

## Correction From God - Part 2

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Recorded February 27, 2021

This is:

### Correction From God - Part 2

I gave Part 1 a while back and one of the things I mentioned in Part 1 was that we don't think about the many factors that affect us in our lives. From the time we are born until the time we take our last breath. Also, this same situation goes from the time we are called into God's Church and the time we are baptized and again to the time we breathe our last—a lot of things take place.

One of those factors I pointed out last time was the role of God's correction in our lives. I mentioned how important that was; even crucial for us. It is a necessary component in our walk with God. I used the example of a baby learning to walk, pointing out that self-correction starts to become part of our lives. As it does prior to conversion and even after conversion, which I will talk about a little later. As babies learn to walk, they fall down, they stand up, they fall down, they toddle a little bit, they take a few steps, they fall down and after a while, they learn that it is better to walk instead of falling down—that hurts. Sometimes the correction, no matter where it comes from, might sting a little bit, but we learn from it and that's the point I am trying to make.

Correction becomes an integral part of our lives, especially after we are converted. I mentioned the fact that our parents begin a whole string of corrections—guiding us, helping us as we grow up—just so we would survive. We have a son we talk to quite often and he has eighteen and twenty-year-old girls. It is a matter of him surviving the girls in his case. I also mentioned in the other sermon how some people just don't like correction—they just reject it. You can sometimes tell whenever you say something to somebody and they bristle a little bit. Even if it's something you say to them in a nice way. Unfortunately for some people, that sets a pattern throughout their lives. They would just rather keep on getting hurt than take correction; that seems to be the way human nature works.

I have quoted somewhere in my notes, I think it was in the context of when I worked for a living. It was either in a leadership article or a seminar that I attended in my working days. They wanted us to have professional upgrades from time to time, so we would book ourselves, in almost any kind of class or seminar we could find, and I think this is where this came from—I just don't remember. I retired fifteen years ago. I can barely remember working. This quote has to do with considering someone for a leadership position and here's the quote:

*Don't just look at scholastic ability and education, but more importantly look at the character of an individual. Their leadership, and especially their ability to take correction.*

That's a pretty good principle anyway. We can even apply that to ourselves in some cases. That correction process that I'm going to be talking about continues throughout our lives and that brings us to today's title which is:

## Correction From God - Part 2

I rarely do a two-part message—mostly because I don't have the energy at eighty years old. I'll leave those multi part messages to people who are good at it, like James, where as I am not. What I tried to mostly focus on in that first part is the need for God's correction and what our attitude should be towards God's correction.

There are so many examples in scripture with lessons to be learned. I will try to cover some in this Part 2 of the topic. Just a quick recap of those five points from Part 1.

1. Build a conversational relationship with God.
2. Ask God for a teachable attitude.
3. Study and meditate on the written word of God. We get a lot of correction from God's Word.
4. Listen to the spoken Word of God. We get a lot of correction from messages if we are listening.

Many years ago, I knew a man who was at a different Church and he didn't like sermons. He was tired of listening to sermons; he didn't want to hear any more sermons. So, they actually accommodated him and let him go to another room and study his Bible, which I thought was a little strange.

5. Watch the word of God in people. Watch people's examples.

I would like to revisit that first point about building a conversational relationship with God. I put the emphasis on conversational relationship because to me that type of relationship with God our Father is the key to everything else. Without that, we kind of flounder along. I had no religious background, Protestant or otherwise. I think all of us, when we were converted, one of the first things we wanted to know about and learn about was prayer. Unfortunately, if we have been doing something like prayer for years and years, we come to a point—and this is just how human nature works—we tend to devalue the importance of that prayer. It may sound funny, but when you do something day after day, month after month, year after year, it becomes a little routine and it cools off your prayer life. Maybe that doesn't work for you but that's kind of the way human nature operates—at least mine does. I'm not saying that is the case with me, it's not. Some people have even used prayer in their life before they came into the Church. I have known a lot of people who pray. I have worked with individuals who knew I was

religious and they have asked me to pray for them. People who have worked for me, people like that.

We are all influenced by the model that we have had for prayer in our lives. Maybe it came from our family. I know my wife has mentioned many times her French-Canadian heritage, Catholic of course, followed by twelve years of Catholic school still bothers her sometimes when she tries to pray. You may have had a Protestant background where people pray to their idea of Jesus. If you have had no religious background like I had, you learned what prayer was and how it was supposed to be done from movies or books or something like that. It didn't really help that we had a lot of young, overzealous ministers when we first came into the Church. We would ask them how we should pray and some of the first things we heard was that you had to pray an hour and study an hour every day or you would never be in God's Kingdom. Unbeknownst to them they laid a real guilt trip on us, as I'll explain. Oh and 80% of your prayer had to be for the glorious leader in the work at the time. If you do the numbers on that it did not leave much time for you and me to develop a personal relationship with God. That's what they taught in those days. Like you could somehow force a relationship with God.

It brings to mind Matthew 6:5 where it talks about not being like the religious hypocrites when you pray. They want to be seen, they want to be thought of as being religious, but let's go to verse 6 and 7 from the New Living Version, where Christ and His instruction to us is not complicated at all.

**Matthew 6:6** *But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. [In other words, make it and keep it personal] Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. (NLT)*

He will answer your prayers unless it's something you shouldn't be praying for.

*7) When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. (NLT)*

We know some religions actually chant. There are enough older people like me here, who have been in the church for so long, that they will remember what happened every time there was a hiccup in the church as far as the income and the growth of the work went—who got blamed? The members did because you were not praying long enough or hard enough and that was a real problem. Remember we would get letters and get scolded because we weren't holding up our end of everything.

If it wasn't bad enough that we had had that bad influence like that, then we started—because of that guilt—we started learning to play the “catch-up” game. I'm not talking about the stuff you put on a hamburger, I am talking about “catch up”. It goes something like this: You get up in the morning, you're late for work—you had to take a shower and get dressed and rush out of the house, get on the freeway in the traffic like I did for years at Hanford. You just didn't have any time for morning prayer. You maybe tried to mumble something on your way to work and tried to make up for it that way. Then later

on during the day, you drag yourself home—you have had a horrible, grueling day and got beaten up at every turn—then you just don't have the energy for study and prayer. We then had self-imposed guilt because of these things we had been taught. We started saying, "I'll just make it up tomorrow—I'll pray twice tomorrow, I'll pray for two hours tomorrow". We started telling ourselves all that stuff. So that's the "catch up" game we learned to play.

We had this concept of God sitting up there with a clipboard, checking off the boxes—yes, Jack did this today, Jack did that, Jack didn't do that—and at the end of your life it was a scorecard. That's kind of the way we did things back then. Now we are all mature Christians and I hope we have grown past that. What I am trying to point out is, yes, there is a time for formal prayer to God—of course there is. We have public prayer twice at least on the Sabbath. There's a way to do it—a certain way to do that and I think we do a good job at that. There also needs to be, I think, an informal period of time where we just have friendly conversations with God. We just sit down and do that. That's what I mean by a conversational relationship with God; that is different than some of the things we were taught early on. It is not a forced thing.

One thing I've been doing lately is, in the evening I'll make a cup of tea, sit down in my nice easy chair in the bedroom and have a conversation with God. Maybe call that "Tea Time with God". Sounds like a book or maybe a poem. It works for me and I know some people are thinking, "You're weirding us out Jack". It's a one-way conversation and it's relaxed and informal. You can do that in a deeply reverent way and we should. Somehow, I stumbled across something on YouTube or somewhere on a calming tea. Usually that stuff—99%—these fixes or cures that you run across don't work for me. But this tea really works, it's chamomile tea and a couple other ingredients and it really works. I just sip on that and converse with God. It doesn't matter what the topic is when you do this, it's between you and God. You can bring up anything that's appropriate. Sometimes I just ask God, what should we talk about this evening and it's amazing some of the things that will pop into my head.

I asked God a while back, how is it out there? How many stars are there, how many galaxies, how many universes are out there—you just kind of go off like that. The point is, as our prayer life develops and I think we've all done that to a point, we should have this element in it. It should tend to be more conversational than just I have to do this, it's a stupid, regimented prayer. You have to think about some of the characters in the Bible like Abraham—he's called a *friend* of God. You look up that word in the Hebrew and Greek and it means "affection" and it can mean "deep affection".

Most of our friendships that we have with people are kind of casual in a way. Sometimes we have close friends where there's a much deeper relationship and there is affection involved with that.

That was Point 1.

Like I mentioned, when I did Part 1 on this and decided to do a part 2, I realized that when I got into this, how much correction there actually is in the Bible. From Genesis—Adam and Eve—clear to Revelation, the way God corrects and deals with humanity is there; it's everywhere. So, I knew right away I was in over my head. In the rest of the sermon today, I would like to just focus on a question:

*Why does God use correction, why does He do that, what are some of the reasons?*

That's a fair question.

I mentioned in Part 1 how most of us would just rather forego any correction; we just want an easy ride into God's Kingdom. It's a whole lot easier than a little bit of pain and suffering, we just don't want to go through that. I revert back to a scripture that I used from Proverbs 3. I made a statement in that first sermon that God has an ultimate purpose in the guidance and correction that He gives us. It shows one reason God uses this element of correction, if we can put it that way. Proverbs 3:11 and 12. Actually I want to read this because it's quoted later on in the New Testament.

**Proverbs 3:11** *My son [Solomon is speaking to his children, his son], do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction;  
12) For whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. (NKJV)*

So, we have this description of Solomon giving this picture of God to his son and saying that He is a loving Father who wants to correct—who needs to correct us. That's what he is teaching his son, just like a loving father would. That counters the view that some have of correction being very stern, harsh and even mean. The idea that some folks have of the God of the Old Testament is that He is harsh, stern and mean. But we know that's not true. If we understand that—and I think we do at this point in time—God is not like that at all.

I think most of us have been through Hebrews 11 many times—it's one of our favorite chapters—you can come into it at so many different angles and see so much in it. So much about the people who have gone before us and it's always interesting. I was reading it and going through it recently and just reading through it, I started making a note of the phrase in there, "by faith"—each one of these individuals "by faith" and I counted nineteen times. We have all the other scriptures that tell us we have to live by faith. Romans 1:17—these are just reference scriptures—Galatians 2:20, Hebrews 10:38—tells us we should live by faith. It's a process and God uses correction in that process. It's a vital component. Notice how Hebrews 11 ends in verses 39-40.

**Hebrews 11:39** *And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,  
40) God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. (NKJV)*

Perfection is a process and it involves correction for us. We can leave out the translators' chapter break and go right into chapter 12 and see how they continue with this crucial element of correction in perfecting that growth process. I'm going to use the Amplified for this. You know I like the Amplified.

**Hebrews 12:1** *Therefore [continuing in the thought of chapter 11], since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who by faith have testified to the truth of God's absolute faithfulness], stripping off every unnecessary weight and the sin which so easily and cleverly entangles us, let us run with endurance and active persistence the race that is set before us ... (AMP)*

That race is the process that we go through from the point of baptism on, until the end of our lives. It's like a race—it has a starting point and a finish line.

2) *[looking away from all that will distract us and] focusing our eyes on Jesus, who is the Author and Perfecter of faith [He's our example, He showed us it could be done] [the first incentive for our belief and the One who brings our faith to maturity], who for the joy [speaking of Christ] [of accomplishing the goal] set before Him endured the cross, disregarding the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God [revealing His deity, His authority, and the completion of His work]. (AMP)*

It references Psalm 110:1 where Yehovah said:

**Psalm 110:1** *The LORD said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” (NKJV)*

When we first started learning about the God of the Old Testament, that was a very telling sentence in Psalm 110. Verse 3 [Hebrews]

3) *Just consider and meditate on Him who endured from sinners such bitter hostility against Himself [consider it all in comparison with your trials], so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

4) *You have not yet struggled to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;*

5) *and you have forgotten the divine word of encouragement which is addressed to you as sons, My son, do not make light of the discipline of the Lord, and do not lose heart and give up when you are corrected by Him;*

6) *For the Lord disciplines and corrects those whom He loves, And He punishes every son whom He receives and welcomes [to His heart].” (AMP)*

Basically, quoting that Proverb 3, when Solomon spoke to his sons.

7) *You must submit to [correction for the purpose of] discipline; God is dealing with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?*

*8) -Now if you are exempt from correction and without discipline, in which all [of God's children] share, then you are illegitimate children and not sons [at all]. (AMP)*

He's quoting Proverbs 3:11 and 12.

*9) Moreover, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us, and we submitted and respected them [for training us]; shall we not much more willingly submit to the Father of spirits, and live [by learning from His discipline]? (AMP)*

I have a plaque I ran across a number of years ago and I gave it to my son; it's a son's prayer and a father's prayer. It's a small plaque you may have seen before.

The son is praying to the Father and he says, "God help me to be the kind of man my father is."

and then the father is praying and he says, "God help me to be the kind of man my son thinks I am".

Going on in verse 10.

*10) For our earthly fathers disciplined us for only a short time as seemed best to them; but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. (AMP)*

There is the ultimate purpose in God's correction.

*11) For the time being no discipline brings joy, but seems sad and painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness [right standing with God and a lifestyle and attitude that seeks conformity to God's will and purpose]. (AMP)*

In other words, correction from God that rightly responded to.

*12) -So then, strengthen hands that are weak and knees that tremble. (AMP)*

It's just saying that sometimes we are weak; we do weaken. It seems like we just run out of steam spiritually.

*13) Cut through and make smooth, straight paths for your feet [that are safe and go in the right direction], so that the leg which is lame [basically talking about spiritually faltering] may not be put out of joint, but rather may be healed. (AMP)*

Spiritually strengthen.

*14) Continually pursue peace with everyone, and the sanctification without which no one will [ever] see the Lord.*

*15) See to it that no one falls short of God's grace; [which just means His unmerited pardon and spiritual blessing] that no root of resentment [due to the correction and discipline from the Father] springs up and causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; (AMP)*

In other words, they don't want the correction, they resist the correction, they don't respond to it the way we all should. Sometimes—we used to use the expression, we get hit up alongside the head by a two by four—that's what we need, I think. That's been my case a few times. Verses 16 and 17 gives the example of Esau who sold his own birthright for a single meal—that's the last part of verse 16.

*17) For you know that afterward, when he wanted [to regain title to] his inheritance of the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no opportunity for repentance [there was no way to repair what he had done, no chance to recall the choice he had made] [he couldn't make up for it], even though he sought it diligently with [bitter] tears. (AMP)*

That is just correction because of bad behavior and we know his story; we know what happened there. There was deceit and everything else going on there.

A similar thing happened to Moses—we won't turn there—but in Numbers 20, we are familiar with that story where Yehovah gave him explicit instructions when the Israelites wanted water. Just thinking back on that story, you see what Moses did. This resulted in bad behavior on his part, because his thought was that Aaron and I are in charge and we are tired of these complaining Israelites. We are going to give them water. But he smacked the rock which is exactly what God told Him not to do. He let his emotions and anger take over. He took it upon himself to discipline and correct the Israelites. He really did a dangerous thing and as we know, he paid a penalty.

Sometimes correction does involve a penalty, it involves punishment. That's always up to God and God is always just when He administers that. Yehovah told Moses, because of this, you are going to go up Mount Nebo and get a look at the Promised Land. If you look that up, it was a pretty good view—it's about 2400 feet above sea level; you do get a really good view. You can see the Jordan and Jerusalem off in the distance—and God told him you are going to climb up there and you are going to die, and he did. He suffered a penalty because of what he tried to do himself. He tried to administer the discipline and correction which he had no business doing; he didn't have the authority to do that. It says he was still in pretty good physical shape at 120 years old. His eyesight hadn't failed him, maybe everything else worked. He trekked up that hill and it's a pretty good climb. We have a hill close to our place that's around 3000 feet and I haven't attempted to walk up there. I know it's a pretty good climb.

Years ago, when I was young and spry—forty-ish—I would climb around mountains deer and elk hunting, but I can't do that anymore. We can see in the example of Moses' case; this punishment and correction were major elements in Moses' life at that time.



We don't know how that is all going to turn out. He is going to be in God's Kingdom, we know that. So maybe, somehow, he's going to use that experience..

Why does God use correction? We can see just from a handful of scriptures, that the primary reason He does it is because He loves us. He wants us to look totally to Him and trust Him as we go through this process of living by faith. Another reason God uses correction is to show us that we have a part to play in that. You know where I'm going—verse 31 and 32—Passover time. Paul is making it very plain about the value of correction and especially about correcting ourselves, examining ourselves—however you may want to put that.

**1 Corinthians 11:31** *For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32) But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.* (NKJV)

That's another reason we have correction from God; that we be not condemned with the world. As it points out here, that takes some self-correcting on our part. That is something we need to do—we need to judge and examine ourselves like an impartial judge would. Just like we were sitting before a judge and that takes some honesty on our part. Sometimes, self-correction—I don't know how it works for you—is a response of God's Holy Spirit working in our minds. Have you ever done something you just regretted doing because it was not very good behavior? We just know that what we have done is not pleasing to God.

I have a couple of simple examples. I was standing in line at a pharmacy the other day—I don't remember if I was picking something up for Marie or myself—and there was a big sign painted on the floor to maintain correct distance. There were two people in front of me, one person at the counter and another waiting and I was third in line. This guy came up and was right on my shoulder. He was an elderly guy with a loose-fitting mask and he asked if I could move up some. I said "Signs are on the floor, keep your distance". I didn't need to do it like that. I could have said, "Excuse me sir, I'm just trying to do my part in all of this—wearing a mask and keeping the correct distance". I didn't have to be nasty like that. My conscience really bothered me and I didn't get a chance to apologize to him.

Another little example, we had gone to the Feast in Australia and de-planed in Sydney. That is a grueling flight if you've ever done it—it's a long haul. It's like twelve or fourteen hours just to New Zealand and another three or four hours to Sydney, so I'm dragging. We got our carry-ons and we had to go through customs. There was a custom agent standing there and like an idiot I have my hands full and I'm so tired I'm about ready to drop and I stuck my passport in my mouth. I got up to the custom agent and he looked at me and said, "Don't do that". I said I'm sorry, you're absolutely right I shouldn't have done that. He had gloves on and this is way before Covid. Just dumb things like that, but they bother your conscience.

Speaking of travel, one time we went to the Feast in Fiji. It was late at night as we had been on a late-night flight. The custom agents there—this is late at night—go through your luggage and you're at their mercy. He took my Bible and started reading the notes I had in my Bible. I stood there for thirty to forty minutes. I didn't think he was going to give my Bible back. I've had that Bible for years, please don't take it. I know those were maybe silly examples but thinking about that incident with Moses when God specified how He wanted things done, He means it. He decides how and when to hand out punishment or correction for the things that are not done the way He specifies.

It reminds me of another incident in the Old Testament which Rick skimmed right by last week in his sermon. He used the example of the lesson of Uzzah and the Ark where Uzzah died for touching the Ark. What I'm thinking of is an incident over in 1 Samuel 4 through 6 where God corrects and punishes an entire nation in a very painful way. I have a short excerpt from a commentary that just says this particular incident is a humorous example of God's correction on the Philistines. It goes on to say that this excellent example of Bible humor spanning three chapters [1 Samuel 4-6] involved the Philistines in an event that would cause them a serious pain in the rear. The title of this piece is,

*A Pain in The Rear; Biblical Humor.*

*The Philistines were a pagan war-like people who inhabited the southwestern section of the land God intended His people to possess. [We know that from Joshua.] As Israel's longest and most implacable enemy, they regularly sought any opportunity to harass, oppress and dominate their territorial larger rival, the Israelites. To put it bluntly the Philistines were simply not nice neighbors. One day during the time of Samuel the prophet, the Philistines carried out a bold incursion in Israel's land. They attacked God's people and won a decisive victory.*

We can pick up that account in 1 Samuel 4. I probably read this at least once or twice before I ever picked up any of the real lesson from this incident. It is kind of humorous. I'll use the Young's Literal Translation. I like this one because, instead of LORD, it says Yehovah.

**1 Samuel 4:1** *And the word of Samuel is to all Israel, and Israel goeth out to meet the Philistines for battle, and they encamp by Eben-Ezer, and the Philistines have encamped in Aphek,  
2) and the Philistines set themselves in array to meet Israel, and the battle spreadeth itself [they spread out facing each other like they did at that time], and Israel is smitten before the Philistines, and they smite among the ranks in the field about four thousand men. [They killed 4000 Israelites]  
3) And the people cometh in unto the camp, and the elders of Israel say, 'Why hath Jehovah smitten us to-day before the Philistines? we take unto us from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and it cometh into our midst, and He doth save us out of the hand of our enemies.'* (YLT)

You have to read between the lines here to see a comedy of errors that the elders did at this point in Israel's history. First off, you don't see any evidence conferring with Ely—the prophet at the time—or with God; they wouldn't take it to God. We have examples of where God fought the Israelites' battles, sometimes with overwhelming odds. Yet the Israelites would win anyway—God would take care of it. You don't see any evidence of that. They decided to take it upon themselves to fight the Philistines. Kind of a bad decision to leave God out of this or any case of importance. A lesson there for us too.

The second thing they did was treated the Ark as an object—it was an 'it'. 'It' will save us. They treated it like a symbol or paraphernalia; Yehovah doesn't live in a box, even though some people think that today. There's a lesson there too—people have their image of God that they hang on to from time to time.

*4) And the people sendeth to Shiloh, and they take up thence the ark of the covenant of Jehovah of Hosts, inhabiting the cherubs, and there [are] two sons of Eli, with the ark of the covenant of God, Hophni and Phinehas. [Two Priests at that time and we know they shouldn't have been Priests.]*

*5) And it cometh to pass, at the coming in of the ark of the covenant of Jehovah unto the camp, that all Israel shout -- a great shout -- and the earth is moved.*

*6) And the Philistines hear the noise of the shouting, and say, 'What [is] the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?' and they perceive that the ark of Jehovah hath come in unto the camp.*

*7) And the Philistines are afraid, for they said, 'God hath come in unto the camp;' and they say, 'Woe to us, for there hath not been like this heretofore. (YLT)*

In other words, they knew something about their neighbors—they knew something about the Israelites and that God had intervened for them before.

*8) Woe to us, who doth deliver us out of the hand of these honorable gods? these [are] the gods who are smiting the Egyptians with every plague in the wilderness. (YLT)*

They didn't really recognize that it was Yehovah. The term 'gods' there—they were just pagan idol worshippers. They naturally thought that other nations were the same way. They saw the Ark as an idol, they didn't see anything more as the story goes on to show.

*9) Strengthen yourselves, and become men, [buck up] O Philistines, lest ye do service to Hebrews, as they have done to you -- then ye have become men, and have fought.'*

*10) And the Philistines fight, and Israel is smitten, and they flee each to his tents, and the blow is very great, and there fall of Israel thirty thousand footmen;*

*11) and the ark of God hath been taken, and the two sons of Eli have died, Hophni and Phinehas. (YLT)*

We know that these were not nice men; they should never have been in the office of priest in the first place. Eli was warned about that a couple of times but he ignored it. He favored his sons instead of listening to what God said.

*12) And a man of Benjamin runneth out of the ranks, and cometh into Shiloh, on that day, and his long robes [are] rent, and earth on his head; (YLT)*

This guy came off the battle line—he was in pretty bad shape. He was beaten up.

*13) and he cometh in, and lo, Eli is sitting on the throne by the side of the way, watching, for his heart hath been trembling for the ark of God, [he knew none of this was right] and the man hath come in to declare [it] in the city, and all the city crieth out. (YLT)*

Things were not good when they saw this guy staggering down the street. They knew the army was in trouble on the battlefield.

*14) And Eli heareth the noise of the cry, and saith, 'What -- the noise of this tumult!' And the man hasted, and cometh in, and declareth to Eli.*

*15) And Eli is a son of ninety and eight years, and his eyes have stood, and he hath not been able to see.*

*16) And the man saith unto Eli, 'I [am] he who hath come out of the ranks, and I out of the ranks have fled to-day;' and he saith, 'What hath been the matter, my son?'*

*17) And he who is bearing tidings answereth and saith, 'Israel hath fled before the Philistines, and also a great slaughter hath been among the people, and also thy two sons have died -- Hophni and Phinehas -- and the ark of God hath been captured.'*

*18) And it cometh to pass, at his mentioning the ark of God, that he falleth from off the throne backward, by the side of the gate, and his neck is broken, and he dieth, for the man [is] old and heavy, and he hath judged Israel forty years. (YLT)*

This is the same Eli who Hannah had poured out her heart to. But he made a series of mistakes that cost many lives. First with his two sons then it's obvious he should have intervened when Israel was planning this battle with the Philistines but he didn't. They were just making bad decisions and he just failed everywhere in that. In a sense, that was a correction from God.

Going over to 1 Samuel 5, I'm still using the Literal Translation.

**1 Samuel 5:1** *And the Philistines have taken the ark of God, and bring it in from Eben-Ezer to Ashdod, [That's probably the capital city at that time]*

*2) and the Philistines take the ark of God and bring it into the house of Dagon, and set it near Dagon. (YLT)*

An idolatrous temple; they considered the Ark as a trophy. They didn't realize they were in serious trouble.

*3) And the Ashdodites rise early on the morrow, and lo, Dagon is fallen on its face to the earth, before the ark of Jehovah; and they take Dagon, and put it back to its place. (YLT)*

Verse 4, the next morning they went and checked again and this time Dagon had lost his head and his hands—he was sitting there and only the flat part was left of him. The flat part would be the bottom, what we would say the rear end, was left of him. They thought the Ark was just an object.

Another representation that they were very superstition, pagan people. They had no idea they were disrespecting and dishonoring Yehovah. They were about to find out in a pretty painful way.

*5) therefore, the priests of Dagon, and all those coming into the house of Dagon, tread not on the threshold of Dagon, in Ashdod, till this day. (YLT)*

Pagan superstition.

*6) And the hand of Jehovah is heavy on the Ashdodites, and He maketh them desolate, and smiteth them with emerods, Ashdod and its borders. (YLT)*

Ashdod and its borders; there were actually five towns/cities in the Philistine territory at that time. As the context goes on to show, all the rulers of these different towns were stricken with this plague of hemorrhoids. I don't know if bible commentators like the idea of hemorrhoids or not, because they will say all kinds of things. They say there was a plague of rodents they call mice, but they were probably rats. They say these brought the bubonic plague to the Philistines and all of this was because of that plague. They try to say because of the plague they had dysentery, which affected—you know. The BDB dictionary makes it pretty clear. It said they define the word as used in two ways; the first definition is "a mound or a hill—like a tumor". The mound would be a tumor on the landscape. I assume that's what they are getting at. It's interesting that hemorrhoids are called piles. Their second definition that the BDB says is "tumor or hemorrhoid". You can google what hemorrhoids are if you want to, but I wouldn't recommend it. The experts tell us that it happens to about three out of four of adults. There are all kinds of reasons for it. It's something quite painful in a very sensitive area.

*7) And the men of Ashdod see that [it is] so, and have said, 'The ark of the God of Israel doth not abide with us, for hard hath been His hand upon us, and upon Dagon our god.' (YLT)*

The correction is really coming down hard—it's pretty painful. They thought that God was hard on their god Dagon, their idol. It never felt a thing of course. You could say the

correction that God administered on these Philistines was a pretty sound spanking to say the least.

*8) And they send and gather all the princes of the Philistines unto them, and say, 'What do we do to the ark of the God of Israel?' and they say, 'To Gath let the ark of the God of Israel be brought round;' and they bring round the ark of the God of Israel;*

*9) and it cometh to pass after they have brought it round, that the hand of Jehovah is against the city -- a very great destruction; and He smiteth the men of the city, from small even unto great; and break forth on them do emerods. (YLT)*

What they were doing was, they thought they could get rid of the Ark by passing it to one of the five cities. They thought they could get rid of the problem by passing the Ark off to the next city. Every time these rulers would suffer with an outbreak of hemorrhoids—we think we have a problem with Covid.

*10) And they send the ark of God to Ekron, and it cometh to pass, at the coming in of the ark of God to Ekron, that the Ekronites cry out, saying, 'They have brought round unto us the ark of the God of Israel, to put us to death -- and our people.' (YLT)*

Actually, they would have probably killed for some Preparation H. (*An American brand of medication used in the treatment of hemorrhoids.*)

*11) And they send and gather all the princes of the Philistines, and say, 'Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and it turneth back to its place, [they finally got it sent back to the Israelites where it belonged] and it doth not put us to death -- and our people;' for there hath been a deadly destruction throughout all the city, very heavy hath the hand of God been there ... (YLT)*

You have to wonder what an undignified yowling that would have been from an entire nation of people, from city to city. Chapter 6.

*1 Samuel 6:1 And the ark of Jehovah is in the field of the Philistines seven months, [seven months they suffered]*

*2) and the Philistines call for priests and for diviners, saying, 'What do we do to the ark of Jehovah? let us know wherewith we send it to its place?' (YLT)*

How are we going to do it? They were worried that whatever they did would make the situation worse.

*3) And they say, 'If ye are sending away the ark of the God of Israel, ye do not send it away empty; for ye do certainly send back to Him a guilt-offering; then ye are healed, and it hath been known to you why His hand doth not turn aside from you.'*

*4) And they say, 'What [is] the guilt-offering which we send back to Him?' and they say, 'The number of the princes of the Philistines -- five golden emerods, and five golden mice -- for one plague [is] to you all, and to your princes ... (YLT)*

You have to think about that—if we could send a plague like that on rulers today. It goes on in verse 5 and 6 and talks about making images—they had to make some golden images. They thought very superstitiously that this was going to placate God. It's going to take everything away. They even built a new cart. They used a couple of cows that had suckling calves. Little bit of humor there too, as these cows went along it will show later on, the cows were lowing. These were nursing cows. The Philistines took that as a sign that God was accepting their offering. Let's drop down to verse 12.

*12) And the kine go straight in the way, on the way to Beth-Shemesh, in one highway they have gone, going and lowing, and have not turned aside right or left; and the princes of the Philistines are going after them unto the border of Beth-Shemesh. (YLT)*

Again, they thought bringing these cows was a sign that God was accepting what they were doing.

*14) And the cart hath come in unto the field of Joshua the Beth-Shemeshite, and standeth there, and there [is] a great stone, and they cleave the wood of the cart, and the kine they have caused to ascend -- a burnt-offering to Jehovah. (YLT)*

They burnt the cart and the cows. That's how the Israelites handled it. Even there they were making mistakes.

*15) And the Levites have taken down the ark of Jehovah, and the coffer which [is] with it, in which [are] the vessels of gold, and place [them] on the great stone; and the men of Beth-Shemesh have caused to ascend burnt-offerings and sacrifice sacrifices in that day to Jehovah;*

*16) -and the five princes of the Philistines have seen [it], and turn back [to] Ekron, on that day.*

*17) And these [are] the golden emerods which the Philistines have sent back -- a guilt-offering to Jehovah: for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one; (YLT)*

Those five cities. And the golden mice—on and on—verse 19.

*19) And He smiteth among the men of Beth-Shemesh, for they looked into the ark of Jehovah, yea, He smiteth among the people seventy men -- fifty chief men; and the people mourn, because Jehovah smote among the people -- a great smiting. (YLT)*

Remember, as Rick pointed out last week in his sermon, in the incident with the Ark and Uzzah, God established rules about the way the Ark should be handled, very specific rules. Not to be touched or looked in except by the appointed Priest.

*21) And they send messengers unto the inhabitants of Kirjath-Jearim, saying, 'The Philistines have sent back the ark of Jehovah; come down, take it up unto you.'* (YLT)

So, what's the point here? God uses correction in this whole story. Sometimes in the form of judgment and punishment, as in this account, and individually as the case may be. The huge lesson is, whenever Yehovah specifies something should be done in a certain way, in a certain order, that is precisely what He means and wants done. Whether it's in the Old or New Testament. God specified it. Sometimes men think they can mess with that. You see people in different religions making their own version of the Ten Commandments. They make their own version of how things should be conducted. How God should be worshipped—they make those things up. Men think they can mess with that and it's a very dangerous thing to do. Rick used Proverbs 16:25 last week and I would like to just go over that once again.

*Proverbs 16:25 There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.* (NKJV)

Men in their arrogance, think they have a better and improved way of doing things. That's what we see in this story--the end of this caused a lot of deaths. They weren't doing things the way God instructed them to do it.

God is the only judge of what is right and He will correct it one way or another at some point. At the same time, He is always just and always right in the way and method that He administers correction or punishment.

One final scripture in this context, especially on an individual level, this says it in a nutshell and that is Philippians 1.

*Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:* (NKJV)

Paul points out that God makes no distinction among us; we are all in this together, no matter who we are or what status we think we have.

*2) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
3) I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,  
4) always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,  
5) for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,  
6) being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work [it's God working in our lives and it takes a lot of correction for most of us] in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;* (NKJV)



The whole point is, God uses correction but it's always for our good in the end. So, let's be thankful we have a loving Father with whom we can have a personal relationship and Who gives us the correction we all need, when we need it and that's how it should be in our lives until Christ returns; until it's all over or all over for us.