

1 Samuel 1:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.

Analysis

The Hebrew phrase translated 'worthy portion' is debated; some render it 'double portion' (as given to the firstborn) while others translate it 'one portion only' (emphasizing her solitary, childless state). Either reading underscores Elkanah's love for Hannah despite her barrenness. The crucial theological statement 'the LORD had shut up her womb' affirms divine sovereignty over fertility. God's closing of Hannah's womb was purposeful preparation for a miraculous opening that would display His glory and provide Israel's needed leader.

Historical Context

In ancient Israel, barrenness was often interpreted as divine disfavor, though Scripture presents a more nuanced view. God sovereignly closed the wombs of Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel before miraculously opening them, establishing a pattern of divine intervention that produces covenant children.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing God's sovereignty over difficult circumstances change your perspective on suffering?
2. What areas of your life might God be 'closing' in preparation for something greater?

Interlinear Text

חַנָּה	יָתַן	מֶנֶח	אֶחָד	אֶפְיָיִם	כִּי	אֶת
But unto Hannah	he gave	portion	a	worthy	H3588	H853
H2584	H5414	H4490	H259	H639		
חַנָּה	אֱהָבָהּ	יְהוָה	סָגַר	כְּחֶמְהָ		
But unto Hannah	for he loved	but the LORD	had shut up	her womb		
H2584	H157	H3068	H5462	H7358		

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 30:2 (Parallel theme): And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?