

1 Samuel 4:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

Analysis

Eli's age (ninety-eight) and blindness are restated, emphasizing his frailty. He cannot see the messenger or read faces; he must wait for words. The physical description - aged, blind, unable to see - comprehensively describes Eli's condition. He has served as judge for forty years (verse 18), almost the entire period of Philistine oppression. His life ends as it was lived: in blindness to spiritual realities he should have seen and addressed.

Historical Context

Ninety-eight years represents exceptional longevity, suggesting Eli's life had been blessed despite his failures. The forty-year judgeship corresponds roughly to a generation, a common biblical time marker. His service bridged the period from judges to Samuel's prophetic ministry.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Eli's physical condition mirror his spiritual condition throughout the narrative?
2. What does the length of Eli's judgeship suggest about his overall influence on Israel?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵל אָקָמָה עֵינָיו וְעַל בֵּן-

Now Eli old was ninety and eight years and his eyes were dim H3808

H5941 H1121 H8673 H8083 H8141 H5869 H6965

לֹרְאֹתָה יְכָלֵל

that he could not see

H3201 H7200

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 3:2 (Parallel theme): 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;

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org