

#### **40). September 28-October 4—Isaiah 40-49**

1) Isa 42:14—**God as a Woman in Childbirth** ~750 BC

“... now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.”

2) Isa 45:10—**Woman Delivered a child** ~750 BC

“Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begetteth thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?”

3) Isa 45:10-11; 46:3-4—**God as a Pregnant Mother** ~750 BC

In a striking maternal image, God declared that He carried Israel “from the womb” (Isa 46:3). Just as a mother bears her child in pregnancy and carries her infant in her arms, God has carried Israel from their very beginning as a nation. This tender language reveals God’s nurturing, protective care for His covenant people. Even into old age and “hoar hairs” (gray hair) He would continue to carry and deliver them (Isa 46:4).

Isaiah rebuked those who questioned God’s purposes, comparing their complaints to a child challenging a father about what he begets or a woman about what she brings forth. The Lord reminded Israel that He is their Creator and Maker, emphasizing His divine authority over His children, and enduring commitment. The passage teaches that God possesses both maternal and paternal attributes. He not only creates and commands but also bears, carries, and nurtures His children with tender compassion (Deu 32:18; Ps 131:2).

4) Isa 47:1, 5—**Daughter of Babylon/Chaldeans** (Fictional) ~750 BC

Isaiah personified Babylon as a proud young woman who would be brought low. He called her “virgin daughter of Babylon” and “daughter of the Chaldeans,” depicting the empire as a pampered princess accustomed to luxury and power (Isa 47:1, 5). Her virginity may also represent that she has no partner or offspring but is spiritually barren. She is described with titles reflecting Babylon’s dominance over the ancient world: “tender and delicate” and known as “the lady of kingdoms” (Isa 47:1, 5).

The prophet commanded this royal daughter to humble herself: “come down, and sit in the dust” (Isa 47:1) with no throne, but she needs to repent. She must “sit silent” in darkness, stripped of her former glory (Isa 47:5). This imagery of a privileged woman reduced to sitting in dust and darkness powerfully conveyed Babylon’s future defeat and exile.

Historically, Babylon conquered Judah in 586 BC and held God’s people captive. Yet Isaiah prophesied that Babylon herself would fall, which happened when Persia conquered her in 539 BC. The passage warns that pride and cruelty lead to downfall, no matter how powerful the nation.

5) Isa 47:5-7—**The Lady of Kingdoms** (Fictional) ~750 BC

Isaiah personified Babylon as a cruel lady who showed no mercy to her captive empire. God had allowed Babylon to punish His people Israel, but Babylon exceeded her commission by treating them brutally (Isa 47:6). She showed no mercy even to “the ancient,” or elderly, and laid a heavy yoke upon them, forcing harsh labor and suffering on the weak.

**Handmaidens, Harems, & Heroines: Find their Messiah in the OT**—Lynne Hilton Wilson, PhD

This lady arrogantly declared, “I shall be a lady for ever,” believing her power would never end. She refused to consider “the latter end,” or her own future judgment and downfall (Isa 47:7). Her pride blinded her to the consequences of her cruelty.

The passage reveals that God uses nations as instruments of His purposes, but He holds them accountable for how they treat people (Jer 50:17-18; Zec 1:15-16). Babylon’s excessive cruelty, especially toward the elderly, brought God’s judgment upon her (Pro 14:31; Mt 25:40).

6) Isa 47:8—**Widow** ~750 BC

“Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.” (*See \*Isa 1:17*)

7) Isa 49:1, 5—**Mother of God’s Servant** ~750 BC

Isaiah’s Servant Song reveals that the Lord calls His Servant “from the womb” (Isa 49:1). God mentioned the Servant’s name before his birth, showing divine foreordination. God “formed” His Servant to gather Israel back to Him (Isa 49:5). This mother would bear a child with a sacred mission appointed before birth. Her role parallels other biblical mothers whose sons fulfilled divine callings—like Samuel’s mother Hannah or John the Baptist’s mother Elisabeth (1 Sam 1:11, 27-28; Lk 1:13-17). The passage points ultimately to Jesus Christ, whom God foreordained in the premortal life to be the Savior (1 Pet 1:19-20; Abr 3:27). His mother Mary bore the child whose name and mission were announced by an angel before conception (Lk 1:30-33). God’s prophecy shows His preparation through faithful mothers to fulfill His plan (Jer 1:5; Alm 13:3). (*See \*Elisabeth, \*Hannah, Mary [1]*)

8) Isa 49:15, 23—**Nursing Mothers Represent God, Kings, and Queens** (Fictional) ~750 BC

Isaiah used the powerful image of a nursing mother to describe God’s love. He asked, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?” (Isa 49:15). The bond between a nursing mother and her baby represents one of the strongest natural attachments. Yet even if a mother could forget her child, God declared, “I will not forget thee” (Isa 49:15). The Book of Mormon adds an extra ending to this verse: “O house of Israel” (1 Ne 21:15).

The maternal image continues as Isaiah prophesied that “kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers” who bow down to Israel (Isa 49:23). This promise meant that powerful rulers would one day care for and serve God’s covenant people, reversing Israel’s captivity and humiliation. The nursing mother imagery reveals God’s tender, nurturing nature (Ps 103:13; Hos 11:3-4). The passage teaches that God’s love surpasses the deepest human bonds.

9) Isa 49:18—**Zion as a Bride** (Fictional) ~750 BC

Isaiah personified Zion as a bride preparing for her wedding. The Lord commanded her to “lift up thine eyes” and see her returning children gathering to her. God promised that Zion would “clothe” herself with her people “as with an ornament, and bind them . . . as a bride doeth.” In ancient Israel, brides adorned themselves with jewelry and ornaments for their wedding day. Isaiah compared Zion’s reunited children to these precious ornaments that a bride carefully arranges on herself. Just as a bride takes joy in her beautiful adornments, Zion would rejoice in her gathered children.

This imagery transforms Zion’s sorrow into celebration. Earlier, Isaiah depicted her as a barren, forsaken woman (Isa 49:14, 21). Now she becomes a radiant bride (Rev 19:7), beautifully adorned with her returning family. The contrast emphasizes God’s power to restore what seemed lost to turn mourning into joy (Ps 30:11; Isa 61:3).

10) Isa 49:22, 56:5—**Daughters** ~750 BC

Isaiah prophesied that daughters would be carried upon shoulders when God gathered His scattered people. The Lord promised to “lift up mine hand to the Gentiles” and “set up [His] standard,” and the nations would respond by bringing “thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders” (Isa 49:22). This imagery shows daughters receiving honored, elevated treatment as they are carried high on shoulders rather than simply held.

Later, God made a remarkable promise about spiritual inheritance. He declared He would give those who keep His covenant “a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters” and “an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off” (Isa 56:5). In ancient Israel, sons and daughters ensured a family’s name continued through generations. Yet God promised something even greater than mortal descendants; He promised an eternal inheritance in His house. These passages affirm daughters’ value in God’s kingdom.