Beulah Baptist Church ***Rev. Jerry D. Black, Pastor***

Sunday School Lesson, November 8, 2026
Rev. Mark A. Seals, Instructor/Teacher
Mike Moore, Superintendent

Lesson—Leadership Run Amuck[1]
Text: 1 Samuel 4:12-22

I. Aim for Change/Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, we will…

1. Understand the importance of following God and his will.
2. Gain insight of God from reading about his teachings.
3. Work to have a right relationship with God.

Why This Lesson Matters: God realigns our priorities by establishing consequences for our failures so that we may live in right relationship with him.

Key Verse: *"And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken." (1 Samuel 4:22, KJV).*

II. Topical Outline of the Lesson

1. Introduction
2. Mistaking Sacred Symbols For God's Presence(*1 Samuel 4:12-18*)
3. The Cost Of Faithless Leadership(*vv. 19-20*)
4. When God's Glory Is Taken For Granted (*vv. 21-22*)

III. Prominent Character(s) in the Lesson

Eli (the priest): A priest who ministered in the temple of the Lord at Shiloh. Because of his prominent role as a priest and judge (*see 1 Samuel 4:18*), interpreters have traditionally understood him to have been the high priest during his lifetime.

Hophni and Phinehas: The two sons of Eli, who ministered as priests at Shiloh. The narrator identifies them as acting wickedly, in a manner that displeased both God and Eli. These two were not corrected by reproof, and God issued A prophecy that they would die prematurely on the same day, which was fulfilled in 1 Samuel 4:11.

Messenger: a warrior (from the tribe of Benjamin) who survived the battle against the Philistines; He brought a message to Shiloh.

[1] *Outline Content courtesy of the Sunday School Publishing Board Teacher Manual, which should be purchased at www.sspbnbc.com*

Wife of Phinehas: She is introduced in our passage as pregnant and died in childbirth.

Ark: Our passage refers to the ark of God six times (v. 13, 17-19, 21-22). In the rest of the chapter, it is called the ark of God once, and it is also referred to as the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the ark of the covenant of God, and the ark of the Lord. Although it is an object, the Ark is, in a sense, a character. The Philistines believed that the gods were among them because of the ark, and the ark would do work as if it were God in 1 Samuel 5.

IV. Key Terms in the Lesson (KJV)

Battle *Eyes* *Heart* *Messenger* *Torn*

V. Historical/Biblical Background and Lesson Context

The central event in the scripture passage for this lesson occurred when a messenger reported to Eli a battle between the Israelites and the Philistines that culminated in the Philistines taking the ark of the covenant. First Samuel 4 describes a period of moral and spiritual decline. Eli served as priest and judge, but his sons abused their authority and showed contempt for God's offerings.

As the battle raged on between the Israelites and the Philistines, the Israelites suffered defeat at their hands. With this, the elders of Israel decided to carry the ark of the covenant from Shiloh to the battlefield, where it was captured by the Philistines. The ark of the covenant was the most sacred object in Israel because it represented the covenant and the presence of God among the people.

During the battle, Eli's sons, Hophni and Phineas, were killed, and when word reached Eli, he felt ill and died, as did the wife of Phineas, who went into labor and died giving birth to their son.

Food for thought/question for consideration: (What have we learned, Charlie Brown?)

Our lesson teaches us to consider the difference between trusting God and trusting symbols. Israel believed the ark would protect them, yet they did not surrender to God with sincere obedience. This mistake teaches that spiritual strength begins with a heart that follows God's teachings. Without this foundation, even meaningful symbols can lose their power to guide God's people through trials.

Closing Hymn: *Blessed be the tie that binds, our hearts in Christian love;*
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

Sunday School Slogan: *To Sunday School to Sunday School, we all should go; we have classes for all ages, help us to grow.*