

The literary structure of 1 Samuel 4:11-22

Judgment on the high priestly family

A. Ark captured/Eli's family: 11 And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

B. Bad news to Shiloh:

A man from the battle: 12 A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes torn and with dirt on his head.

Eli sitting/the ark: 13 When he arrived, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God.

The city mourns: And when the man came into the city and told the news, all the city cried out.

C. The man and Eli meet:

Eli/hearing: 14 When Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he said, "What is this uproar?"

The man comes to Eli: Then the man hurried and came and told Eli.

Eli/sight: 15 Now Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes were set so that he could not see.

B¹. Bad news to Eli:

A man from battle: 16 And the man said to Eli, "I am he who has come from the battle; I fled from the battle today." And he said, "How did it go, my son?" 17 He who brought the news answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great defeat among the people. Your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured."

The ark/Eli falls over: 18 As soon as he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate,

Eli dies: and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

A¹. Eli's family/ark captured:

19 Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant, about to give birth. And when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed and gave birth, for her pains came upon her. 20 And about the time of her death the women attending her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have borne a son." But she did not answer or pay attention. 21 And she named the child Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel!" because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. 22 And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."