

The Ark Captured

1 Samuel 4

by Don Falkos

copyright 2016 Donald Falkos Storytelling LLC

Israel lost many men in a battle with the Philistines. Israel's leaders said, "Let's bring the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh. We'll carry into battle, and it will save us from our enemies." Some men were sent who brought the Ark to the Israelite camp, accompanied by the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas. The Israelites shouted for joy.

The Philistines were afraid. "How can we face the mighty gods of Israel who destroyed the Egyptians with plagues? We must fight harder than ever or we will become slaves to the Hebrews!"

The Philistines fought tooth and nail. Israel was defeated. Thousands upon thousands were killed, including the two sons of Eli. And the Philistines captured the Ark of God.

At Shiloh, Eli was sitting on his chair by the city gate worrying about the Ark. A man arrived with news, "I have just come from the battlefield. Israel's army has been slaughtered by the Philistines. Both your sons were killed, and the Ark of God has been captured."

When Eli heard about the Ark, he fell backwards off his chair. He was old and fat; when he fell his neck was broken and he died.

Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant, very pregnant. When she heard that the Ark had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labor and died giving birth to a son, but not before she named the boy Ichabod, and said, "Israel's glory is gone, for the Ark of God has been captured."