

1 Samuel 4:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And she named the child I-chabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.

Analysis

The dying woman names her son Ichabod (I-kabod), meaning 'no glory' or 'where is the glory?' Her interpretive statement explains: 'The glory is departed from Israel.' The Hebrew kabod (glory) refers to God's weighty, manifest presence. Her declaration - naming that redefines the disaster - shows remarkable theological insight. She understands that the Ark's capture means more than military defeat or personal loss; it signals the departure of divine presence. Her dying words become prophetic pronouncement.

Historical Context

Names in ancient Israel often commemorated circumstances of birth or carried prophetic significance. Ichabod's name would perpetually remind Israel of this dark day. The naming function belonged typically to mothers, making this woman's action culturally appropriate.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does naming her son 'Ichabod' accomplish theologically?
2. How does this dying woman's theological insight compare to the elders who brought the Ark to battle?

Interlinear Text

וַתִּקְרָא א	לַנַּיִם עַר	אִי	כָבוֹד	לֵאמֹר	גָּלָה	כָּבוֹד
And she named	the child	H0	Ichabod	saying	is departed	The glory
H7121	H5288		H350	H559	H1540	H3519
מִשְׁכַּן ל	וְאֵל	הִלָּקָה	אֲרֹן	הָאֱלֹהִים	וְאֵל	
from Israel	because	was taken	the ark	of God	because	
H3478	H413	H3947	H727	H430	H413	
וְכִי יְה	וְאִשָּׁה:					
and because of her father in law	and her husband					
H2524	H376					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 26:8 (Parallel theme): LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

Psalms 78:61 (Glory): And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.

Jeremiah 2:11 (Glory): Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.

Psalms 78:64 (Word): Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.

Hosea 9:12 (Parallel theme): Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!

1 Samuel 4:11 (References God): And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

Psalms 106:20 (Glory): Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

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