

41). October 5-11—Isaiah 50-57

1) Isa 50:1—**Divorced Mother** (Fictional) ~750 BC

Isaiah personified Jerusalem or Zion as a divorced mother whose children were sold into slavery. The Lord challenged His people with rhetorical questions: “Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement?” and “which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?” Under Mosaic law, a man divorcing his wife had to give her a written bill of divorcement (Deu 24:1). The Lord declared He had issued no such document.

God clarified that separation from Him results from human choices: “for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.” The people sold themselves into captivity through sin, not because God abandoned them or owed debts to enemies. Their mother (representing the covenant community) was sent away because of their rebellion, not because God rejected her permanently.

This imagery emphasizes personal accountability. Israel’s exile came from their own disobedience, not from God’s failure or abandonment (Jer 3:8; Hos 2:2). (*See *Deu 24:1-4*)

2) Isa 52:1-2—**Daughter of Zion** (Fictional) ~750 BC

Isaiah depicts Zion as a woman preparing herself for restoration and glory. He commanded personified Zion to “awake” and “put on thy strength” and “beautiful garments” (Isa 52:1). The beautiful garments are repeated four times in restored scripture (2 Ne 8:24; 3 Ne 20:36; Moro 10:31; D&C 82:14); and probably synonymous with “robes of righteousness” (Isa 61:10; D&C 29:12; 109:76).

Jerusalem, called “the holy city,” received a promise that “the uncircumcised and the unclean” would no longer enter her (Isa 52:1). The prophet told Jerusalem to “shake thyself from the dust” and “arise,” addressing her as “captive daughter of Zion” bound with “bands of thy neck” (Isa 52:2). In ancient times, captives were led away with bonds around their necks. Isaiah commanded this captive daughter to loose herself from these chains and rise from the dust of humiliation.

The contrast between dusty captive and beautifully dressed woman emphasizes the dramatic transformation God would bring. A city of Zion moves her inhabitants from bondage to freedom, from defilement to holiness, from sitting in dust to sitting in honor (Ps 113:7-8; Isa 61:3). (*See *Isa 1:8*)

3) Isa 54:1—**Barren Women** ~750 BC

“Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.” (*See *Ex 23:26; *3 Ne 22:1*)

4) Isa 54:6-10—**Wife of Youth Forsaken** (Fictional) ~750 BC (also in Isa 62:4-5; 3 Ne 22:6) ~ 750 BC

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

The forsaken wife represents Israel in this tender prophecy. The Lord called her “a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused” (Isa 54:6). In ancient Israel, a rejected wife—especially one married in her youth—experienced profound shame. Yet the Lord uses the imagery as forsaken her only “for a small moment” but would gather her “with great mercies” (Isa 54:7). He hid His face “for a moment” in wrath but promised “everlasting kindness” and mercy (Isa 54:8). God compared His covenant to His promise after the flood: He would not remain angry with this wife (Isa 54:9).

The Lord’s final promise emphasized permanence: “the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed” (Isa 54:10). Even if the most stable features of earth disappeared, God’s kindness toward this forsaken wife would endure forever (Ps 89:33-34; Jer 31:3). (*See *Isa 1:8*)

5) Isa 54:4—**Widowhood** (Fictional) ~750 BC

The widow represents Israel in this prophecy of restoration. God commanded her, “Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame.” In ancient Israel, widows were among society’s most marginalized without a husband’s protection or provision (Isa 1:17).

The Lord promised this widow would “forget the shame of thy youth” and no longer “remember the reproach of thy widowhood.” Her youth’s shame likely referred to Israel’s early unfaithfulness, while widowhood’s reproach symbolized her departing from God’s covenants. During the exile she felt abandoned and unprotected. Both forms of disgrace would be erased.

This prophecy transforms the widow’s identity from shame to honor. God would remove both her past failures and present suffering from memory, replacing reproach with restoration (Isa 61:7). (*See *Ps 68:5*)

6) Isa 56:5—**Daughters** ~750 BC

“... I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.” (*See *Isa 49:22*)

7) Isa 57:3—**Sorceress** (Fictional) ~750 BC

The sorceress represents spiritual apostasy in Isaiah’s condemnation of idolatry. She includes those who obscured truth and led others into darkness through idolatrous practices. Isaiah called Israel’s unfaithful people “sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore.” The Hebrew word for “sorceress/*anan*” means “something that blocks the way, as in a cloud or a mist of darkness,” figuratively describing apostates who obscure truth.

This sorceress was not a literal witch but a symbolic figure representing Israel’s idolatrous practices. Her “sons” were those who followed her into spiritual darkness. The terms “adulterer” and “whor” also functioned as figurative language for idolatrous worship by selling oneself to false deities instead of remaining faithful to the Lord.

Isaiah used this female imagery to emphasize how deeply Israel had betrayed their covenant relationship with God, portraying idolatry as spiritual adultery and witchcraft (Jer 3:6-10; Ek 16:15-22). (*See *Ex 22:18; *Pro 6:26*).

8) Isa 57:3-13—**Seed of the Adulterer and the Whore** (Fictional) ~750 BC

The adulterer represents unfaithful Jerusalem who had covenanted with God and then left Him in for idolatry. In Isaiah's devastating condemnation he calls Israel "children of transgression, a seed of falsehood" (Isa 57:4). The whole city of Jerusalem has turned to idolatry, or an allegorical prostitute who "set thy bed" on high mountains to offer sacrifice and "discovered thyself to another" than God (Isa 57:7-8). She "enlarged thy bed" and made covenants with false gods, language describing spiritual adultery (Isa 57:8). This prostitute went "to the king with ointment" and increased her perfumes, debasing herself "even unto hell" (Isa 57:9). She pursued idolatry relentlessly, never saying "there is no hope" despite her weariness (Isa 57:10).

The Lord confronted this unfaithful woman: she feared others more than God, forgot Him, and never nurtured His word to heart (Isa 57:11). Her actions would not profit her (Isa 57:12). When she cried for help, her idols would fail as "the wind shall carry them all away" (Isa 57:13). The imagery includes horrific practices like child sacrifice "in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks" and pagan rituals "under every green tree" (Isa 57:5), showing how far Jerusalem had fallen into spiritual prostitution (see also Jer 2:20; Ezk 16:15-34).