

1 Samuel 4:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

Analysis

Phinehas's wife, pregnant and near delivery, receives the triple news: Ark captured, father-in-law dead, husband dead. The shock induces labor; her 'pains came upon her.' The phrase 'she bowed herself' suggests collapse, indicating the birth occurs amid crisis rather than normal conditions. This unnamed woman becomes a prophetic voice, naming her son in a way that interprets the disaster theologically. Women in 1 Samuel often function as spiritual discerners (Hannah, this woman, the medium of Endor).

Historical Context

The connection between severe emotional trauma and premature or complicated labor was recognized in ancient cultures. The wife of Phinehas represents the broader community's suffering, experiencing personal, family, and national tragedy simultaneously.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does this woman's experience embody the comprehensive nature of the disaster?
2. What role do women play as spiritual interpreters throughout 1 Samuel?

Interlinear Text

וְכֹלֶת וָ	אָשֶׁת	פִּינְחָס	בְּנֵה	בְּנֵה	וְתַדְעַת לְדִין
And his daughter in law	wife	Phinehas	was with child	herself and travailed	
H3618	H802	H6372	H2030	H3205	
וְתַשְׁמַת עַ	אֲתָה	הַשְׁמֹועַ	אֶל	הַלְקָח	וְאֶלְהָה יִם
and when she heard	H853	the tidings	that	was taken	the ark
H8085	H8052	H413	H3947	H727	of God
וְמִתְ	בְּמִתְ	בְּמִתְ יָ	וְאִישׁ הָ	וְתַכְבֵּעַ	
were dead	and that her father in law	and her husband	she bowed		
H4191	H2524	H376	H3766		
וְתַדְעַת לְדִין	עַל יָ	גַּנְחָבָה	אֶרְחָבָה:		
herself and travailed	H3588	came	H5921	for her pains	
H3205	H2015			H6735	

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org