

1 Samuel 4:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Eli sits 'by the wayside watching,' heart trembling for the Ark. Despite his failures, Eli's concern for the Ark shows genuine devotion to God's honor. The narrator emphasizes this: 'his heart trembled for the ark of God.' When the messenger arrives and the city cries out, Eli hears but cannot see - his physical blindness now fully symbolic. The aged priest awaits news that will confirm both his worst fears and God's certain judgment.

Historical Context

Eli's position 'by the wayside' suggests he stationed himself where he could intercept news from the battle. His trembling heart indicates awareness that the Ark's removal from Shiloh violated proper procedure and risked divine displeasure.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does Eli's concern for the Ark reveal about his heart despite his failures?
2. How does physical blindness symbolize spiritual condition in this narrative?

Interlinear Text

בָּ א	וְהִנֵּה	עַל־יְשֻׁב	הַכִּסֵּא	אֵל	דָּ		
And when he came		lo Eli	sat	upon a seat			
H935	H2009	H5941	H5921	H3678	H5221		
בְּ דֶרֶךְ	מִצֵּפֶה	כִּי	הָיָה	לְבָבוֹ	תָּרַד	עַל	אֵרֶן
by the wayside	watching		for his heart	trembled			for the ark
H1870	H6822	H3588	H1961	H3820	H2730	H5921	H727
הָאֱלֹהִים	וַהֲאִישׁ	בָּ א	וַיֹּדֵעַ	לְהִגִּיד	בְּעִיר:		
of God	And when the man	And when he came	and told	into the city			
H430	H376	H935	H5046	H5892			
וַיִּצְעַק	כָּל	בְּעִיר:					
cried out		into the city					
H2199	H3605	H5892					

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 1:9 (Parallel theme): So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.

1 Samuel 4:18 (References God): 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.