

## **Exegetical Notes – 1 Samuel 4:12-22**

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### **1 Samuel 4:12-22**

#### **Verses 12-17**

***<sup>12</sup> That same day a Benjamite ran from the battle line and went to Shiloh with his clothes torn and dust on his head. <sup>13</sup> When he arrived, there was Eli sitting on his chair by the side of the road, watching, because his heart feared for the ark of God. When the man entered the town and told what had happened, the whole town sent up a cry.***

***<sup>14</sup> Eli heard the outcry and asked, "What is the meaning of this uproar?" The man hurried over to Eli, <sup>15</sup> who was ninety-eight years old and whose eyes had failed so that he could not see. <sup>16</sup> He told Eli, "I have just come from the battle line; I fled from it this very day."***

***Eli asked, "What happened, my son?"***

***<sup>17</sup> The man who brought the news replied, "Israel fled before the Philistines, and the army has suffered heavy losses. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured."***

- On the day of battle (see 4:1b-11), Israel had taken the Ark of the Covenant with them. They had been defeated in battle and the Philistines took possession of the Ark.
- A man from the tribe of Benjamin, dressed in mourning, ran to Shiloh to tell them what had happened.
- Eli, Israel's high priest, was sitting at the gate of the camp awaiting news from the battle. Eli was 98 years old and blind. He could not see the Benjamite, but when he heard the shout of the people, he knew something was happening. He demanded to know what was going on.
- The messenger gave Eli the news that the battle was lost, that Israel had suffered great casualties, that the ark was lost to the Philistines, and that Eli's sons had both been killed.

### **Verse 18**

**<sup>18</sup> When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man, and he was heavy. He had led Israel forty years.**

- When Eli heard the news about the Ark, he fell over backwards and broke his neck. He died on the same day as his sons.

### **Verses 19-20**

**<sup>19</sup> His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and near the time of delivery. When she heard the news that the ark of God had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labor and gave birth, but was overcome by her labor pains. <sup>20</sup> As she was dying, the women attending her said, “Don’t despair; you have given birth to a son.” But she did not respond or pay any attention.**

- That day, the wife of Phinehas, Eli’s son, gave birth to a son. This child would have stood in succession to become Israel’s high priest. As the woman lay dying from childbirth, those attending her told her not to despair for she had given birth to a son. But she took no joy from that news.

### **Verses 21-22**

**<sup>21</sup> She named the boy Ichabod, saying, “The Glory has departed from Israel”—because of the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. <sup>22</sup> She said, “The Glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.”**

- In her dying moments, she named the child Ichabod. Ichabod means no glory. Ichabod’s mother named him so because of the events of that day. The loss of the Ark and the deaths of her husband and father-in-law meant that God’s favor had left Israel. God had lifted His hand of blessing and protection because Israel had ceased to follow Him and to obey His word.

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