

A large, moss-covered standing stone stands prominently in a grassy field. The stone is tall and narrow, with a rough, textured surface covered in green moss. It is set against a backdrop of rolling green hills under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The foreground is a mix of green and yellow grass.

# THE EBENEZER

1 Samuel 4 to 7

1 Samuel 1 to 3 tells how a young boy named Samuel came to live with the prophet Eli at the temple in Shiloh, and how Samuel learned to recognize the voice of God.



Israel was in a state of decline.

**1 Samuel 3:1b**

<sup>1</sup> ...And the word of the LORD was precious in those days;  
*there was no open vision.*



These chapters conclude with Samuel's emergence as a prophet of the LORD.

### 1 Samuel 3:19-21

- <sup>19</sup> And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.
- <sup>20</sup> And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel *was* established to be a prophet of the LORD.
- <sup>21</sup> And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.



Chapter Four begins the chronicle of Samuel's ministry as a judge in Israel.

### **1 Samuel 4:1a**

<sup>1</sup> And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.



Israel's strength as a nation hinged upon her relationship with God. Years of neglect had caused it to greatly atrophy.

### 1 Samuel 4:1b-2

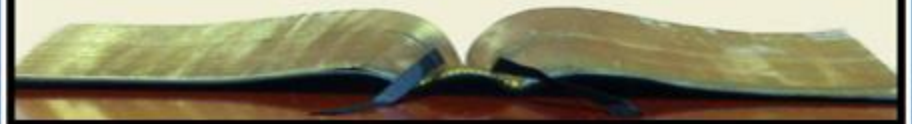
- <sup>1</sup> ... Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.
- <sup>2</sup> And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, **Israel was smitten before the Philistines:** and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.





## 1 Samuel 4:1b-2

- 1 ... Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside **Ebenezer**: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.
- 2 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.





## 1 Samuel 4:1b-2

- 1 ... Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in **Aphek**.
- 2 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.





Their faith in God was so degraded that to them the ark of God was nothing more than a magical charm.



### 1 Samuel 4:3

<sup>3</sup> And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said,  
Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines?  
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.



This was not much different from hiding behind a cross.



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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.





## 1 Samuel 4:4-5

- 4 So the people sent to **Shiloh**, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth *between* the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.
- 5 And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.



The Philistines turned their fear of the ark into a rallying point.

### 1 Samuel 4:6-9

- <sup>6</sup> And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, 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.
- <sup>7</sup> And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.
- <sup>8</sup> 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.
- <sup>9</sup> 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.

The Israelites were thoroughly defeated, and the ark was captured.

### **1 Samuel 4:10-11**

- <sup>10</sup> And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.
- <sup>11</sup> And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

A messenger brought news of the defeat to Eli in Shiloh.

### 1 Samuel 4:12-14

- <sup>12</sup> And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.
- <sup>13</sup> And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.
- <sup>14</sup> And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.

The news was  
devastating to hear.

### 1 Samuel 4:15-17

- <sup>15</sup> Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.
- <sup>16</sup> And the man said unto Eli, I *am* he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army.  
And he said, What is there done, my son?
- <sup>17</sup> And the messenger answered and said, 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, and the ark of God is taken.



## 1 Samuel 4:18

<sup>18</sup> And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.





About this time, Eli's daughter-in-law was giving birth.

### 1 Samuel 4:19-22

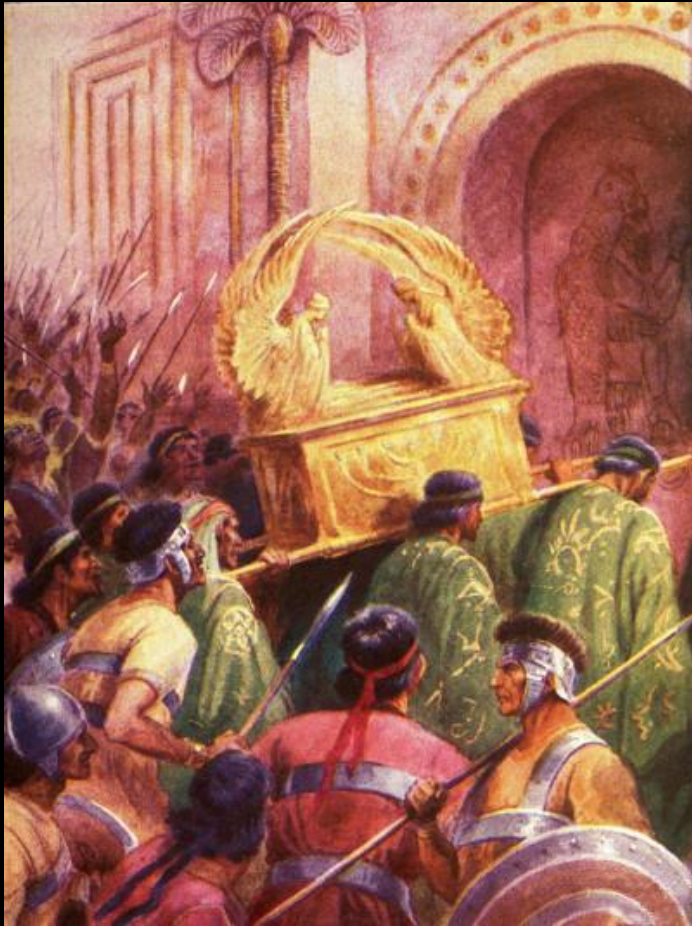
- <sup>19</sup> And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *near* to be delivered:  
and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.
- <sup>20</sup> And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard *it*.
- <sup>21</sup> And she named the child Ichabod, saying,  
The glory is departed from Israel:  
because the ark of God was taken,  
and because of her father in law and her husband.
- <sup>22</sup> And she said, The glory is departed from Israel:  
for the ark of God is taken.



## 1 Samuel 5:1

<sup>1</sup> And the Philistines took the ark of God,  
and brought it from Ebenezer unto  
**Ashdod.**





## 1 Samuel 5:2

- 2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.





## 1 Samuel 5:2

<sup>2</sup> When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

Dagon was the chief deity of the Philistines. According to their mythology, Dagon was the father of Baal. He was the fish god, and he was represented as a half-man, half-fish creature. From [gotquestions.com](http://gotquestions.com)





### 1 Samuel 5:3

- <sup>3</sup> And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.



### 1 Samuel 5:4-5

- 4 And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only *the stump of Dagon* was left to him.
- 5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.

But the punishment of the Philistines had only begun.

### **1 Samuel 5:6**

<sup>6</sup> But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof.

But the punishment of the Philistines had only begun.

### 1 Samuel 5:6

<sup>6</sup> But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with **emerods**, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof.

tumors, hemorrhoids





## 1 Samuel 5:7-9

- 7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that *it was* so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.
- 8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto **Gath**. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about *thither*.



The giant Goliath was from Gath.

## 1 Samuel 5:7-9

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## 1 Samuel 5:9

9 And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.





## 1 Samuel 5:10

<sup>10</sup> Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron.

And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.





## 1 Samuel 5:11-12

- <sup>11</sup> So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.
- <sup>12</sup> And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

After suffering for seven months, the Philistines decided to return the ark to the Israelites.

### 1 Samuel 6:1-3

- 1 And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines **seven months**.
- 2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.
- 3 And they said,  
If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel,  
send it not empty;  
but in any wise return him a trespass offering:  
then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you  
why his hand is not removed from you.

Over 400 years had passed since the Exodus, but the Philistines still remembered what God had done to the Egyptians.

### 1 Samuel 6:4-6

- 4 Then said they, What *shall be* the trespass offering which we shall return to him?  
They answered,  
Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague *was* on you all, and on your lords.
- 5 Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.
- 6 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

They devised a test to test the source of these calamities:

### 1 Samuel 6:7-9

- <sup>7</sup> Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:
- <sup>8</sup> And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.
- <sup>9</sup> And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, *then* he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that *it is* not his hand *that* smote us: *it was* a chance *that* happened to us.





### **1 Samuel 6:10-11**

- <sup>10</sup> And the men did so;  
and took two milch kine,  
and tied them to the cart,  
and shut up their calves at home:
- <sup>11</sup> And they laid the ark of the LORD  
upon the cart, and the coffer with  
the mice of gold and the images of  
their emerods.





## 1 Samuel 6:12

<sup>12</sup> And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh.



## 1 Samuel 6:13-14

<sup>13</sup> And *they of* Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley:

and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.

<sup>14</sup> And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, and stood there, where *there was* a great stone:

and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD.





### 1 Samuel 6:15-16

- <sup>15</sup> And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great stone:  
and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD.
- <sup>16</sup> And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day.



## 1 Samuel 6:17-18

- <sup>17</sup> And these *are* the golden emerods which the Philistines returned *for* a trespass offering unto the LORD;  
for Ashdod one,  
for Gaza one,  
for Askelon one,  
for Gath one,  
for Ekron one;
- <sup>18</sup> And the golden mice, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging to* the five lords, *both* of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great *stone of* Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: *which stone remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite.

Sadly, the men of Bethshemesh treated the ark like a curiosity and paid a heavy price for their irreverence.

### 1 Samuel 6:19-21

- <sup>19</sup> And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, **because they had looked into the ark of the LORD,** even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten *many* of the people with a great slaughter.
- <sup>20</sup> And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?
- <sup>21</sup> And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, *and* fetch it up to you.



## 1 Samuel 7:1

<sup>1</sup> And the men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.





## 1 Samuel 7:2

<sup>2</sup> And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was **twenty years:** and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.







20 years later David brought it to Jerusalem.

## 2 Chronicles 1:4

4 But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjathjearim to *the place* which David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.





## 2 Samuel 6:3-5

- 3 And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.
- 4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which *was* at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark.
- 5 And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of *instruments made of fir wood*, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.



Back to our story ...

### 1 Samuel 7:3

<sup>3</sup> And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the strange gods and Ashtaroath from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.





## 1 Samuel 7:4-6

- 4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.
- 5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.
- 6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.



## 1 Samuel 7:7-8

- 7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.
- 8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.



## 1 Samuel 7:9

<sup>9</sup> And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD:  
and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel;  
and the LORD heard him.

## 1 Samuel 7:10-11

- <sup>10</sup> And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.
- <sup>11</sup> And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar.



A large, moss-covered standing stone stands prominently in a grassy field. The stone is tall and narrow, with a rough, textured surface covered in green moss. It is set on a base of smaller rocks. The background features rolling green hills under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

## 1 Samuel 7:12

<sup>12</sup> Then Samuel took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.





### **1 Samuel 7:13-14**

- <sup>13</sup> So the Philistines were subdued,  
and they came no more into the coast of Israel:  
and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines  
all the days of Samuel.
- <sup>14</sup> And the cities which the Philistines had taken from  
Israel were restored to Israel,  
from Ekron even unto Gath;  
and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the  
hands of the Philistines.  
And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.



## 1 Samuel 7:15-16

- <sup>15</sup> And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.
- <sup>16</sup> And he went from year to year in circuit to **Bethel**, and **Gilgal**, and **Mizpeh**, and judged Israel in all those places.





## 1 Samuel 7:17

<sup>17</sup> And his return was to **Ramah**;  
for there was his house;  
and there he judged Israel;  
and there he built an altar unto the  
LORD.



A large, moss-covered standing stone in a grassy field under a cloudy sky. The stone is tall and narrow, with a rough, textured surface. It stands in a field of green grass, with rolling hills in the background under a blue sky with white clouds.

## Psalm 78:40-42

- 40 How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness,  
*and* grieve him in the desert!
- 41 Yea, they turned back and tempted God,  
and limited the Holy One of Israel.
- 42 They remembered not his hand, *nor* the day  
when he delivered them from the enemy.

Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

A large, moss-covered standing stone stands prominently in a grassy field. The stone is tall and narrow, with a rough, textured surface covered in green moss. It is set against a backdrop of rolling green hills under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The foreground is a mix of green and yellow grass.

**Psalms 103:2**

<sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits:

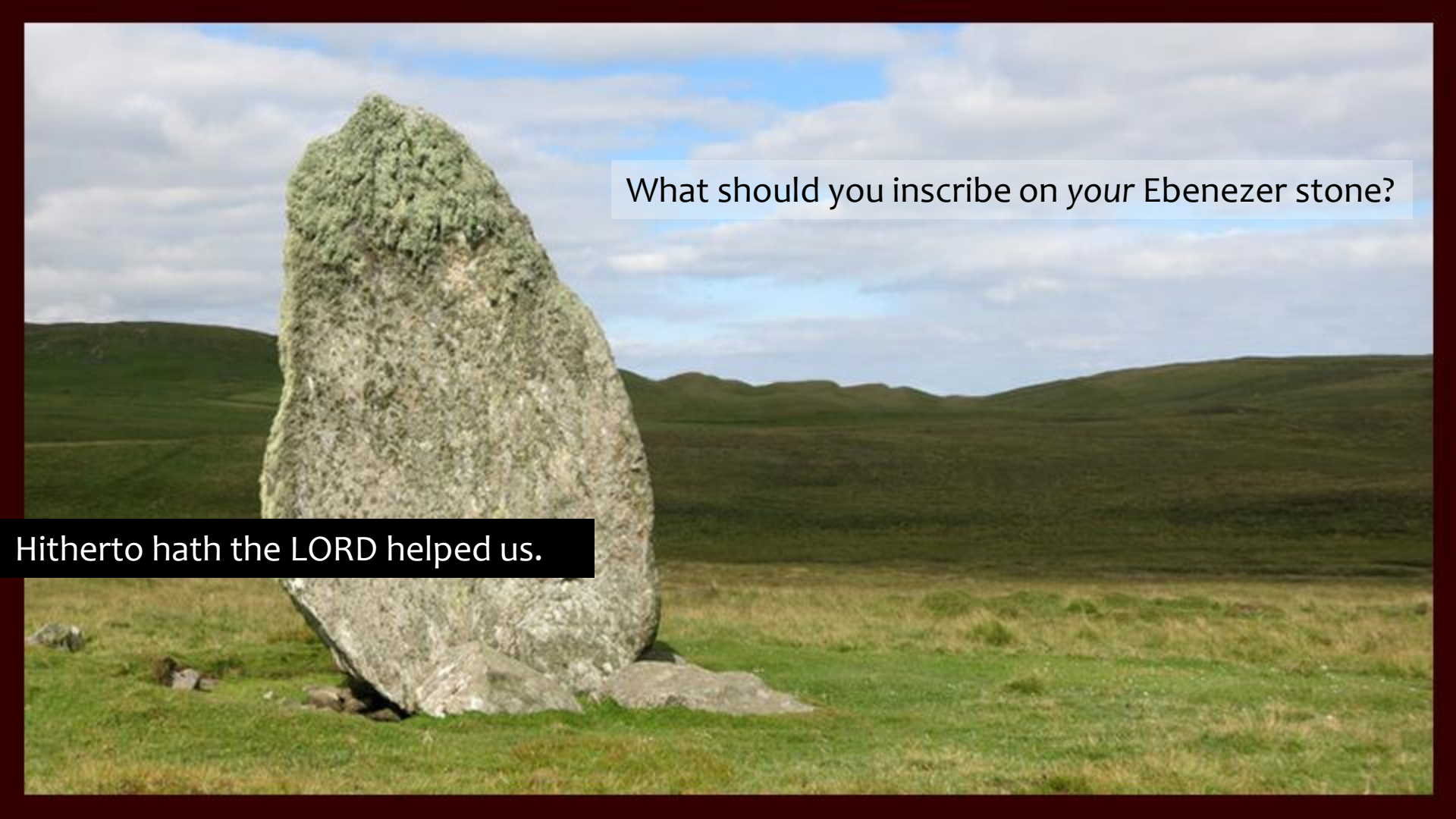
Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

A large, moss-covered standing stone (menhir) stands prominently in a grassy field. The stone is tall and narrow, with a rough, textured surface covered in green moss. It is set against a backdrop of rolling green hills under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The foreground is a mix of green and yellow grass.

## 2 Corinthians 1:10

<sup>10</sup> Who delivered us from so great a death,  
and doth deliver:  
in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

A large, weathered, moss-covered standing stone stands prominently in a grassy field. The stone is tall and narrow, with a rough, textured surface. The background features rolling green hills under a sky filled with soft, white clouds. The overall scene is serene and natural.

What should you inscribe on your Ebenezer stone?

Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.



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