that our husband may leave us, that we may lose our jobs, health and we do not respect what we have but we complain instead. And in this way we curse God! Let's stop. Let's wake up and consider deeply what we are doing and let's us draw godly conclusions? Where is the Spirit of the Son of God in us which is the spirit of submission that told Isaac to offer his hands to his father while the old man was tying them to make an offering of Isaac to God ...? Do we possess this very spirit? The Spirit of God?]

SOP: *"With this sacred chest were associated the most wonderful revelations of God's truth and power. In former days miraculous victories had been achieved whenever it appeared. It was shadowed by the wings of the golden cherubim, and the unspeakable glory of the Shekinah, the visible symbol of the most high God, had rested over it in the holy of holies. But now it had brought no victory. It had not proved a defense on this occasion, and there was mourning throughout Israel." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 584.1}*

SOP: *"They had not realized that their faith was only a nominal faith, {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 584.2}*

My comment: The majority of people who call themselves believers associate the Bible with beautiful and miraculous victories, and yet they do not take this precious Book seriously and do not want to see the Truth. After some time the Bible becomes an ordinary book for them. The Bible is no longer their defense wall against the world and its prince of darkness. Do you also defend yourself against the Truth?]

SOP: *"and had lost its power to prevail with God." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 584.2}*

[My comment: The previous sentence from the Spirit of Prophecy answers the question: why do we sin?! We sin because we have become unfaithful! Therefore, we have no power to win in the name of God. Therefore, there are no victories for Christ in us! And it is happening now when the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is alive and Jesus is reigning and ruling NOW on the earth and NOW you can live without sin because He gave us an example during His life here on the earth how to overcome sin and never succumb to temptation! It is NOW that you lose your power to win because you are not faithful and there is no perseverance in you! You have no love for Your Creator, therefore you keep losing the battles.]

SOP: *"The law of God, contained in the ark, was also a symbol of His presence; but they had cast contempt upon the commandments, had despised their requirements, and had grieved the Spirit of the Lord from among them." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 584.2}*

[My comment: read: The Spirit of Prophecy. By rejecting the writings of Ellen G. White, God's people rejected the Testimony of Jesus, that is, the Word of God - God's Spirit !!!]

SOP: *"When the people obeyed the holy precepts, the Lord was with them to work for them by His infinite power; but when they looked upon the ark, and did not associate it with God, nor honor His revealed will by obedience to His law, it could avail them little more than a common box. They looked to the ark as the idolatrous nations looked to their gods, as if it possessed in itself the elements of power and salvation. They transgressed the law it contained; for their very worship of the ark led to formalism, hypocrisy, and idolatry. Their sin had separated them from God, and He could not give them the victory until they had repented of and forsaken their iniquity. It was not enough that the ark and the sanctuary were in the midst of Israel. It was not enough that the priests offered sacrifices, and that the people were called the children of God. The Lord does not regard the request of those who cherish iniquity in the heart; it is written that 'he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination'." Prov. 28:9 {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 584.3}*

[My comment: It is not enough that you have been baptized in the name of Jesus; or that you are an Adventist and have a Bible at home ... if you do not have all the Laws and commands that God has given through His servants in your heart and in your mind - you are nobody!]

SOP: *"When the army went out to battle, Eli, blind and old, had tarried at Shiloh. It was with troubled forebodings that he awaited the result of the conflict; "for his heart trembled for the ark of God." Taking his position outside the gate of the tabernacle, he sat by the highway side day after day, anxiously expecting the arrival of a messenger from the battlefield." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 585.1}*

„At length a Benjamite from the army, "with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head," came hurrying up the ascent leading to the city. (...) The messenger was brought to him. And the man said unto Eli, "Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead." Eli could endure all this, terrible as it was, for he had expected it. But when the messenger added, "And the ark of God is taken," a look of unutterable anguish passed over his countenance. {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 585.2-3}

[My comment: Unfortunately, such a fate awaits those who will not take all the above quoted words seriously **soon enough not to let all these horrible consequences fall upon them**. Let us return to God's path with all our strength, hearts and minds. Today let us choose to be faithful because tomorrow may be too late ...]

SOP: *"The thought that his sin had thus dishonored God and caused Him to withdraw His presence from Israel was more than he could bear; his strength was gone, he fell, "and his neck brake, and he died." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 585.3}*

[My comment: Unfortunately, there is no clue that Eli finally repented. On the contrary, it was rather remorse that tormented him, like Judas later ... and even if he had been given another chance, he would not have used it properly either ...]

Let us sum up continuing from the Spirit of Prophecy:

SOP: *"The Lord often employs His bitterest enemies to punish the unfaithfulness of His professed people. The wicked may triumph for a time as they see Israel suffering chastisement, but the time will come when they, too, must meet the sentence of a holy, sin-hating God. Whenever iniquity is cherished, there, swift and unerring, the divine judgments will follow." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 585.5}*

[My comment: It is so sad, so sad that God's enemies can serve God as instruments to punish His children! Let us not give God a cause that He will have to apply something like this to us; that He must hand us over to the Gentiles as His punishing instrument, because we disobey Him and become infidels! Let us not delay doing God's will, because we can be sure of God's judgment. He does not hesitate, nor does He delay His wrath... but He does everything on and in time!

SOP: *"But the Philistines were now as anxious to free themselves from its [the ark's] presence as they had been to obtain it. Instead of being a source of strength to them, it was a great burden and a heavy curse. Yet they knew not what course to pursue; for wherever it went the judgments of God followed (...)* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 586.3}

*"These wise men acknowledged a mysterious power accompanying the ark—a power which they had no wisdom to meet. Yet they did not counsel the people to turn from their idolatry to serve the Lord. **They still hated the God of Israel, though compelled by overwhelming judgments to submit to His authority. Thus sinners may be convinced by the judgments of God that it is in vain to contend against Him. They may be compelled to submit to His power, while at heart they rebel against His control. Such submission cannot save the sinner. The heart must be yielded to God—must be subdued by divine grace—before man's repentance can be accepted. (...) How great is the long-suffering of God toward the wicked!*** {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 587.3}

[My comment: 6000 years God has accompanied people on this pilgrimage to Heaven; pilgrimage full of pain and suffering ... but the end is coming, God's judgments are close at hand and it would be unwise to prove your own way !!!]

SOP: *"The idolatrous Philistines and backsliding Israel had alike enjoyed the gifts of His providence. Ten thousand unnoticed mercies were silently falling in the pathway of ungrateful, rebellious men. Every blessing spoke to them of the Giver, but they were indifferent to His love. (...) but when they stubbornly persisted in their impenitence, He removed from them His protecting hand."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 587.4}

[My comment: Gradually but definitely God will take away His caring hand ... so, dear wife or husband, dear brother or sister think before you have something done your own way. Dear children, think before mumbling something to your parents in rejection of performing their will. Dear husband, think before you reject Jesus Christ's words spoken by others or written in SOP books so you would not be the reason for your wife and your children to lose their track to Heaven !!!]

SOP: *"They refused to listen to the voice of God in His created works, and in the warnings, counsels, and reproofs of His word, and thus He was forced to speak to them through judgments."* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 587.4}

[My comment: Because they refused to obey God in His admonitions, reproofs, warnings, counsels and exhortations uttered by other people. They refused to listen and were too proud to admit their guilt...therefore God will be forced to judge them fairly].

SOP: *"There were some among the Philistines who stood ready to oppose the return of the ark to its own land. Such an acknowledgment of the power of Israel's God would be humiliating to the pride of Philistia. But "the priests and the diviners" admonished the people not to imitate the stubbornness of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and thus bring upon themselves still greater afflictions.* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 588.1}

[My comment: Pride is an enormous root which makes us deaf and blind to God's words and actions and takes our minds away !!!]

SOP: „*The ark, with the golden trespass offering, was placed upon a new cart, thus precluding all danger of defilement; to this cart, or car, were attached two kine upon whose necks a yoke had never been placed. Their calves were shut up at home, and the cows were left free to go where they pleased. If the ark should thus be returned to the Israelites by the way of Beth-shemesh, the nearest city of the Levites, the Philistines would accept this as evidence that the God of Israel had done unto them this great evil; “but if not,” they said, “then we shall know that it is not His hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us.”* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 588.1}

[My comment: The oxen took the ark to the nearest Levite city to Beth-Shemesh, and the Philistines took this as a sign that it was the God of Israel who had brought these calamities upon them. Unfortunately, in Beth-Shemesh the Ark did not find a safe place. Even though it was a Levite city, its inhabitants let an awful thing happen to the ark.

SOP: *“The men of Beth-shemesh quickly spread the tidings that the ark was in their possession, and the people from the surrounding country flocked to welcome its return. The ark had been placed upon the stone that first served for an altar, and before it additional sacrifices were offered unto the Lord. Had the worshipers repented of their sins, God’s blessing would have attended them. But they were not faithfully obeying His law; and while they rejoiced at the return of the ark as a harbinger of good, **they had no true sense of its sacredness. Instead of preparing a suitable place for its reception, they permitted it to remain in the harvest field. As they continued to gaze upon the sacred chest and to talk of the wonderful manner in which it had been restored, they began to conjecture wherein lay its peculiar power. At last, overcome by curiosity, they removed the coverings and ventured to open it.”*** {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 589.1}

[My comment: Another astonishing and surprising attitude, this time of people from Beth-Shemesh - the people of God - people from the city of Levites. Examine yourselves if your attitude is not similar to theirs? How can you rejoice in God's matters, even make a sacrifice to God and yet leave holiness far away from you and for hours or more to talk about God ... and then to defile God ... with slander, stubbornness, perjury, lust, disregard, carelessness, laziness ... indifference, neglect ... and never experience repentance !!!??? Unbelievable – yet true!]

SOP: *“All Israel had been taught to regard the ark with awe and reverence. When required to remove it from place to place the Levites were not so much as to look upon it. Only once a year was the high priest permitted to behold the ark of God. Even the heathen Philistines had not dared to remove its coverings. Angels of heaven, unseen, ever attended it in all its journeyings. The irreverent daring of the people at Beth-shemesh was speedily punished. Many were smitten with sudden death.* {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 589.2}

*„The survivors were not led by this judgment to repent of their sin, but only to regard the ark with superstitious fear. Eager to be free from its presence, yet not daring to remove it, the Beth-shemites sent a message to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, inviting them to take it away. With great joy the men of this place welcomed the sacred chest. **They knew that it was the pledge of divine favor to the obedient and faithful. With solemn gladness they brought it to their city and placed it in the house of Abinadab, a Levite. This man appointed his son Eleazar to take charge of it, and it remained there for many years”*** {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 589.3}

[My comment: What a different kind of joy was shown by the people from Kirjath-jearim! The joy that is responsible, caring, insightful and solemn!]

And this is how this chapter of the book *Patriarchs and Prophets* ends. Later on page 538 begins the story of David who wanted to bring the ark of covenant to Jerusalem from Kiriath-Jearim, which we have already studied in the article about Uzzah.

Let's now summarize all with the words of the Prophetic Spirit from the book "Patriarchs and Prophets" p. 590:

SOP: *"The Israelites as a nation still continued in a state of irreligion and idolatry, and as a punishment they remained in subjection to the Philistines. During this time Samuel visited the cities and villages throughout the land, seeking to turn the hearts of the people to the God of their fathers; and his efforts were not without good results. After suffering the oppression of their enemies for twenty years, the Israelites "mourned after the Lord." Samuel counseled them, "If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only." Here we see that practical piety, heart religion, was taught in the days of Samuel as taught by Christ when He was upon the earth. Without the grace of Christ the outward forms of religion were valueless to ancient Israel. They are the same to modern Israel." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 590.1}*

"There is need today of such a revival of true heart religion as was experienced by ancient Israel. Repentance is the first step that must be taken by all who would return to God. No one can do this work for another. We must individually humble our souls before God and put away our idols. When we have done all that we can do, the Lord will manifest to us His salvation. {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 590.2}

"With the co-operation of the heads of the tribes, a large assembly was gathered at Mizpeh. Here a solemn fast was held. With deep humiliation the people confessed their sins; and as an evidence of their determination to obey the instructions they had heard, they invested Samuel with the authority of judge." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 590.3}

"The Philistines interpreted this gathering to be a council of war, and with a strong force set out to disperse the Israelites before their plans could be matured. The tidings of their approach caused great terror in Israel. The people entreated Samuel, "Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 590.4}

"While Samuel was in the act of presenting a lamb as a burnt offering, the Philistines drew near for battle. Then the Mighty One who had descended upon Sinai amid fire and smoke and thunder, who had parted the Red Sea and made a way through Jordan for the children of Israel, again manifested His power. A terrible storm burst upon the advancing host, and the earth was strewn with the dead bodies of mighty warriors." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 590.5}

"The Israelites had stood in silent awe, trembling with hope and fear. When they beheld the slaughter of their enemies, they knew that God had accepted their repentance.

For nations as well as for individuals, the path of obedience to God is the path of safety and happiness, while that of transgression leads only to disaster and defeat. The Philistines were now so completely subdued that they surrendered the strongholds which had been taken from Israel and refrained from

acts of hostility for many years. Other nations followed this example, and the Israelites enjoyed peace until the close of Samuel's sole administration." {Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 591.1}

In today's lecture / article we've found out what led the Ark of the Covenant to fall into the hands of Israel's enemies and be absent from Jerusalem until David decided to bring it back.

The Ark of the Covenant, in which the law of God was located, is symbolized today by our hearts and minds and what they cling to. God's law inscribed in our hearts means having the character of Christ. If, through our unfaithfulness, we allow ourselves to become the property of Satan, God's judgment will not pass us by. But if we still benefit from God's mercy and His grace and confess our sins and repent ... He will protect us and lead us through everything for His name! Dear wife, mother, daughter, sister, grandmother, aunt, cousin, friend, uncle, brother, grandfather, son, husband ... do not hesitate, but **today** choose Jesus Christ and follow Him uncompromisingly !!! You alone in God can make possible what seems to you from a human point of view impossible. Bet on faithfulness to God and truly crush your heart before Him, and there is still hope ...

Remaining **in the blessed hope** that we will rise to the occasion and devote ourselves unconditionally and thoroughly to God the Father at His disposal and that we will become members of the **present** kingdom of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Beata Maciejewska