

Deuteronomy 28:57

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

Analysis

And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet—Hebrew šilyātāh (שִׁלְיָתָהּ) specifically means the afterbirth or placenta, suggesting she will eat it immediately after delivery. **And toward her children which she shall bear** clarifies: not just the afterbirth but the newborns themselves. **For she shall eat them for want of all things secretly** (בְּסֵתֶר, bəsēter)—in hiding, ashamed but desperate.

This is perhaps the most disturbing verse in Scripture. The woman who should nurture life becomes death. The Hebrew emphasizes the immediacy—'coming out from between her feet' suggests she eats the child at birth. This happened during the Roman siege according to Josephus. The word 'secretly' shows residual shame: even in total depravity, conscience isn't fully dead, only suppressed in desperate sin.

Historical Context

Josephus records multiple cases of women eating their infants during the AD 70 siege. Lamentations 4:10 similarly records 'compassionate women' cooking their

children during the Babylonian siege. These historical confirmations remove any possibility that Moses was using hyperbole.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this passage reveal the depth to which sin can drag humanity?
2. What does the preservation of shame ('secretly') suggest about the indestructibility of conscience?
3. How does Christ's giving of His body 'for want of all things' reverse this curse of consuming children?

Interlinear Text

וּבְשִׁלִּיתָּהּ	הֵיִצֵּאתָ תֵן	מִבֵּין	בֵּין יְהוָה		
And toward her young one	that cometh out	H996	from between her feet		
H7988	H3318		H7272		
וּבְנֵי יְהוָה	אֲשֶׁר	תֵּלֵד	כִּי תֹאכֵל מִן		
and toward her children	H834	which she shall bear	H3588 for she shall eat		
H1121		H3205	H398		
בְּחָסֶר	כָּל	בְּסִתְרָה	בְּמָצוֹר וּבְמָצוֹק	אֲשֶׁר	
them for want	H3605	of all things secretly	in the siege	and straitness	H834
H2640		H5643	H4692	H4689	
יִצְיָא	לְ	אִיְבֹבְךָ	בְּשַׁעְרֵי־בָבֶל		
shall distress	H0	wherewith thine enemy	thee in thy gates		
H6693		H341	H8179		

