

“Lengthen Your Tent-Cords”

Siphrut

Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures

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*“Lengthen Your Tent-Cords”:
The Metaphorical World
of Israel’s Household
in the Book of Isaiah*

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To my husband
for his חסד עולם
and to Eliana and Nathanael,
who have helped me grasp
YHWH's maternal נחם

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All translations of the biblical text throughout this work are mine unless otherwise noted.

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, D. N., editor. <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
AcT	<i>Acta Theologica</i>
AfOB	Archiv für Orientforschung: Beiheft
ANETS	Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
AS	Assyriological Studies
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BCOT	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
BH	Bible in History
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibJudS	Biblical and Judaic Studies
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BK	<i>Bibel und Kirche</i>
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BRev	<i>Bible Review</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	Gelb, Ignace J., et al., editors. <i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . 21 vols. (A–Z). Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956–2011
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CC	Continental Commentaries
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CI	<i>Critical Inquiry</i>
CogLin	<i>Cognitive Linguistics</i>
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
ConJ	<i>Concordia Journal</i>
COS	Hallo, W. W., and K. L. Younger Jr., editors. <i>The Context of Scripture</i> . 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2003
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
CTU	Dietrich, M.; Loretz, O.; and Sanmartín, J., editors. <i>The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places</i> . Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995

<i>CurTM</i>	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
DBATB	Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament und seiner Rezeption in der Alten Kirche, Beiheft
<i>DCH</i>	Clines, D. J. A., editor. <i>Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . 9 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 1993–2014
<i>DD</i>	<i>Dor le Dor</i>
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
<i>DL</i>	<i>Davar Logos</i>
<i>DTIB</i>	Vanhoozer, K. J., editor. <i>Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible</i> . Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005
EA	Knudtzon, J. A., editor. <i>Die El-Amarna Tafeln</i> . 2 vols. Leipzig, 1915. Reissued, Aalen, 1964. Continued in A. F. Rainey, <i>El-Amarna Tablets</i> , 359–379. 2nd rev. ed. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1978
<i>EBib</i>	<i>Etudes Bibliques</i>
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
EIAHG	Eretz-Israel Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies
<i>Enc</i>	<i>Encounter</i>
<i>EuroJTh</i>	<i>European Journal of Theology</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FCB	Feminist Companion to the Bible
FRC	The Family, Religion, and Culture
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FTL	Forum theologiae linguisticae
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
GKC	Kautzsch, E., editor. <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HBS	Herders biblische Studien
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>HS</i>	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IB</i>	Buttrick, G. A., et al., editors. <i>Interpreter's Bible</i> . 12 vols. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1951–57
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
<i>IBHS</i>	Waltke, B. K., and O'Connor, M. <i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> . Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JANESCU</i>	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>

<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>JBS</i>	Jerusalem Biblical Studies
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JPSTC</i>	The JPS Torah Commentary
<i>JSem</i>	<i>Journal for Semitics</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTAK</i>	<i>Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa</i>
<i>KAI</i>	Donner, H., and Röllig, W. <i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> . 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962–64
<i>LAI</i>	Library of Ancient Israel
<i>LCBI</i>	Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation
<i>LCL</i>	Loeb Classical Library
<i>LD</i>	Lectio divina
<i>LHBOTS</i>	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
<i>LUÅ</i>	Lunds universitets årsskrift
<i>NAC</i>	New American Commentary
<i>NCB</i>	New Century Bible
<i>NIB</i>	<i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i>
<i>NICOT</i>	The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	VanGemeren, W. A., editor. <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> . 5 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997
<i>NIVAC</i>	NIV Application Commentary
<i>NSBT</i>	New Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>NTDH</i>	Neukirchener Theologische Dissertationen und Habilitationen
<i>OBO</i>	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
<i>OPKF</i>	Occasional Publications of the S. N. Kramer Fund
<i>OTL</i>	Old Testament Library
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
<i>OtSt</i>	Oudtestamentische Studiën
<i>Poet.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i>
<i>PSac</i>	<i>Philippinana Sacra</i>
<i>PSB</i>	<i>Princeton Seminary Bulletin</i>
<i>QD</i>	Quaestiones disputatae
<i>RA</i>	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	Aristotle, <i>The Art of Rhetoric</i>
<i>RINAP</i>	The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
<i>SAHL</i>	Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant

SBLAIL	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and Its Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLEJIL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
ScEs	<i>Science et esprit</i>
ScrCon	Scripture in Context
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SFSMD	Studia Francisci Scholten memoriae dicata
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SRR	Studies in Rhetoric and Religion
SSN	Studia semitica neerlandica
StBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
StPB	Studia post-biblica
SwJT	<i>Southwestern Journal of Theology</i>
TCT	Textual Criticism and the Translator
TDOT	Botterweck, G. J., and Ringgren, H., editors. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
TJ	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
TL	<i>Theology and Life</i>
Transeu	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
TTJ	<i>Trinity Theological Journal</i>
TynBul	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
UNP	Parker, Simon B., editor. <i>Ugaritic Narrative Poetry</i> . Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World 9. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WestBC	Westminster Bible Companion
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WW	<i>Word and World</i>
ZABR	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Aims of This Study

From beginning to end, the book of Isaiah teems with metaphors, interwoven like threads in an intricate tapestry, forming distinct and beautiful patterns, while occasionally seeming to get tangled up in a chaotic mass of clashing colors. Certain strands appear and disappear only to reappear later, giving off new hues against a different background. Tracing these threads both separately and in relation to one another can give us a better grasp of the complex realities they depict. This monograph examines the five metaphors for Israel and its capital city arising from the realm of household relationships—sons/children, daughter(s), mother, wife, and servant(s)—exploring their development throughout the book of Isaiah as well as the interrelationships between them. These metaphors intertwine to produce a complicated portrait of the relationships involving people, city, and YHWH as each party occupies multiple positions in the household order.

Yet despite the apparent conflicts between them, a few scholars have noted the usefulness of approaching these metaphors together. For example, in connection with his work on Hosea, J. Andrew Dearman asks “if it is not possible to see the different roles of spouse, parent and child . . . as part of a larger root metaphor of the family (or better household) in Israel’s cultural milieu” and suggests that seeing Israel as “YHWH’s house” might provide “the conceptual key to the familial imagery.”¹ Moreover, Leo Perdue acknowledges the centrality of these metaphors in Israelite thought, contending that “the household . . . became the primary lens through which to view the character and activity of God [and] the identity and self-understanding of Israel in its relationship to God.”²

1. J. Andrew Dearman, “YHWH’s House: Gender Roles and Metaphors for Israel in Hosea,” *JNSL* 25 (1999) 106–7; see also idem, “Daughter Zion and Her Place in God’s Household,” *HBT* 31 (2009) 155; as well as Leila Leah Bronner, “Gynomorphic Imagery in Exilic Isaiah (40–66),” *DD* 12 (1983) 82, who contends that “the family is the centre of all [Second Isaiah’s] metaphors, similes and personifications.”

2. Leo G. Perdue, “The Household, Old Testament Theology, and Contemporary Hermeneutics,” in *Families in Ancient Israel* (ed. Leo G. Perdue et al.; FRC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 225; similarly, James A. Sanders, “The Family in the Bible,” *BTB* 32 (2002) 122. J. David Schloen argues that the household played a crucial role in ANE thought more generally, stating that “an interlocking set of metaphors drawn from

Thus, while earlier studies have examined the parent-child relationship between YHWH and Israel; the female personification of Zion in her roles as daughter, wife, and mother; and the servant theme,³ this monograph takes as its point of departure the assumption that these metaphors are part of a root metaphor of the household and therefore that new insights will emerge from studying them together. Kathryn Pfisterer Darr takes a similar approach in *Isaiah's Vision and the Family of God*,⁴ though she does not seek to integrate her discussions of Israel as YHWH's rebellious children and Zion

traditional household relationships—'father,' 'son,' 'brother,' 'master,' 'servant,' 'heir,' etc., each of which could evoke the root metaphor of the 'house of the father' . . . were creatively applied in a wide variety of situations beyond the ordinary household, serving to mediate and motivate social action of many kinds" (*The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* [SAHL 2; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001] 1).

3. Parent-child relationship: See, e.g., Sarah J. Dille, *Mixing Metaphors: God as Mother and Father in Deutero-Isaiah* (JSOTSup 398; London: T&T Clark, 2004); Norbert Clemens Baumgart, "Wenn JHWH Kinder erzieht: Zum Gottesbild im Jesajabuch aus religionsgeschichtlicher und kanonisch-intertextueller Perspektive," in *Das Echo des Propheten Jesaja: Beiträge zu seiner vielfältigen Rezeption* (ed. Norbert Clemens Baumgart and Gerhard Ringhausen; Münster: LIT, 2004) 1–43; Maria Häusl, "Gott als Vater und Mutter und die Sohnschaft des Volkes in der Prophetie: Rezeption mythischer Vorstellungen," in *Mythisches in biblischer Bildsprache: Gestalt und Verwandlung in Prophetie und Psalmen* (ed. Hubert Irsigler; QD 209; Freiburg: Herder, 2004) 258–89; David R. Tasker, *Ancient Near Eastern Literature and the Hebrew Scriptures about the Fatherhood of God* (StBL 69; New York: Peter Lang, 2004); Richard D. Patterson, "Parental Love as a Metaphor for Divine-Human Love," *JETS* 46 (2003) 205–16.

Female personification: E.g., Odil Hannes Steck, "Zion als Gelände und Gestalt: Überlegungen zur Wahrnehmung Jerusalems als Stadt und Frau im Alten Testament," in *Gottesknecht und Zion: Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Deuterojesaja* (FAT 4; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992) 126–45; Christl M. Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion: Gender, Space, and the Sacred in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008); A. van der Woude, "The Comfort of Zion: Personification in Isaiah 40–66," in "Enlarge the Site of Your Tent": *The City as Unifying Theme in Isaiah* (ed. Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen and Annemarieke van der Woude; OtSt 58; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 159–67; Carleen R. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (SemeiaSt 58; Atlanta: SBL, 2007) 159–67; Ulrich Berges, "Personifications and Prophetic Voices of Zion in Isaiah and Beyond," in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character and Anonymous Artist* (ed. Johannes C. de Moor; OtSt 45; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 54–82.

Servant theme: E.g., Antony Tharekadavil, *Servant of Yahweh in Second Isaiah: Isaianic Servant Passages in Their Literary and Historical Context* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007); Ulrich Berges, "The Literary Construction of the Servant in Isaiah 40–55: A Discussion about Individual and Collective Identities," *SJOT* 24 (2010) 28–38; Jürgen Werlitz, "Vom Gottesknecht der Lieder zum Gottesknecht des Buches," *BK* 61 (2006) 208–11; Christopher R. Seitz, "You Are My Servant, You Are the Israel in Whom I Will Be Glorified": The Servant Songs and the Effect of Literary Context in Isaiah," *CTJ* 39 (2004) 117–34; H. G. M. Williamson, *Variations on a Theme: King, Messiah and Servant in the Book of Isaiah* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998) 113–66; Peter Wilcox and David Paton-Williams, "The Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah," *JSOT* 42 (1988) 79–102.

4. Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, *Isaiah's Vision and the Family of God* (LCBI; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994).

as daughter, wife, and mother.⁵ Moreover, since Darr limits her focus to the familial metaphors, she does not give significant attention to the servant image. However, servants were integral members of the household (בֵּית־אֲבִי) in ancient Israelite society,⁶ and the servant metaphor is deeply interconnected with the familial metaphors in Isaiah 40–66.

Since the influential commentary of Bernhard Duhm in 1892,⁷ most studies of the servant in Isaiah have isolated four “Servant Songs”—42:1–4 [or 1–9], 49:1–6 [or 1–13], 50:4–9 [or 4–11], 52:13–53:12—and focused on identifying the anonymous servant figure depicted therein. Over the last few decades, the tide has slowly been changing, and many scholars have argued that these four servant texts must be read in the context of the larger theme of Israel as YHWH’s servant(s) as presented in Isaiah 40–66.⁸ However, studying the servant image as part of the root metaphor of the household provides a new frame of reference for Isaiah’s servant texts, which invites reflection on what the metaphor conveys about the relationship between YHWH and his servant(s) and raises questions about how the book’s portrayal of Israel as YHWH’s servant(s) relates to its depiction of the people as his sons/children. This study ultimately suggests that due to the people’s tendency to rely on YHWH’s parental protection regardless of their own behavior, the latter chapters of Isaiah reimage the people as YHWH’s servants to drive home the point that only those who honor YHWH as master will enjoy the privileges accorded to his children.

In this study, I also build on the work of several scholars who have noted intriguing parallels between Lady Zion and the servant figure in Isaiah 40–66, particularly in chaps. 49–54.⁹ Although some argue that these two

5. Also, given her focus on Israel as *rebellious* children, she incorporates into her study passages that use rebellion terminology but do not explicitly refer to the people as children. Moreover, she does not address the portrayals of the people as YHWH’s בָּנִים in 43:6 and 45:11.

6. See, e.g., Exod 20:10; Daniel I. Block, “Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel,” in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (ed. Ken M. Campbell; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003) 38.

7. Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja: übersetzt und erklärt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892).

8. See n. 3 above.

9. E.g., Leland Edward Wilshire, “The Servant-City: A New Interpretation of the ‘Servant of the Lord’ in the Servant Songs of Deutero-Isaiah,” *JBL* 94 (1975) 356–67; idem, “Jerusalem as the ‘Servant City’ in Isaiah 40–66: Reflections in the Light of Further Study of the Cuneiform Tradition,” in *The Bible in the Light of Cuneiform Literature: Scripture in Context III* (ed. William W. Hallo, Bruce William Jones, and Gerald L. Mattingly; ANETS 8; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1990) 231–55; John F. A. Sawyer, “Daughter of Zion and Servant of the Lord in Isaiah: A Comparison,” *JSOT* 44 (1989) 89–107; Knud Jeppesen, “Mother Zion, Father Servant: A Reading of Isaiah 49–55,” in *Of Prophets’ Visions and the Wisdom of Sages* (ed. Heather A. McKay and David J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 162; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 109–25; Patricia Tull Willey, “The Servant of YHWH and Daughter Zion: Alternating Visions of YHWH’s Community,” in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1995* (SBLSP 34; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 267–303; Marjo C. A. Korpel, “The Female Servant of the LORD

figures should be equated—that is, that the servant is simply one more metaphor used to depict Zion¹⁰—I contend that the two figures have different roles, which are tied to their respective metaphorical portrayals understood against their historical-cultural background. The male servant actively accomplishes Y^{HWH}'s deliverance on behalf of Zion and her children, whereas Zion in her dependent female roles as daughter, wife, and mother is almost entirely a passive recipient of that deliverance, though by the end of Isaiah she takes a more active role in the care of her children (see 66:7–12).

Thus, in this monograph I seek to go beyond current research on these household metaphors by examining the interrelationships between them. Although this synthesizing work has already begun in studies comparing the servant and Lady Zion, little attention has been given to the possible connections between the other household metaphors, for example, between the sons/children image and the daughter or servant images.¹¹

However, this monograph also makes a significant contribution by examining each metaphor separately to see how it is used throughout the book of Isaiah. While most studies of Lady Zion (in Isaiah or the HB as a whole) analyze the female personification of Zion without clearly distinguishing between her roles as daughter, wife, and mother,¹² this study considers the unique contribution each of these female metaphors makes to the book's complex characterization of Zion and then explores the interrelationships between them.¹³ One observation that emerges from this approach is that Isaiah uses the daughter metaphor to portray an unbreakable relationship between Zion and Y^{HWH}, which transcends the rift of exile (see 49:14–15, 52:2, 62:11), while the wife metaphor presents the possibility of a complete relational rupture in its discussion of divorce (50:1, though see the marital reconciliation in 54:4–10).¹⁴

in Isaiah 54," in *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkelen van Dijk-Hemmes* (ed. Bob Becking and Meindert Dijkstra; BIS 18; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 153–67; Sue Ann Fry, "From Suffering to Restoration: The Relationship between the Unnamed Servant and Zion in Isaiah 40–55" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2006).

10. See especially Wilshire, "Servant City," 367.

11. Though not focused on Isaiah, Häußl observes the need for a comparative study of the son and daughter images ("Gott als Vater," 260 n. 19).

12. See, e.g., Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 124–204; Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*; Woude, "Comfort of Zion," 159–67; Sawyer, "Daughter of Zion," 89–107; John J. Schmitt, "The City as Woman in Isaiah 1–39," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; 2 vols.; VTSup 70; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 1:95–119.

13. For a similar approach, see Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 60, though she combines the metaphors at points because her primary organizing scheme is narrational (esp. chap. 6); also Julia M. O'Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor: Theology and Ideology in the Prophets* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008) 143; Dearman, "Daughter Zion," 156.

14. Unless otherwise noted, I am using "Isaiah" to designate the book in its final form rather than the eighth-century prophet.

Moreover, whereas previous studies of the father-son or parent-child relationship between YHWH and Israel have generally emphasized the divine side of the relationship (sometimes treating only those texts that explicitly call YHWH “father”), this monograph focuses primarily on how the metaphor contributes to Isaiah’s characterization of Israel. And in contrast to the many scholars who have sought to determine the identity of the individual servant in the “Servant Songs,” I seek to determine what Isaiah’s use of the servant metaphor (applied both to Israel and to an unnamed representative of Israel) conveys about what it means to be YHWH’s people.

Method

Dramatic Progression in Isaiah

In this study, I do not presuppose any particular theory of the book’s composition but operate under the assumption that Isaiah can be read as a coherent whole. After more than a century of Isaiah scholarship focused on redaction-critical issues, many scholars have recently noted that, whatever the book’s origins, several unifying features appear throughout its three major sections. These common images, themes, and motifs serve as evidence of an intentional shaping of the final form of the book and provide a foundation for reading the book as “a complex unity.”¹⁵

Indeed, as some scholars have argued, Isaiah even seems to exhibit “dramatic progression.” In other words, a narrative strand—or perhaps a collection of interconnected narrative strands—runs through the book as later passages build on earlier passages to develop the story. This is perhaps clearest in Isaiah 40–55, which describes the restoration of Israel and Zion after the exile, accomplished through Cyrus and YHWH’s servant.¹⁶ Yet elements of dramatic progression can be found throughout Isaiah, leading Christopher Seitz to describe the book as “The Drama of God and Zion.”¹⁷ It

15. Rolf Rendtorff, “The Book of Isaiah—A Complex Unity: Synchronic and Diachronic Reading,” in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996) 32–49; see also idem, “The Composition of the Book of Isaiah,” in *Canon and Theology* (ed. and trans. Margaret Kohl; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 146–69; Roy F. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40–55* (BZAW 141; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976); Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 325–38; Ronald E. Clements, “The Unity of the Book of Isaiah,” *Int* 36 (1982) 117–29; idem, “Beyond Tradition History: Deutero-Isaianic Development of First Isaiah’s Themes,” *JSOT* 31 (1985) 95–113; Richard J. Clifford, “The Unity of the Book of Isaiah and Its Cosmogonic Language,” *CBQ* 55 (1993) 1–17; Christopher R. Seitz, “Isaiah 1–66: Making Sense of the Whole,” in *Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah* (ed. Christopher R. Seitz; Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2002) 105–26.

16. See the discussion by Richtsje Abma, who draws on the Dutch writings of Willem A. M. Beuken and H. Leene in applying the concept of “dramatic progression” to Isaiah 40–55 (*Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery, Isaiah 50:1–3 and 54:1–10, Hosea 1–3, Jeremiah 2–3* [Assen: Van Gorcum, 1999] 57–61).

17. Seitz, “Isaiah 1–66,” 122; see also Robin L. Routledge, “Is There a Narrative Substructure Underlying the Book of Isaiah?” *TynBul* 55 (2004) 183–204.

should be made clear that I am not here advocating identifying the book's genre as a performative drama.¹⁸ Any attempt to identify speakers for each verse in Isaiah is speculative, and the book does not display the high degree of coherence from text to text that would be required in a dramatic performance.¹⁹ My claim is more modest, namely, that there is development in the situation of Israel and Zion from the beginning of the book to its conclusion so that particular passages can best be read in light of where they fit into that development.

The book's framing chapters (chaps. 1 and 65–66) provide the basic outlines of this drama.²⁰ At the beginning of the book YHWH's people are rebellious children who have forsaken their divine parent (1:2–4), and "Daughter Zion" (v. 8) is a harlot, full of injustice (vv. 21–23). But YHWH promises to purify Zion and deliver the repentant, while bringing judgment against those who persist in rebellion (vv. 24–31). Thus he calls his people to turn from their sins and "seek justice" (vv. 16–17) so that they may enjoy the blessings of restoration (v. 19). By the book's end, YHWH's children have been separated into two parties. Those who have heeded his warnings—now called his "servants"—inherit a new heavens and a new earth (65:8–25) and delight in the abundant nourishment provided by a restored Mother Zion (66:7–14). The rebels, by contrast, face deprivation, despair, and ultimately destruction (65:11–15, 66:24).

As can be seen from this brief sketch of Isaiah's programmatic introduction and conclusion, metaphors derived from household relationships play a significant role in the book's dramatic progression. Thus, after reading sequentially through the book to see how a particular metaphor is used, in my summary section I step back to consider how it relates to Isaiah's

18. As, e.g., John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33* (rev. ed.; WBC 24; Waco, TX: Word, 2005); idem, *Isaiah 34–66* (rev. ed.; WBC 25; Waco, TX: Word, 2005); and with regard to Isaiah 40–55, Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001); as well as Richtsje Abma's comments concerning "the 'lost stage directions' in Isaiah 49–55" in "Travelling from Babylon to Zion: Location and Its Function in Isaiah 49–55," *JSOT* 74 (1997) 28.

19. For further critique of this view, see John G. F. Wilks, "The Prophet as Incompetent Dramatist," *VT* 53 (2003) 530–43.

20. On the connections between Isaiah 1 and 65–66 and their significance for understanding the book as a whole, see, e.g., Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4 and the Post-Exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition* (BZAW 171; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988) 22–24; David McLain Carr, "Reading Isaiah from Beginning (Isaiah 1) to End (Isaiah 65–66): Multiple Modern Possibilities," in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 188–218; Emmanuel Uchenna Dim, *The Eschatological Implications of Isa 65 and 66 as the Conclusion of the Book of Isaiah* (BH 3; Bern: Peter Lang, 2005) 290–94, also 274–78, 282–84; K. D. Jenner, "Jerusalem, Zion and the Unique Servant of Yhwh in the New Heaven and the New Earth: A Study on Recovering Identity versus Lamenting Faded Glory (Isaiah 1–5 and 65–66)," in *Enlarge the Site of Your Tent: The City as Unifying Theme in Isaiah* (ed. Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen and Annemarieke van der Woude; OtSt 58; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 169–72.

broader narrative development. In my detailed analysis of each metaphor, my primary focus is on discerning the rhetorical function of each metaphorical appearance within its larger context. In other words, I want to know why these metaphors in particular are used and what role they play in the communicative aim encoded in the text.²¹ Thus, I selectively employ resources from both metaphor theory and rhetorical criticism.

Metaphor

Recent years have seen an increasing interest in metaphor among biblical scholars,²² partly in response to modern theories of metaphor offered in the last several decades by linguists, philosophers, and even scientists, who have pointed out its pervasiveness in everyday life and its importance for our processes of conceptualization.²³ The ubiquity of metaphor is especially true in the case of religious language, which depends heavily on metaphor to explain the abstract or transcendent by means of the concrete or immanent. Indeed, the Bible itself is replete with metaphor, particularly in the poetic texts of the prophets. Thus, our understanding of the prophetic messages depends in large measure on our ability to grasp their uses of metaphor.

How Metaphors Work

The classic definition of metaphor offered by Aristotle describes it as deviant naming, that is, “the application of a word that belongs to another thing: either from genus to species, species to genus, species to species, or by analogy” (*Poet.* 1457b [Halliwell, LCL]). Although Aristotle valued the ability to metaphorize well (to recognize resemblances; cf. *Poet.* 1459a), his view eventually devolved into a denigration of metaphor as a merely stylistic feature that confuses pure and literal logic. According to this understanding, a metaphor involves an unnecessary substitution of one term for another and can thus be translated by reversing the substitution and

21. My hermeneutical approach is to seek to determine the communicative aim of the implied author, rather than the real author, whose identity may be in question. For more on this, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998).

22. For a few recent examples, see Alison Ruth Gray, *Psalm 18 in Words and Pictures: A Reading through Metaphor* (BIS 127; Leiden: Brill, 2014); Edward J. Bridge, “The Metaphoric Use of Slave Terms in the Hebrew Bible,” *BBR* 23 (2013) 26; Maria Häusl, “Verkörperertes Leben: Körperbilder und -konzepte im Alten Testament,” *BK* 67 (2012) 10–15; Andrea L. Weiss, “A New Approach to Metaphor in Biblical Poetry,” in *Mishneh Todah* (ed. Nili Sacher Fox, David A. Glatt-Gilad, and Michael J. Williams; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009) 475–86; idem, *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel* (VTSup 107; Leiden: Brill, 2006); and the collection of essays in P. van Hecke, ed., *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (BETL 187; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005).

23. See George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) 3; Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962) 236–43.

recovering the original literal expression.²⁴ In response to this substitution theory, many scholars now argue (1) that metaphors are not merely stylistic forms of expression but are patterns of thinking, (2) that metaphorical expressions must be considered at the level of the discourse unit and conceptual structure rather than at the level of individual words, and (3) that metaphorical expressions have a “surplus of meaning” and so cannot be exhausted by translation to literal language.²⁵

Max Black. Max Black explains the way metaphors work by means of a filtering image. Encountering the metaphor “man is a wolf,” a reader’s *system of associated commonplaces* related to the term *wolf* (the *subsidiary subject*) acts as a filter to organize her conception of *man* (the *principle subject*). These *associated commonplaces* are culturally determined perceptions of the subsidiary subject that allow for shared meaning between author and reader, though they may also include novel associations introduced by the author.²⁶ The metaphor then “selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes features of the principle subject” by applying to it language appropriate to the subsidiary subject.²⁷

By this means, metaphors do not merely give expression to similarities already recognized or even already existing between the principle and subsidiary subjects. Metaphors actually create new similarities, functioning as “‘cognitive instruments,’ indispensable for perceiving connections that, once perceived, are *then* truly present.”²⁸ Like maps, graphs, and lifelike paintings, metaphors depict “how things are,” though from a particular perspective, which is at least in part a construction.²⁹ For Black, however, this filtering is not an entirely one-way process; the subsidiary subject is also viewed in light of the principle subject. For example, the image of man as a wolf also “makes the wolf seem more human than he otherwise would.”³⁰ While many discussions of biblical metaphor draw on Black’s work, they more commonly use the earlier terminology of I. A. Richards,

24. For example, “Richard is a lion” simply means “Richard is brave,” because “lion” was substituted for “brave” (Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 36).

25. Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning* (trans. Robert Czerny; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977) 87; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: A Study in Hermeneutics and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 62–64.

26. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 27, 40, 43. Since the commonplaces are cultural perceptions, they are not necessarily accurate depictions of reality. For example, the metaphor may rely on a popular conception that wolves ferociously attack humans, even if they usually avoid interaction with people (George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989] 66).

27. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 44.

28. Max Black, “More about Metaphor,” in *Metaphor and Thought* (ed. A. Ortony; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 37.

29. *Ibid.*, 39.

30. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 44, also pp. 37–41; Marjo C. A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990) 70–71.

calling Black's principle subject (man) the *tenor* and his subsidiary subject (wolf) the *vehicle*,³¹ a practice that will be followed in this study.

Paul Ricoeur. Paul Ricoeur goes beyond Black, characterizing metaphor as "the rhetorical process by which discourse unleashes the power that certain fictions have to redescribe reality" and thus as having "the power to project and reveal a world."³² He approaches the problem of how a metaphor creates new meaning by adopting the Wittgensteinian concept of "seeing as," understood as a partly cognitive and partly experiential act by which the reader constructs the area of commonality between tenor and vehicle.³³ In this act, both imagination and feeling play a key role in realizing the metaphor's "full cognitive intent."³⁴ For Ricoeur, "feeling" designates not particular emotions but rather a participatory relationship with an object, which makes near what is distant.³⁵ If metaphor creates a world and offers a means of "seeing as," then there is a certain degree of openness in interpreting it, allowing for the continual discovery of new connections.³⁶ Translating a metaphor to a list of similarities shared by tenor and vehicle prematurely closes off meaning, leading to a "loss in cognitive content."³⁷

Janet Soskice. Like Ricoeur, Janet Soskice also builds on Black's understanding of metaphor but offers a couple helpful correctives to his proposals. First, she points out the tension between Black's (unidirectional) image of filtering and his idea of a two-way interaction between the principle and subsidiary subjects, as well as his failure to explain *how* the subsidiary subject (or vehicle) is modified by the principle subject (or tenor).³⁸ Second, she provides a helpful working definition of metaphor, which is absent from Black's discussion, calling it, "*that figure of speech whereby we speak*

31. I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936) 96, 99. Black argues that Richards uses these terms somewhat inconsistently, sometimes referring to what Black sees as the two subjects of a metaphor, sometimes to their implications, and sometimes to the metaphor's "resultant meaning" (*Models and Metaphors*, 47 n. 23). This confusion may explain some differences in the definitions of these terms given throughout the literature (see, e.g., Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 37; Ian Paul, "Metaphor," *DTIB* 508; Korpel, *Rift in the Clouds*, 41). I am following what seems to be the most widespread use and appears most in accord with Richards's definitions of the terms, regardless of his actual usage.

32. Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 7, 93; see also Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: A Study in Hermeneutics and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 65.

33. Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 212–15; idem, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," *CI* 5 (1978) 150.

34. Ibid., 158, also p. 155.

35. Ibid., 156; see also Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative*, 65–66.

36. See Korpel, *Rift in the Clouds*, 74.

37. That phrase is taken from Black, who also points out that such a list would be unable to establish the relative weights of various aspects of the metaphor (*Models and Metaphors*, 46).

38. Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) 42.

about one thing [the tenor] *in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another* [the vehicle].”³⁹

This definition provides a foundation for distinguishing between living and dead metaphors. A dead metaphor applies language to the tenor that is no longer seen as inappropriate to it and thus is not “suggestive” of something else.⁴⁰ For example, the designation of a table’s supports as “legs” no longer calls to mind the image of a body. Thus, only living metaphors evoke a generative model whereby the tenor is understood in terms of the vehicle. However, even dead metaphors can structure the way we conceptualize the tenor,⁴¹ and they can be revitalized by applying new aspects of the forgotten vehicle to the tenor.⁴²

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory of Cognitive Linguistics. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson emphasize how central metaphor is to our everyday thought processes in their seminal work, *Metaphors We Live By*, which introduces many of the basic tenets of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory emerging from cognitive linguistics. They explain that we conceptualize abstract ideas such as time and causation in terms of structural metaphors rooted in experience, which then determine how we act. For example, because we typically see problems by means of a puzzle metaphor, we continually seek solutions to problems in order to bring about complete resolution. If we instead viewed our problems as chemical compounds, we might be more apt to focus on the interaction between them, recognizing that catalysts that resolve one problem may create or exacerbate others.⁴³

In a later publication, George Lakoff and Mark Turner use the terminology of *source* (vehicle) and *target* (tenor) to speak of metaphor as mapping aspects of the source domain onto the target domain.⁴⁴ A metaphor *highlights* those aspects of the target that fit the source, while *downplaying* or *hiding* aspects that are inconsistent with the source. Ultimately, the meta-

39. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 44–46, also 15, emphasis in the original; similarly, Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 5; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985) 189.

40. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 73.

41. Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (2nd ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), xi, who gives the example that we tend to think of the mind as a machine and thus use expressions like “the workings of the mind.” See also Carol A. Newsom, “A Maker of Metaphors: Ezekiel’s Oracles against Tyre,” *Int* 38 (1984) 153, who argues that dead metaphors can be dangerous and even oppressive because they are no longer recognized as shaping our understanding.

42. See Gary Alan Long, “Dead or Alive? Literality and God-Metaphors in the Hebrew Bible,” *JAR* 62 (1994) 524. As an example, Julie Galambush suggests, rightly or wrongly, that Ezekiel took “a traditional metaphor which must to some extent have been ‘dead’”—cities as female personas—and turned it into the “provocative and shocking image” of Jerusalem as a harlot (*Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh’s Wife* [SBLDS 130; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992] 8).

43. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 143–45.

44. Lakoff and Turner, *More Than Cool Reason*, 38–39.

phor “defines a *structural* similarity between the *entire range* of highlighted experiences,”⁴⁵ preserving the “image-schema structure” of the source.⁴⁶ Particular metaphorical expressions often invoke a conventional set of mappings between source and target, but a metaphor can be used in novel ways by drawing out other areas of correspondence. For example, Lakoff observes that the song lyric, “We’re driving in the fast lane on the freeway of love,” uses the conventional metaphor LOVE-IS-A-JOURNEY (which produces statements like “*the relationship isn’t going anywhere*”) but evokes a new set of associations, emphasizing the excitement but also the risks of a relationship that moves quickly.⁴⁷

Conceptual Blending. A later development spinning out of the cognitive linguistic approach is the idea of Conceptual Blending. Whereas Conceptual Metaphor Theory focuses on the two domains of source and target, Conceptual Blending argues that at least four mental spaces are interacting in a metaphor. Along with the two input spaces (roughly paralleling the source and target domains), there is also a generic space, which contains the abstract ideas shared by both source and target. More important, however, is the fourth blended space, where elements from the source and target are blended.⁴⁸ In a single-scope network the structure of one of the input spaces (the source) is projected into the blended space, but in a double-scope network the blend has emergent structure that does not correspond to either input. For example, the metaphorical expression “digging your own grave” conveys the ideas that (1) someone is engaging in behavior that will lead to a negative result and (2) they do not realize this causal connection. But the structure of the blended space is derived not from the source input space (gravedigging) but from the interaction between the two input spaces (gravedigging and foolish-behavior-leads-to-a-negative-result). The metaphorical expression highlights the causal relationship between the person’s behavior and their coming downfall even though digging someone’s grave does not cause their death.⁴⁹ Since many metaphors are single-scope networks, they may be adequately analyzed using the concepts of vehicle and tenor (or source-to-target mapping), but for some complex or mixed metaphors, the concept of conceptual blending is a helpful tool.⁵⁰

45. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 152–53, also pp. 10–13, emphasis in the original.

46. See George Lakoff, “The Invariance Hypothesis: Is Abstract Reason Based on Image-Schemas?” *CogLin* 1 (1990) 54.

47. Idem, “The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor,” in *Metaphor and Thought* (ed. Andrew Ortony; 2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 210; see also p. 206.

48. Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind’s Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002) 40–50.

49. Fauconnier and Turner, *Way We Think*, 126–35.

50. For an example of how conceptual blending may be applied to a biblical metaphor, see P. Van Hecke, “Conceptual Blending: A Recent Approach to Metaphor Illustrated with the Pastoral Metaphor in Hos 4,16,” in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. P. Van Hecke; BETL 187; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005) 215–31.

Metaphor and Simile. While Isaiah relies primarily on metaphor to draw figurative comparisons between Israel and various household roles, the book occasionally employs similes in this regard. Formally, metaphors and similes are distinct—similes draw comparisons using “like” or “as,” whereas metaphors are grammatically unmarked. Whether there is any functional difference is, however, a matter of debate. Roland Frye sees a fundamental distinction between them, contending that “whereas similes compare, metaphors predicate or name.”⁵¹ Others, following Aristotle (*Rhet.* 1406–1407), contend that metaphors are simply elliptical similes.⁵² As Korpel points out, many texts appear to use metaphors and similes interchangeably. For example, it is unlikely that the writer(s) of Song of Songs intended any significant difference between the statements “your eyes are doves” (1:15b) and “his eyes are *like* doves” (5:12a).⁵³

Soskice sees a more complex relationship between metaphor and simile, distinguishing between *illustrative* and *modeling* similes. The former offer merely “point for point” comparisons of two objects, while the latter present one object as the conceptual framework for understanding another and thus are functionally equivalent to metaphors. Crucial to her distinction is the idea of “epistemic distance.” Soskice contends that if we have prior knowledge of both tenor and vehicle, we will compare them point-by-point. If, however, the tenor “is beyond our full grasp,” we will view the vehicle as a model for conceptualizing the tenor.⁵⁴

While I appreciate Soskice’s classification, I think a more helpful criterion for distinguishing between illustrative and modeling similes is the degree to which the point(s) of comparison are explicitly stated. A simile that offers no points of comparison invites hearers to create those connections for themselves and thus should be characterized as a modeling simile (e.g., Song 5:12a).⁵⁵ Similarly, an extended simile listing several points of comparison might also invite further creative reflection on the relationship be-

51. Roland Frye, “Language for God and Feminist Language: A Literary and Rhetorical Analysis,” *Int* 43 (1989) 54; see also Black, “More about Metaphor,” 30; E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968) 727; Donald Davidson, “What Metaphors Mean,” in *On Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) 36–39.

52. Robert J. Fogelin, *Figuratively Speaking* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988) 25, though he also suggests that “metaphors can have more force than their counterpart similes” (p. 27); see also G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 144; Aida Besançon Spencer, “Father Ruler: The Meaning of the Metaphor ‘Father’ for God in the Bible,” *JETS* 39 (1996) 436–37; Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 174, also p. 248.

53. Korpel, *Rift in the Clouds*, 55–56, citing H. P. Müller; see also Spencer, “Father Ruler,” 437–38.

54. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 59–60; see also Hanne Løland, *Silent or Salient Gender? The Interpretation of Gendered God-Language in the Hebrew Bible, Exemplified in Isaiah 42, 46, and 49* (FAT 2/32; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 48–50.

55. See Marc Zvi Brettler, “Incompatible Metaphors for YHWH in Isaiah 40–66,” *JSOT* 78 (1998) 102, who makes a similar point with regard to metaphors.

tween tenor and vehicle. By contrast, a simile that provides a single explicit point of comparison will likely function merely to illustrate, particularly if the point of comparison is fairly conventional (e.g., “the lion like the ox will eat straw,” Isa 11:7b). Metaphors, however, also differ in this regard and so fall onto a spectrum with those at one end serving more illustrative purposes (see, e.g., Isa 1:3) and those at the other end functioning as full-blown constructive models.⁵⁶ Thus, I see metaphor and simile as running on parallel tracks, distinguished more by form than by import. Where a single explicit point of comparison is given, however, I contend that the metaphorical “is” carries slightly greater force than the “like” of a simile.

A Hermeneutic of Metaphor. The understanding of metaphor outlined above raises an important hermeneutical question. If, as Ricoeur argues, the power of metaphor lies largely in its creative potentiality, what limits are there to how far a metaphor may be taken? I suggest three means of focusing and limiting interpretation of metaphor, while still allowing for fruitful imaginative construction within those bounds: (1) exploring the *associated commonplaces* of the vehicle in the writer’s cultural context, (2) assessing the metaphor’s interaction with other metaphors depicting the same subject in the near literary context, and (3) noting how other details in the literary context bear on the metaphor. The relative helpfulness of each of these principles varies from context to context, and thus they do not all receive equal attention in each passage. While most studies of biblical metaphor have given attention to associated commonplaces (1) and literary context (3), few have made a concerted effort to understand metaphors in light of their interaction with other metaphors (2). Thus, this point deserves further discussion.

Complex realities can be expressed only by means of multiple metaphors that complement but also stand in tension with and critique one another, each pointing to particular aspects of a multifaceted subject.⁵⁷ While these metaphors are not wholly *consistent*, they generally overlap (that is, have some *shared entailments*) and thus may be seen as *coherent*.⁵⁸ In a monograph-length study of parental metaphors for YHWH in Isaiah 40–55, Sarah Dille examines the interaction between different metaphors used to describe YHWH within a particular passage. Contending that “interacting metaphors *highlight* shared commonplaces,” she focuses on areas of overlap between the various metaphors.⁵⁹ While this approach proves fruitful, she does not extend it further to consider how the metaphors critique and limit

56. See Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, “Two Unifying Female Images in the Book of Isaiah,” in *Uncovering Ancient Stones* (ed. Lewis M. Hopfe; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994) 20–22, esp. p. 22 n. 20; also note Caird’s discussion of the “varying degrees of correspondence between vehicle and tenor” (*Language and Imagery*, 153).

57. See Brettler, “Incompatible Metaphors,” 120; Lakoff and Turner, *More Than Cool Reason*, 52–53.

58. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 93–96.

59. Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 1, emphasis mine.

each other. Marc Zvi Brettler engages in the latter type of reflection in an article entitled “Incompatible Metaphors for YHWH in Isaiah 40–66,” noting, for example, with regard to Isa 44:21–22 that the compassion YHWH demonstrates as Israel’s redeemer shapes the text’s simultaneous portrayal of him as their master.⁶⁰ As these studies by Dille and Brettler demonstrate, areas of both overlap and conflict between metaphors interacting in a particular passage can offer clues as to how each metaphor should be interpreted.

Rhetorical Criticism

In addition to discerning what each metaphor means within its particular context, this study also employs rhetorical criticism in a limited fashion in order to determine each metaphor’s rhetorical function. Rhetorical criticism has been a quickly growing feature on the landscape of biblical studies since Muilenburg’s landmark SBL address in 1968, in which he advocated the new method as a means of focusing on the particularities of a text, supplementing form criticism’s concentration on its typical elements.⁶¹ Muilenburg’s rhetorical-critical approach involves determining the limits of a passage and following its “sequence and movement” and “the shifts or breaks in the development of the writer’s thought” by paying close attention to rhetorical devices.⁶² Some biblical rhetorical criticism has followed in Muilenburg’s wake, focusing primarily on identifying a text’s unique stylistic features;⁶³ however, that approach does not reflect the type of rhetorical criticism used by scholars outside the realm of biblical studies, which aims instead at analyzing a text’s persuasive strategy and effect.⁶⁴

That approach is exemplified by rhetorical critic George Kennedy, who applies the categories and canons of classical Greek rhetoric to the study of the New Testament. He acknowledges that there is no evidence that ancient Israelites consciously theorized about rhetoric but contends that the Bible demonstrates their concern for persuasive speech. Moreover, Kennedy points out that Aristotle, on whom he is largely dependent, under-

60. Brettler, “Incompatible Metaphors,” 110.

61. James Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” *JBL* 88 (1969) 5, 18.

62. *Ibid.*, 10, also pp. 8–9. His approach is illustrated in his commentary: *idem*, “Isaiah 40–66,” in *IB* 5:381–773.

63. E.g., Phyllis Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (GBS; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); Richard J. Clifford, *Fair Spoken and Persuading: An Interpretation of Second Isaiah* (New York: Paulist, 1984); Paul A. Smith, *Rhetoric and Redaction in Tristram: The Structure, Growth, and Authorship of Isaiah 56–66* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

64. Some biblical scholars who advocate the latter approach include Michael V. Fox, “The Rhetoric of Ezekiel’s Vision of the Valley of the Bones,” in *The Place Is Too Small for Us: The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995) 176–78; C. Clifton Black, “Keeping Up with Recent Studies XVI: Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation,” *ExpTim* 100 (1989) 254; Yehoshua Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion: A Study of Isaiah 40–48* (FTL 14; Bonn: Linguistica Biblica, 1981) 27. Wilhelm Wuellner sees rhetorical criticism of this type as providing “liberation from the Babylonian captivity of rhetoric reduced to stylistics” (“Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?” *CBQ* 49 [1987] 457).

stood his task not as articulating an understanding of specifically Greek rhetoric but rather as conveying universal principles of communication.⁶⁵

Many biblical scholars have adopted Kennedy's five-step method for analyzing a text's rhetoric,⁶⁶ and a simplified version of his approach provides the basic framework for this study. Following Kennedy, I first determine the limits of each *rhetorical unit*—understood as a literary, not an oral, entity—by identifying structural features used to mark transitions. Second, I consider the *rhetorical situation* of the unit, insofar as it can be reconstructed from the text. The rhetorical situation is the set of exigencies that appear to have produced the prophetic utterance, taken in its final form, and which the passage seeks to address and/or transform.⁶⁷ It may include the concerns and attitudes of the implied audience and/or the broad outlines of the assumed historical situation but will generally transcend specific historical details.⁶⁸

Third, I determine the type of rhetoric being used with respect to its aim. Some biblical rhetorical critics have adopted Aristotle's threefold classification of the *species* (or *genres*) of rhetoric,⁶⁹ but this system of classification may not adequately cover the various types of Hebrew rhetoric.⁷⁰ For this reason—and in order to avoid overloading this study with unnecessary terminology—I simply describe the rhetorical aim of each passage rather than using Aristotle's categories. Finally, I make observations concerning the *arrangement* and *style* of the passage, as these pertain to our understanding of the rhetorical function of the metaphor under consideration.⁷¹

65. George Alexander Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) 10–11.

66. See especially C. Clifton Black and Duane F. Watson, eds., *Words Well Spoken: George Kennedy's Rhetoric of the New Testament* (SRR; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008); Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?" 455–58; Karl Möller, "Rhetorical Criticism," *DTIB* 690; Reed Lessing, "Preaching Like the Prophets: Using Rhetorical Criticism in the Appropriation of Old Testament Prophetic Literature," *Conf* 28 (2002) 391–408. See also Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*; idem, *Isaiah and His Audience: The Structure and Meaning of Isaiah 1–12* (Assen: van Gorcum, 1991).

67. See Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 33–35.

68. For example, in Isa 1:2–20, the fact that much of Judah has recently been devastated by an enemy invasion is crucial to the rhetorical situation, though it makes little difference to the argument of the passage whether the destruction is attributed to the Assyrian invasion of 701 B.C. or the later Babylonian invasion (Yehoshua Gitay, "Reflections on the Study of the Prophetic Discourse: The Question of Isaiah I 2–20," *VT* 33 [1983] 216–17; see also idem, "Prophetic Criticism: 'What Are They Doing?' The Case of Isaiah—A Methodological Assessment," *JOT* 96 [2001] 116).

69. I.e., *judicial*, *deliberative*, and *epideictic* rhetoric (see further Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 19–20, 36–37; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.3.1358b).

70. See Lessing, "Preaching Like the Prophets," 407. Kennedy also classifies the type of rhetoric with respect to its means of persuasion, relying on Aristotle's categories of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* (*NT Interpretation*, 15–16; see Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.2.1356a), but that classification is not helpful for my purposes.

71. For Kennedy, analysis of the unit's *arrangement* involves dividing the unit into parts based on the "conventional structure" of its particular species of rhetoric (*NT Interpretation*, 23–24; similarly Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 36, 39); however, I will seek to

While I rely on these methods as I analyze each metaphorical occurrence, they do not rigidly control my approach. Because each text presents its own exegetical challenges, I strive to allow the text to set the agenda, treating these methods as tools to be employed wherever they help to bring out the meaning and rhetorical force of each metaphor in its broader context.

Chapter Summary

This study first examines each of the household metaphors for Israel and Zion separately (chaps. 2–5)⁷² and then draws together the results of these individual analyses in order to explore their interrelationships (chap. 6). Chapters 2–5 each begin by broadly surveying the background of each metaphor by examining (1) ancient Israelite perceptions (or *associated commonplaces*)⁷³ of the relational role on which the metaphor is based (e.g., children) and (2) similar uses of the metaphor in ANE texts and elsewhere in the HB. The goal of this survey is not to establish direct influence, except where a particular text seems to provide an important background for Isaiah's use of the metaphor, but rather to illuminate the "cognitive environment"⁷⁴ in which the book of Isaiah was written. These chapters then analyze each of the relevant passages, which are grouped by categories of usage, moving sequentially through the book of Isaiah within each category.⁷⁵ The exegesis of each text is not exhaustive but is directed toward interpreting how each metaphor functions in its context and discerning its rhetorical force, using the resources of metaphor theory and rhetorical criticism. Finally, each body chapter concludes with a summary of the rhetorical uses of the metaphor, considering whether it is possible to trace any development in the use of these metaphors throughout the book.

discern the arrangement of the passages solely by means of their own internal logic (see also Black, "Keeping Up," 255).

Kennedy's fifth step involves both assessing the success of the unit in addressing its rhetorical situation and contemplating its effects on the audience (*NT Interpretation*, 38), but that goes beyond my aim of understanding how the relational metaphors fit into the rhetorical purposes of the implied author.

72. The mother and wife metaphors will be treated together in a single chapter (chap. 4) because they appear least frequently and, more importantly, because they are inextricably intertwined within the book. The wife image never appears apart from that of mother, though the latter appears in a few texts without the former (see p. 194).

73. See p. 8.

74. A phrase taken from John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006) 21–23.

75. See p. 196.

Chapter 2

The People of Israel as Sons/Children

The first metaphor we will examine is the people of Israel as בנים, which forms an inclusio around the book (1:2–4, 66:7–14).¹ Initially, Isaiah portrays the people as the בנים of YHWH (1:2, 4; 30:1, 9; 43:6; 45:11; cf. 63:8, 16; 64:7[8]; 66:13), but as the female personification of Zion gains prominence in the latter chapters of the book, it also depicts them as the בנים of their city-mother (49:17, 20, 22, 25; 50:1; 51:18, 20; 54:1, 13; 57:3; 60:4, 9; 62:5; 66:8; also 37:3).²

Sons or Children?

Because Isaiah never describes Israel as the (sg.) בן of YHWH or Zion but only as their (pl.) בנים, it is unclear whether בנים denotes sons or children of both genders. For the most part, references to both YHWH's and Zion's בנים seem to point to the people of Israel as a whole.³ Moreover, when used of their relationship with YHWH, the highlighted aspects of the metaphor

1. See Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "'Look! The Children and I Are As Signs and Portents in Israel': Children in Isaiah," in *The Child in the Bible* (ed. Marcia J. Bunge, Terence E. Fretheim, and Beverly Roberts Gaventa; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 101.

2. Other Hebrew terms for children applied to the people of Israel in Isaiah include זרע ("offspring"), צאצא ("offspring, descendant"), ילד ("child"), and זכר ("male [child]"), but these are used metaphorically only alongside references to Israel as בנים and so will be discussed in those contexts.

Some scholars also see the parent-child metaphor in 46:3, contending that YHWH's address to "you who have been borne from birth, who have been carried from the womb" portrays the people as emerging from YHWH's womb (see, e.g., Hanne Løland, *Silent or Salient Gender? The Interpretation of Gendered God-Language in the Hebrew Bible, Exemplified in Isaiah 42, 46, and 49* [FAT 2/32; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008] 141–58; Leila Leah Bronner, "Gynomorphic Imagery in Exilic Isaiah [40–66]," *DD* 12 [1983] 77). However, the text does not clearly make that identification (see Chris A. Franke, "'Like a Mother I Have Comforted You': The Function of Figurative Language in Isaiah 1:7–26 and 66:7–14," in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* [ed. A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim; SBLAIL 4; Atlanta: SBL, 2009] 49 n. 45; cf. 44:2, 24), and the point of vv. 3–4 is that YHWH carries the people from birth to old age, in contrast to Babylon's idols, who need to be carried themselves.

3. See Irmtraud Fischer, "Das Buch Jesaja. Das Buch der weiblichen Metaphern," in *Kompendium Feministische Bibelauslegung* (ed. Luise Schottroff and Marie-Theres Wacker; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1998) 254; also Norbert Clemens Baumgart, "Wenn JHWH Kinder erzieht: Zum Gottesbild im Jesajabuch aus religionsgeschichtlicher und kanonisch-inter-textueller Perspektive," in *Das Echo des Propheten Jesaja: Beiträge zu seiner vielfältigen Rezep-*

are characteristics common to both sons and daughters. In portrayals of the people's relationship with Mother Zion, however, uniquely masculine aspects of the vehicle sometimes come into play. Thus, I generally refer to the "children of YHWH" but at times speak of the "sons of Zion."

Associated Commonplaces of the Vehicle: Children

Although socioeconomic conditions and social institutions in ancient Israel varied over the course of its history, the **בית אב** ("house[hold] of the father"), an extended family encompassing three or four generations living together in a family compound, consistently formed the core of Israelite society and thus remained relatively stable.⁴ Moreover, given the need for members of the family to work together in order to maintain their subsistence in the largely agrarian setting of ancient Israel, an individual's personal identity was inextricably bound up with his or her familial role(s).⁵ Since it was through children, particularly sons, that the life and land of the family, clan, and tribe were extended across generations, having children was viewed as a great blessing in ancient Israel (Ps 127:4–5; cf. Deut 28:4, 11).⁶ Conversely, barrenness produced shame and despair (Gen 30:1–3, 1 Sam 1:6–7), and losing an only child was devastating (Judg 11:34–35, Jer 6:26, Amos 8:10), because both threatened the family with extinction.⁷

tion (ed. Norbert Clemens Baumgart and Gerhard Ringshausen; Münster: Lit, 2004) 1, who notes the parallels with **גו** ("nation," 1:4) and **עם** ("people," 1:4; 30:9; 60:21; 62:10, 12).

4. See Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* [LAI; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001] 39; Rainer Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel: An Introduction* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008) 5. Paula M. McNutt, however, suggests that the nuclear family may have been more central to everyday life (*Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* [LAI; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999] 90; see also S. Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel: The Institution of the Family (Beit 'Ab) from the Settlement to the End of the Monarchy* [JBS 7; Jerusalem: Simor, 1996] 121–23; Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012] 42). There is debate about whether urban households were comprised of nuclear or extended families (see Aaron J. Brody, "The Archaeology of the Extended Family: A Household Compound from Iron II Tell en Nabeh," in *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* [ed. Assaf Yasur-Landau, Jennie R. Ebeling, and Laura B. Mazow; CHANE 50; Leiden: Brill, 2011] 254; Avraham Faust "Household Economies in the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah," in *Household Archaeology*, 257).

5. See Carol Meyers, "The Family in Early Israel," in *Families in Ancient Israel* (ed. Leo G. Perdue et al.; FRC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 21–22. Elsewhere, she notes the importance of "family integrity" even in urban environments (idem, "Everyday Life: Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible," in *Women's Bible Commentary* [ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998] 258; see also Bendor, *Social Structure*, 219).

6. C. J. H. Wright, "Family," *ABD* 2:766. As Meyers points out, children were also necessary to increase the family's labor output ("Family in Early Israel," 27).

7. Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, *Isaiah's Vision and the Family of God* (LCBI; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 51; Daniel I. Block, "Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel," in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (ed. Ken M. Campbell; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003) 81–82.

The survival of the family, and by extension society as a whole, was also endangered by children (especially sons) who rebelled against their parents by rejecting their authority.⁸ Thus, a high value was placed on honoring and obeying parents (Exod 20:12, Lev 19:3, Prov 6:20), and persistent filial disobedience was a serious offense. A “stubborn” (סָרָר) and “rebellious” (מָרֶה) son who would “not listen to the voice of his father or . . . mother” could even receive the death penalty (Deut 21:18–21). However, despite the considerable legal authority parents exercised over their children, including the ability to sell them into debt-slavery in cases of extreme economic hardship (Exod 21:7, Neh 5:4–5),⁹ the death penalty could be enacted only by the judgment of the village elders.¹⁰

Sons were expected to provide for their parents when they reached old age,¹¹ and widows who had no sons to care for them were particularly vulnerable, as the story of Ruth illustrates. Parents, in turn, bore the responsibility to instruct their children in both religious and practical matters (Gen 18:19; Deut 4:9, 6:7),¹² as well as to discipline them (Prov 22:15, 23:13, 29:17), which is understood as a demonstration of love (Prov 13:24; cf. 19:18). Despite high expectations of filial obedience, children could undoubtedly rely on the nearly unbreakable parent-child bond, expecting steadfast love, compassion, and forgiveness from their parents (Ps 103:13).¹³

The People of Israel as YHWH's Children

As the opening image of Isaiah (1:2–4), the portrait of the people of Israel as YHWH's children is central to their characterization, appearing in some form in each of the major sections of the book.

ANE Background

Israel was not unique in using the parent-child metaphor to describe its relationship with God. ANE texts portray various deities as the parents

8. Joseph Blenkinsopp, “The Family in First Temple Israel,” in *Families in Ancient Israel* (ed. Leo G. Perdue et al.; FRC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 70–71; Elizabeth Bellefontaine, “Deuteronomy 21:18–21: Reviewing the Case of the Rebellious Son,” *JSOT* 13 (1979) 17; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPSTC; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996) 196; Caryn A. Reeder, *The Enemy in the Household: Family Violence in Deuteronomy and Beyond* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012) 43–44.

9. Leo G. Perdue, “The Israelite and Early Jewish Family: Summary and Conclusions,” in *Families in Ancient Israel* (ed. Leo G. Perdue et al.; FRC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 190.

10. See Wright, *ABD* 2:767; Bellefontaine, “Deuteronomy 21:18–21,” 24.

11. Block, “Marriage and Family,” 93–94; Perdue, “Israelite and Early Jewish Family,” 190.

12. Christopher J. H. Wright, “צָב,” *NIDOTTE* 1:220.

13. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: Free Press, 1992) 162–63. On the emotional ties between parents and children, see Gen 25:28; 37:3, 34–35; Judg 11:34–35.

of humankind or of a representative figure, such as the king.¹⁴ For example, in Sumer-Akkad the legitimation of the king was sometimes related to Enlil's fatherhood and described in procreative terms.¹⁵ Moreover, in the "Lamentation Over the Destruction of Ur," the goddess Ningal laments before her husband Nanna over the loss of her "sons and daughters," the people of Ur, who have been sent into exile. A mourner then complains that "Mother Ningal" has abandoned the city and attributes its destruction to "Father Nanna," drawing the god's attention to the resulting cessation of his temple service.¹⁶ The text implies both the gods' parental responsibility to protect the people and their duty as children to maintain the operation of the cult.¹⁷ Finally, a supplicant compares Marduk's heart to that of his parents when seeking the god's compassion.¹⁸

While the Egyptian sun god Re was often portrayed as the father of Pharaoh,¹⁹ Amun became known as "mother and father for all eyes" or, more restrictively, "of the one who places him in his heart,"²⁰ emphasizing the necessity of devotion for those who seek to be his children. Moreover, Amun's concern for the needy is expressed by his designation as "the father of the motherless."²¹ In the Ugaritic Kirta epic, El is repeatedly called "the Father of Man," perhaps due to his perceived role in creating humankind,²² though the context emphasizes his self-revelation, authority, and beneficence.²³ El demonstrates his paternal role toward King Kirta by his concern and provision, while Kirta honors his divine father with a sacrifice.²⁴

Some scholars read the biblical parent-child metaphor against the background of ANE vassal treaties, which sometimes use father-son language to describe the relationship between suzerain and vassal. Moreover, F. Charles

14. For the structure of the following survey and several of the subsequent references, see David R. Tasker, *Ancient Near Eastern Literature and the Hebrew Scriptures about the Fatherhood of God* (StBL 69; New York: Peter Lang, 2004) 15–77.

15. Richard D. Patterson, "Parental Love as a Metaphor for Divine-Human Love," *JETS* 46 (2003) 207.

16. Lines 283–84, 351, 373–78, 407 (see the still-classic work by Samuel N. Kramer, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* [AS 12; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940] 50–51, 60–67; somewhat differently, Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once . . . : Sumerian Poetry in Translation* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987] 465, 472).

17. On the aspect of divine protection, see also a prayer found in Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) 128.

18. Baumgart, "Wenn JHWH Kinder erzieht," 5.

19. See James K. Hoffmeier, "Son of God: From Pharaoh to Israel's Kings to Jesus," *BRev* 13, no. 3 (1997) 45; Patterson, "Parental Love," 207.

20. Jan Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt* (trans. David Lorton; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001) 220; noted by Baumgart, "Wenn JHWH Kinder erzieht," 7–8.

21. Assmann, *Search for God*, 223.

22. Marjo C. A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990) 235–36.

23. *CTU* 1.14 I.37, 43; III.32, 47; VI.13, 32 (*UNP* 12–42).

24. El's concern for Kirta: *CTU* I.41(?); II.6; IV.6. Kirta honors El: *CTU* II.24; elsewhere Kirta is described as El's "servant" (III.49, 51; VI.34–35).

Fensham argues that “son” and “servant” are often used interchangeably in vassal treaty contexts, as exemplified in the biblical text by Ahaz’ address to Tiglath-pileser in 2 Kgs 16:7.²⁵ Because Isaiah refers to the people of Israel as both “children” and “servant(s)” of YHWH, it must be considered whether these are simply synonymous terms indicating a covenantal relationship. As Frank Moore Cross contends, however, to see “the language of ‘brotherhood’ and ‘fatherhood,’ ‘love,’ and ‘loyalty’” as “covenant terminology” is to look at the situation backward. In a covenant, two parties enter into a kinship-like relationship.²⁶

The Use of the Metaphor Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible

That the metaphor of Israel as YHWH’s child(ren) cannot simply be reduced to an indicator of the covenant is also suggested by the fact that it appears in the Exodus narrative prior to the establishment of the Sinai covenant (Exod 4:22–23) and continues to function when the covenant has been broken (Jer 31:9, 18–20).²⁷ Moreover, the biblical authors go far beyond ANE treaty texts in exploring how YHWH birthed and cared for his child(ren).

In Exod 4:22–23, YHWH instructs Moses to ground his plea to Pharaoh to let the Israelites go in Israel’s status as YHWH’s “firstborn son” (בְּנִי בכֹרִי; cf. Hos 11:1). The designation “firstborn” may imply that all the nations are YHWH’s children while Israel occupies a special place of honor.²⁸ Elsewhere, the metaphor is linked with YHWH carrying, guiding, and providing for Israel in the wilderness (Deut 1:31, Hos 11:3–4) but also with his paternal discipline (Deut 8:5; cf. Prov 3:12). Moreover, it provides a basis for religious prescriptions (Deut 14:1) and expectations of filial honor (Mal 1:6),

25. F. Charles Fensham, “Father and Son as Terminology for Treaty and Covenant,” in *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright* (ed. Hans Goedicke; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971) 125, 128–29; see also Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel, 1250–587 BCE* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993) 8; Dennis J. McCarthy, “Notes on the Love of God in Deuteronomy and the Father-Son Relationship between Yahweh and Israel,” *CBQ* 27 (1965) 145; Antony Tharekadavil, *Servant of Yahweh in Second Isaiah: Isaianic Servant Passages in Their Literary and Historical Context* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007) 85–87, 103–5.

26. Frank Moore Cross, “Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel,” in *From Epic to Canon* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) 11; see also J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (SAHL 2; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001) 1; M. Weinfeld, “The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East,” *JAOs* 90 (1970) 194.

27. Wright, *NIDOTTE* 1:222; see also Brent A. Strawn, “‘Israel, My Child’: The Ethics of a Biblical Metaphor,” in *The Child in the Bible* (ed. Marcia J. Bunge, Terence E. Fretheim, and Beverly Roberts Gaventa; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 113–14.

28. Cf. Deut 32:8, Jer 3:19; see also Chrys C. Caragounis, “בן,” *NIDOTTE* 1:676; Strawn, “Israel, My Child,” 126–27; Tasker, *ANE Literature*, 85; as well as Frederick E. Greenspahn, *When Brothers Dwell Together: The Preeminence of Younger Siblings in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) 59–60, who argues that “the title ‘firstborn’ is often socially rather than chronologically assigned” and thus conveys the “divine preference” of Israel, rather than his birth order (also Block, “Marriage and Family,” 83–84).

and it supports a call for unity among the post-exilic community (2:10). In the psalms, YHWH is described more specifically as the “father of orphans” (68:6[5]),²⁹ and his compassion for “those who fear him” is compared to a father’s for his children (103:13). Ezekiel 16:20–21 describes the people of Israel as Jerusalem’s children, whom she bore to YHWH but then sacrificed to her idols. Here, the metaphor suggests both the people’s great value to YHWH and his authority over their lives, thus underscoring the monstrosity of Jerusalem’s act, performed against their father’s wishes (also 23:37).

Negatively, the metaphor is used to illustrate the people’s faithlessness (Jer 3:14; Hos 11:5–7) and foolishness (Jer 4:22) in rejecting their divine parent. Nevertheless, the biblical portrait insists that YHWH will not give his son over to complete destruction (Mal 3:17) but will “have compassion on him” because YHWH’s “inward parts groan for him” (Jer 31:20; cf. Hos 11:8–9). Therefore, he will reclaim his errant children (Hos 2:1[1:10]) and bring them back from exile (Jer 31:9; cf. 3:14; Hos 11:10–11).

The metaphor receives extended treatment in the Song of Moses (Deut 32), which describes the origin of the parent-child relationship using creational (v. 6b), adoptive (v. 10), and procreative (v. 18) language.³⁰ The creational aspect highlights YHWH’s power and authority over Israel, the adoptive emphasizes YHWH’s election,³¹ and the procreative conveys the close relationship between them. Moreover, the Song illustrates YHWH’s parental care for Israel by describing how he guided Israel to the land of his inheritance, richly fed him with the fruits of the land, and “nursed him with honey out of the rock” (vv. 12–14). The people became complacent, however, and abandoned their divine parent for other gods (vv. 15–18, 21), demonstrating their lack of understanding (vv. 28–29; cf. Isa 1:3). Thus, YHWH disowned his children (v. 5) and sold them to their enemies (v. 30). Nevertheless, he will again have compassion on his people, now described as his “servants” (v. 36), executing vengeance on their behalf (v. 43).³²

Textual Analyses

Isaiah 1:2, 4

Isaiah’s opening description of YHWH’s errant children in 1:2–4 is part of a unit comprising the whole of chap. 1—set off by superscriptions in

29. Where the Heb. and Eng. versification differ, the Eng. will be given in brackets.

30. *Adoptive*: Although there are no clear references to an adoption formula in the HB, the clear use of the metaphor suggests that the practice must have been well known (Block, “Marriage and Family,” 88; see further Janet L. R. Melyn, “When Israel Was a Child: Ancient Near Eastern Adoption Formulas and the Relationship between God and Israel,” in *History and Interpretation* [ed. M. Patrick Graham, William P. Brown, and Jeffrey K. Kuan; JSOTSup 173; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993] 245–59).

Procreational: See further James Earl Harriman, “Our Father in Heaven: The Dimensions of Divine Paternity in Deuteronomy” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005) 149–94,

31. See Melyn, “When Israel Was a Child,” 259.

32. The LXX and Tg. have “children” in place of “servants” in v. 43.

1:1 and 2:1—which functions as a prologue to the book.³³ The rhetorical situation involves the desolation of the land after a foreign incursion (v. 7), which left only “Daughter Zion” intact (v. 8).³⁴ The text begins with YHWH bringing an accusation against his בנים before an audience:

שָׁמְעוּ שָׁמַיִם וְהָאֲדָמָה אָרֶץ	2	Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth,
כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר		for YHWH has spoken.
בָּנִים גִּדַּלְתִּי וּרִמַּמְתִּי		“Children have I raised and brought up,
וְהֵם פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי		but they have rebelled against me.
...	...	
הוּא גִּי חַטָּא עִם כְּבֹד עֹן	4	Woe to a sinful nation, a people heavy with iniquity,
זֶרַע מְרֻעִים בָּנִים מִשְׁחִיתִים		offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly.
עָזְבוּ אֶת־יְהוָה		They have forsaken YHWH;
נֶאֱצָו אֶת־קֹדֶשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל		they have despised the Holy One of Israel;
נָדְדוּ אַחֲוֵר		they have become estranged.”

YHWH contends that he has fulfilled his parental role toward his בנים, but his efforts have been repaid only by stubborn defiance (v. 2b). Echoing Deut 32:5, the people are “children who deal corruptly” (מִשְׁחִיתִים)³⁵ by forsaking their divine parent (cf. Deut 32:15) and embracing lives of sin (v. 4), marked by injustice and oppression (vv. 16–17).³⁶ Since they neither resemble YHWH nor acknowledge his parental authority, they are acting like “offspring of evildoers.”³⁷ Thus, they may have cause to wonder whether YHWH will disown them as in Deut 32:5.

This indictment of YHWH’s children for “rebell[ing]” (פָּשַׁע) recalls the law concerning the rebellious son in Deut 21:18–21 (there using סָרַר and מָרָה).³⁸ Here, however, the cosmic audience serves merely as a witness

33. Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4 and the Post-exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition* (BZAW 171; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988) 101; similarly, David McLain Carr, “Reading Isaiah from Beginning (Isaiah 1) to End (Isaiah 65–66): Multiple Modern Possibilities,” in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996) 197–200.

34. See further p. 59.

35. Or perhaps more literally “children who destroy” (cf. the use of שָׁחַת in 14:20, 36:10; similarly, Roy F. Melugin, “Figurative Speech and the Reading of Isaiah 1 as Scripture,” in *New Visions of Isaiah* [ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996] 288).

36. The passage also recalls Deuteronomy 32 with its opening call to the heavens and earth to act as witnesses, combining four words found together only in these two places in the HB (שָׁמַע, שָׁמַיִם, אָזַן, אָרֶץ, Isa 1:2; cf. Deut 32:1), and its use of נָאֵץ (“to spurn,” Isa 1:4; cf. Deut 32:19). See further Ronald Bergey, “The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32.1–43) and Isaianic Prophecies: A Case of Early Intertextuality?” *JSOT* 28 (2003) 39–42, 47–53.

37. Melugin, “Figurative Speech,” 288–89.

38. Baumgart, “Wenn JHWH Kinder erzieht,” 17–19; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 412; also Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 61, who observes that the nation’s leaders are called “stubborn” (סָרַר) in v. 23.

(v. 2a),³⁹ not as judge or jury like the town elders in the legal prescription.⁴⁰ YHWH is both prosecutor and judge, and Israel's persistence in "turning away" has led him to execute a sentence involving corporal punishment (vv. 5–6). Given the extent of Israel's injuries, this is a deeply troubling image.⁴¹ Understood in light of Deut 21:18–21, however, these verses may reflect YHWH's mercy in withholding the death penalty.⁴² Moreover, they express his parental sorrow as he pleads with Israel to desist from the rebellion that necessitates judgment: "Why are you still struck down? [Why] do you continue to rebel?" (v. 5a).

Rhetorically the passage aims to shock the people into recognizing the effects of their deviant behavior—it is their filial disobedience that has brought about their current deplorable condition. And it implores them to return to YHWH so that they may experience his blessing (see vv. 18–20, 27–28). The passage may also counter complaints that YHWH is punishing them despite their faithful adherence to the cult by emphasizing their rejection of YHWH and explaining that their religious practices are unacceptable to him due to their glaring moral failings (vv. 10–15).⁴³ Within this context, the primary focus of the child metaphor is on the responsibility of the people to obey their divine parent in fitting response to his care and provision. However, the passage also invites reflection on YHWH's love for his בנים and his grief at their rebellion. By presenting the courtroom drama in vv. 2–4 in the third person, the text creates distance between the audience and the accused, thus encouraging the audience to identify with the sorrow of a parent rejected by one's own children and so join YHWH in condemning their own behavior.

Isaiah 30:1, 9

Similar themes emerge when YHWH's children next appear in the rhetorical unit in 30:1–18, which is marked off by the "woe" (והי) beginning v. 1 and a switch to prose in v. 19.⁴⁴ The rhetorical situation involves Israel's attempt to enter into a political alliance with Egypt (vv. 2–7) in order to provide protection against Assyria, disregarding the counsel of the true

39. Cf. covenantal texts such as Deut 30:19, 32:1 (John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986] 85).

40. Contra Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 57, who fails to distinguish between the roles of the respective audiences, calling both "witnesses."

41. Julia M. O'Brien suggestively remarks, "Isaiah does not criticize the father's beatings but rather the son's willfulness" (*Challenging Prophetic Metaphor: Theology and Ideology in the Prophets* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008] 80).

42. See also Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003) 172–73.

43. See Yehoshua Gitay, *Isaiah and His Audience: The Structure and Meaning of Isaiah 1–12* (Assen: van Gorcum, 1991) 34.

44. See Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 556–57. Verse 18 functions as a hinge, looking both backward to vv. 1–17 (note the opening לכן) and forward to vv. 19–26 (with its theme of comfort) and so could be included with either unit (Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001] 226–27).

prophets of YHWH (vv. 9–10). YHWH condemns their obstinacy in a woe oracle:

1	הרי בנים סוררים נאם־יהוה	“Woe to stubborn children,” declares YHWH,
	לעשות עצה ולא מני	“making a plan but not from me,
	ולנסך מסכה ולא רוחי	and pouring a drink-offering but not by my Spirit*
	למען ספות חטאת על־חטאת	to add sin
		to sin,
2	ההלכים לרדת מצרים	who go down to Egypt
	ופי לא שאלו	without asking me,
	לעזוב במעוז פרעה	to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh
	ולחסות בצל מצרים	and seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt.
...	...	
9	כי עם מרי הוא בנים כחשים	For they are a rebellious people, false children,†
	בנים לא־אבו	children unwilling
	שמעו תורת יהוה	to listen to the instruction of YHWH.”

* These two lines are unclear. For this understanding, which views the drink-offering as tied to the act of making an alliance with Egypt, see R. E. Clements, *Isaiah 1–39* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 243–44; Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1–39* (NAC 15a; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2007) 511. Alternatively, these lines could contain a reference to idolatry (cf. מסכה in 30:22, and see further H. G. M. Williamson, “Isaiah 30:1,” in *Isaiah in Context* [ed. Michaël N. van der Meer et al.; VTSup 138; Leiden: Brill, 2010] 190–91), or לנסך could be taken to denote “seeking security,” i.e., from Egypt (cf. 25:7; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 411).

† On this understanding of בנים כחשים as “false children” (those not living as true children) rather than “lying children,” see Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 551–52 (cf. the ESV and JPSV, which read, “faithless children”; also 48:1).

Here the links to Deut 21:18–21 are stronger than in chap. 1. Like the wayward son in the legal text, YHWH’s children are both “stubborn” (סרר, v. 1) and “rebellious” (מר, v. 9a; cf. מרה in Deut 21:18). Moreover, they refuse “to listen to the instruction (שמע תורת) of YHWH,” their divine parent (v. 9b; cf. שמע בקול in Deut 21:18). Although YHWH has satisfied his parental responsibility to train his children by giving them visions of “what is right” through his seers and prophets (v. 10), they have utterly rejected his teaching.⁴⁵ Whereas in chap. 1 their rebellion was characterized primarily by moral failure, now it involves making political decisions without seeking YHWH’s will. In essence, the people are replacing YHWH with Pharaoh, seeking “refuge” and “shelter” from Egypt (v. 2).⁴⁶ In a striking reversal of their expectations, however, their reliance on Egypt will lead only to “shame” (v. 5). And their rejection of their divine parent will produce its own punishment as their fragile wall of protection shatters (vv. 12–14).

45. Similarly, Lapsley, “Look!,” 93.

46. The irony of Israel’s choice is heightened if the origin of the child metaphor is seen in the exodus event. (I owe this insight to Daniel Brendsel in private communication.) YHWH delivered the people from their position as slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt (Exod 5:15–16), giving them the honored position of his “firstborn son” (בני בכרי, Exod 4:22–23). Now the people are renouncing their status as YHWH’s בנים and turning back to the harsh master they once served.

Nevertheless, v. 18 indicates that, as in chap. 1, YHWH still has compassion on his rebellious children, though he “waits” to demonstrate it, perhaps until the day when they begin to “wait on” him.

Explicitly, 30:1–18 condemns the people for their rejection of YHWH, but by portraying the disaster that will result from their dependence on Egypt (vv. 3, 5, 12–14), it may also implicitly aim to convince them that their rebellion is futile, thus prompting them to turn back to YHWH. Although they have not yet heeded YHWH’s call to repent, the passage leaves open the possibility that they may still experience YHWH’s deliverance if they respond appropriately (see vv. 15, 18). Like chap. 1, the child metaphor is used to emphasize the people’s responsibility to honor their divine parent, in this case, by seeking his counsel and following his instructions. They will then place themselves under his paternal protection, which, in contrast to the help offered by Pharaoh, is firm and unailing.

Isaiah 43:6

That aspect of paternal protection moves to the foreground in the next scene involving YHWH’s בנים in 43:1–7, part of a unit encompassing 42:18–43:21, which addresses the rhetorical situation of exile.⁴⁷ YHWH now promises the protection Egypt failed to provide (30:3), declaring that he will deliver Israel by offering Egypt as a ransom (43:2–3). He then explains the reason for his redemption:

מאשר יקרת בעיני נכבדת	4	Because you are precious in my eyes, honored,
ואני אהבתיך		and I love you,
ואתן אדם תחתך		I will give men in exchange for you
ולאמים תחת נפשך		and peoples in exchange for your life.
...		...
אמר לצפון תני	6	I will say to the north, “Give up,”
ולתימן אל-תכלאי		and to the south, “Do not withhold.
הביאי בני מרחוק		Bring my sons from afar
ובנותי מקצה הארץ		and my daughters from the end of the earth,
כל הנקרא בשמי	7	everyone who is called by my name
ולכבודי בראתי		and whom I created for my glory,
יצרתי אף-עשיתי		whom I formed and made.”

Calling to the four corners of the earth, he will demand that they bring his “sons” and “daughters” home (vv. 5b–6). These children—the exiled people of Israel (see v. 1)—trace their descent from YHWH because they are his creations and bear his name (v. 7; cf. Deut 32:6). Thus, they need not fear, despite their precarious situation, because YHWH takes responsibility for their well-being (vv. 1b, 5). His actions are motivated, however, not just by a sense of duty but also by his tender paternal affection. In a rare and striking acknowledgement of his internal disposition toward his child(ren), YHWH declares to Israel, “You (sg.) are precious in my eyes, honored, and I

47. See further pp. 140 and 83.

love you" (v. 4). At the center of a chiastic structure encompassing vv. 1–7, this statement provides both the focal point of the subsection and the ground for its promise of deliverance.⁴⁸ The people may be viewed as worthless in the eyes of the nations, but they are treasured by their divine father.

The combination of the redeemer and father metaphors in these verses (vv. 1, 6; cf. 63:16) raises the question, if the people of Israel have a parent capable of acting on their behalf, why should they need a redeemer, a role generally undertaken by a more distant relative in Israelite society?⁴⁹ In this case, however, the people's divine father delivered them over as plunder, not because of his inability to protect them, but because of the nation's sin (42:24; cf. 50:1; Deut 32:30).⁵⁰ Therefore, he also serves as Israel's redeemer.⁵¹ These overlapping metaphors emphasize YHWH's role as the people's advocate and defender.

The larger rhetorical unit may address a complaint that the exile reveals YHWH's lack of concern for his desolate people.⁵² In 43:1–7 the stated rhetorical aim is to persuade the people not to fear (vv. 1a, 5a) but rather to trust in YHWH's deliverance, and the father-child metaphor provides a basis for this trust. Here, the associated commonplace of the children's responsibility to obey their father is completely hidden. The larger passage employs the servant metaphor for that purpose, but that aspect of Israel's relationship with YHWH plays no role in these verses. Instead, they highlight the unconditional love and devotion that the people can expect from their divine father. Although he gave his children over to their enemies for a time, judgment cannot be the last word. YHWH's children are indelibly written on his heart, and his tender love will move him to show compassion on them again.

Isaiah 45:11

The tone changes radically when YHWH next describes the people as his children in 45:11, which may be taken as part of a rhetorical unit encompassing 45:9–25. Although some scholars include 44:24–45:8 with these verses, due in large part to their shared concern with YHWH's use of Cyrus (44:28; 45:1, 13),⁵³ it may be better to take the former as constituting part

48. Sarah J. Dille, *Mixing Metaphors: God as Mother and Father in Deutero-Isaiah* (JSOTSup 398; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 76–77; John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40–55: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (2 vols.; ICC; New York: T&T Clark, 2006) 1:271–72.

49. See Annette Böckler, *Gott als Vater im Alten Testament: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Entwicklung eines Gottesbildes* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 2000) 287, concerning 63:16.

50. For further connections with Deuteronomy 32, see Bergey, "Song of Moses," 45–46.

51. Dille observes that the exodus narrative also portrays YHWH as redeeming his own child (*Mixing Metaphors*, 99).

52. See further p. 140.

53. See, e.g., Childs, *Isaiah*, 348–50; Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40–66* (NAC 15b; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009) 243.

of the rhetorical situation addressed by the latter.⁵⁴ The disputatious tone of 45:9–12, leading up to YHWH's (re)affirmation of Cyrus's role as his agent in v. 13, suggests that the people may have responded with shock and dismay to YHWH's choice of Cyrus as his "anointed one" (45:1) who would restore Jerusalem (44:28).⁵⁵ Thus, YHWH counters their objections by highlighting his own authority:

הוי רב	9	Woe to the person who contends
את-יצרו		with the one who forms him,
חרש את-חרשי אדמה		a pot among the pots of the ground.*
היאמר חמר ליצור		Does the clay say to the one who forms it,
מה-תעשה		"What are you making?"
ופעלך אין-ידיים לו		or "Your work has no hands?"†
הוי אמר לאב	10	Woe to the one who says to a father,
מה-תוליד		"What are you begetting?"
ולאשה מה-תחילין		or to a woman, "With what are you in labor?"
כה-אמר יהוה	11	Thus says YHWH,
קדוש ישראל ויצור		the Holy One of Israel and the One who forms him,
האתיות שאלוני על-בני		"Ask me‡ of things to come concerning my children,#
ועל-פעל ידי תצוני		and command me concerning the work of my hands!"

* The NRSV seems to read חרש as חרש ("artisan"), which may have been inspired by the participial form חורשי (likely חורשי, "artisans") in the second part of the line in 1QIsa^a (on which, see further Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 124). But most English translations follow the MT (e.g., NIV, NASB, ESV, JPSV; also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 250).

† Alternatively, the line could read, "or your work, 'he has no hands,'" making פעלך the speaker, presumably referring to his fashioner (cf. the LXX; see also the NASB, NIV; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998] 207; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 251; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:35). However, elsewhere in these verses 2nd per. forms appear only in quotations, and the quotations inquire about the nature of the object being formed/produced, not the artisan (see the ESV, NRSV, JPSV; Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 261, all taking ידיים as designating "handles").

‡ Although שאלוני could be a 3rd per. pf. form (so Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 207), it is probably better to take it as an ironic impv. given the 2nd per. תצוני in the last line of the verse. In that case, תצוני may be understood as continuing the imperative force of the preceding verb (Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 126; similarly Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:37–38; also the ESV).

The LXX reads "my sons . . . and my daughters," probably in light of 43:6.

As in 1:4 and 30:1, 45:9–10 presents a declaration of woe, here against clay that challenges its fashioner's (יצרו) design and a person who interrogates parents about what sort of child they are bearing. Although the identity of the questioner in v. 10 is not stated, the parallel with v. 9 suggests

54. John Goldingay sees 44:24–45:8 both as forming the conclusion to a rhetorical unit beginning in 43:22 and as introducing the concerns addressed in 45:9–25 (*The Message of Isaiah 40–55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* [London: T&T Clark, 2005] 216–17).

55. See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2002) 252; Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66* (WestBC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998) 73; Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40–66: Translation and Commentary* (ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012) 259–60.

that the child is disputing the circumstances of his own birth.⁵⁶ Applying the lesson to the current situation, v. 11 identifies YHWH with both the potter and the parents and connects Israel with the “work” YHWH “forms” (יצור) and presumably also with its parallel, YHWH’s “children.”⁵⁷ Reading v. 11 in light of vv. 9–10 supports the idea that YHWH’s command to question him is an ironic directive addressed to these very children, challenging them to recognize the absurdity and presumption of their complaints (cf. 29:16).⁵⁸ Because YHWH is the sovereign creator of all (v. 12), it is his prerogative to elect a foreign ruler as his agent (v. 13).⁵⁹

Thus, the rhetorical aim of these verses may be to drive the people to submit to YHWH’s plans for them and particularly his election of Cyrus as their deliverer. The parent-child metaphor overlaps with the potter-clay image, highlighting YHWH’s authority over his people as their creator (cf. Deut 32:6b). Julia O’Brien contends that these verses thus entail an authoritarian model of fatherhood, “claim[ing] that sons have no right to question their fathers.”⁶⁰ However, v. 10 castigates children not for questioning their parents per se but more specifically for questioning them concerning what kind of children they have borne. Moreover, the interaction with the potter-clay metaphor reveals the limits of the parent-child image. While human parents have little control over what kind of children they produce, YHWH is a parent who not only gives birth to his children but also forms them in the womb, thoughtfully and intentionally molding them into a finished work (v. 11; cf. 44:2, 24). Thus, they have neither cause nor right to challenge his creative purposes, which are currently directed toward his plan of rebirthing the people out of exile.

Isaiah 63:8, 16; 64:7[8]

In each of the preceding passages, the identification of the people as children came from YHWH’s mouth. In the lament in 63:7–64:11[12], however, the people, represented by a single speaker (see 63:7–15), call on YHWH to act as their father. The rhetorical situation involves the destruction of both land and temple (63:18, 64:9[10]); thus, the nation’s current condition does not correspond to its status as a people called and chosen by YHWH (see 63:19). The lament begins by recounting the goodness and love

56. Contra Smith, *Isaiah* 40–66, 262.

57. See also Paul, *Isaiah* 40–66, 262; Childs, *Isaiah*, 351. By contrast, Blenkinsopp contends that the children are “what God chooses to bring about on the scene of world events” (*Isaiah* 40–55, 252), while Goldingay and Payne identify them with Cyrus and the Medes (*Isaiah* 40–55, 2:38; similarly Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 126).

58. See Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 209–10; contra Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah Chapters 40–48* (vol. 1 of *Isaiah III*; trans. Anthony P. Runia; 3 vols.; HKAT; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1997) 451–58, who sees vv. 9–10 as the people’s speech, expressing a tone of resignation about their situation, and v. 11 as YHWH’s response inviting their questioning.

59. Paul Niskanen, “Yhwh as Father, Redeemer, and Potter in Isaiah 63:7–64:11,” *CBQ* 68 (2006) 405 n. 25.

60. O’Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor*, 79; also Niskanen, “Yhwh as Father,” 405.

YHWH has shown Israel in the past (63:7) and narrating the history of their relationship:⁶¹

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָיִם הֵמָּה	63:8	And he said, “Surely they are my people,
בָּנִים לֹא יִשְׁקֶר		children who will not deal falsely,”
וַיְהִי לָהֶם לְמוֹשִׁיעַ		and he became their Savior.
בְּכָל־צָרָתָם לֹא צָר	9	In all their distress, he was distressed,*
וּמֵלָאֵךְ פָּנָיו הוֹשִׁיעַם		and the angel of his presence saved them.
בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ וּבְחַמְלָתוֹ		In his love and in his mercy,
הוּא גָאֵלָם וַיִּנְטֵלָם		he redeemed them and lifted them up
וַיִּנְשָׂאֵם כָּל־יְמֵי עוֹלָם		and carried them all the days of old.
וְהֵמָּה מָרֹד וַעֲצָבוּ אֶת־רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁ	10	But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit.
וַיִּפְךָ לָהֶם לְאוֹיֵב		And he turned [to be] an enemy to them;
הוּא נִלְחָם־בָּם		he himself fought against them.

* The NRSV follows the LXX in reading the first part of v. 9 (בְּכָל־צָרָתָם) with v. 8, following the *Kethiv* לֹא (“not”) rather than the *Qere* לוֹ (“to him”), and taking צָר (“distress”) as צִיר (“envoy”), producing: “and he became their savior in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them.” However, there is little support for the LXX reading, and most English translations follow the MT (see also Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 19B; New York: Doubleday, 2003] 252–54).

Noting YHWH’s acceptance of the people as his children, the speaker emphasizes his parental “love” and “mercy,” expressed both by his identification with their “distress” and by his redemption, most notably in the exodus (vv. 8b–9a). As a parent carries a young child, so he “carried them all the days of old” (v. 9b). However, the speaker also highlights YHWH’s expectation that his children would be faithful and ominously hints at their rapid descent into disobedience—“Surely they are . . . children who will not deal falsely” (v. 8). Indeed, despite YHWH’s parental care, the people soon “rebelled” (מָרָה), ultimately leading their divine father to turn against them (v. 10).

Given the lamenter’s ultimate aim of persuading YHWH to “rend the heavens and come down” to vindicate his people (63:19b–64:1[64:1–2]), the reader might expect a more positive portrayal of the origin of the parent-child relationship focused on YHWH’s unconditional election. Instead, the lament affirms the book’s earlier depictions of the people as rebellious children,⁶² perhaps to present a forceful contrast between them and the present generation, who are now seeking to restore their relationship with their divine father. In any case, the lamenter relies on YHWH’s continued parental concern, pleading with him to temper his judgment with mercy:

הִבֵּט מִשָּׁמַיִם וּרְאֵה	63:15	Look down from heaven and see,
מִזְבֵּל קֹדֶשׁ וּתְפֹאֲרֶתָךְ		from your holy and beautiful dwelling.

61. See also p. 173.

62. Note the use of מָרָה in 30:9; see also 1:2, 4; 30:1 (Johannes Goldenstein, *Das Gebet der Gottesknechte: Jesaja 63,7–64,11 im Jesajabuch* [WMANT 92; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2001] 49–50).

איה קנאתך וגבורתך המון מעיך ורחמין אלי התאפקו כי־אתה אבינו 16 כי אברהם לא ידענו וישראל לא יכירו אתה יהוה אבינו גאלנו מעולם שמך ...	Where are your zeal and your might? The agitation of your inward parts and your compassion are restrained from me. But you are our father, though Abraham does not know us,* and Israel does not regard us. You, O YHWH, are our father, our Redeemer from of old is your name. ...
ועתה יהוה אבינו אתה 64:7[8] אנחנו החמר ואתה יצרנו ומעשה ידך כלנו 8[9] אל־תקצף יהוה עד־מאד ואל־לעד תזכר עון הן הבט־נא עמך כלנו	But now, YHWH, you are our father. We are the clay, and you are the one who forms us. And we are all the work of your hand. Do not be extremely angry, YHWH, and do not remember iniquity forever, See, look down; we are all your people.

* For this translation, see Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 610; Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah Chapters 56–66* (vol. 3 of *Isaiah III*; trans. Anthony P. Runio; HKAT; Leuven: Peeters, 2001) 376; cf. most English translations. Alternatively, the verse may state a possibility, rather than a fact (see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 252, who translates, “were Abraham not to know us”; similarly John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66* [rev. ed.; WBC 25; Waco, TX: Word, 2005] 325; cf. the NLT).

In contrast to the people’s prior experience of YHWH’s salvific and nurturing presence, now the speaker envisions YHWH as distant, completely disregarding the fate of his people (v. 15). He contends that this failure to extend them compassion and love is not consistent with YHWH’s paternal role (v. 16)—the people’s suffering should move their divine father to a grief that wells up from the depths of his being and impels him to action (v. 15b).⁶³ Although the children’s rebellion may have distanced them from the promises given to their human ancestors, the speaker expresses confidence that their relationship with YHWH spans the breach caused by sin and exile with a double affirmation of YHWH’s fatherhood (v. 16).⁶⁴ The parallel references to YHWH as father and redeemer in v. 16b (cf. 43:1–7) again link YHWH’s parentage to the historical experience of the exodus from Egypt, for it is above all in that act of deliverance that YHWH demonstrated the fatherly traits of protection and loving concern for his children.⁶⁵ Moreover, the overlapping metaphors highlight YHWH’s continuing responsibility to defend and rescue his people.

63. Niskanen observes that, despite the frequent reference to Israel as YHWH’s “son(s),” the HB rarely calls YHWH “father” (see Deut 32:6; Ps 68:6[S]; Jer 3:4, 19; 31:9; Mal 1:6; 2:10; “Yhwh as Father,” 397–98).

64. See Goldenstein, *Das Gebet der Gottesknechte*, 94–95; also Koole, *Isaiah 56–66*, 377–78, who proposes that the reference to Abraham and Israel not knowing the people may have a double meaning, indicating further that their deceased ancestors cannot help them (cf. the Tg.; also Böckler, *Gott als Vater*, 286–87).

65. See Niskanen, “Yhwh as Father,” 402.

When the lamenter again invokes Y_{HWH}'s role as father, he combines it with the metaphor of Y_{HWH} as potter (64:7[8]), echoing 45:9–11:⁶⁶

Isaiah 45

"Woe to the person who says to a father
(לֹאֵב), 'What are you begetting?' (v. 10a)"
"Does the clay (חֹמֶר) say to the one who
forms it (לִיצֵר), 'What are you making?'"
(v. 9b)
"Command me concerning the work of my
hands (פֶּעַל יָדַי, v. 11b)!"

Isaiah 64:7[8]

"But now, Y_{HWH}, you are our
father (אֲבִינוּ)."
"We are the clay (הַחֹמֶר), and you
are the one who forms us
(לִיצֵר)."
"And we are all the work of your
hand (וְכָלֵנוּ מְעֵשֶׂה יָדְךָ)."

At first glance, it appears that the lamenter is responding to the earlier critique and conveying the people's submission to Y_{HWH}'s authority as both their father and creator.⁶⁷ This use of the potter metaphor may, however, contain a subtle complaint. The lamenter has just acknowledged the people's unresponsiveness to Y_{HWH} but has placed the responsibility for their failing on him: "For you have hidden your face from us and made us melt in our iniquity" (v. 6[7]; cf. 63:17a). Thus, he suggests that the people, in all their sin, are just what Y_{HWH} has molded them to be,⁶⁸ thereby demonstrating little development in outlook since chap. 45. The people may no longer be overtly resisting Y_{HWH}'s plans for them, but they are implicitly questioning his (pro)creative work by claiming that he has formed or begotten rebellious children.

The lamenter grounds his plea for Y_{HWH} to turn from his wrath (v. 8[9]) on the people's relationship to him as both his children and his work of art. Here, the overlapping metaphors highlight the concern Y_{HWH} should have for his people, raising the question of whether he can really abandon those in whom he is so deeply invested.⁶⁹ Moreover, by combining these metaphors, he also roots the father-child relationship firmly in Y_{HWH}'s act of creating the nation, suggesting that their status as children precedes the historical establishment of the covenant and is not ultimately dependent on their filial obedience.⁷⁰ Thus, the parent-child metaphor forms one of the primary grounds for the lamenter's petition that Y_{HWH} would come to his people's aid. Because Y_{HWH} elected the people as his children (63:8), the lamenter sees him as bearing the responsibility to act as father. Thus, he calls on Y_{HWH} to exercise his fatherly compassion and his creative power

66. See Baumgart, "Wenn J_{HWH} Kinder erzieht," 38, who notes the connections but explores the significance of the parallel only with respect to the complete absence in 63:7–64:11[12] of the "mother" figure from 45:9–11.

67. On the people's submission, without reference to Isaiah 45, see David Tasker, "The People of God in Prophetic Literature," in *For You Have Strengthened Me* (ed. Martin Pröbstle; St. Peter am Hart: Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen, 2007) 82.

68. Walter Harrelson, "Why, O Lord, Do You Harden Our Heart? A Plea for Help from a Hiding God," in *Shall Not the Judge of All the Earth Do What Is Right?* (ed. David Penchansky and Paul L. Redditt; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000) 171–72.

69. See Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 629; Niskanen, "Y_{HWH} as Father," 406.

70. Tasker, *ANE Literature*, 150.

by mercifully delivering the people from both their sin and its disastrous results (63:15–16, 64:7–8[8–9]).⁷¹

Isaiah 66:13

In his response to the lamenter's pleas in chaps. 65–66, YHWH offers the tender care of a parent but does so in a simile placing himself in the role of mother (66:13). This maternal imagery for YHWH appears immediately after an extended portrait of Zion as mother (vv. 7–12), producing a complicated family portrait:⁷²

הנני נטה-אליה כנור שלום	12 For thus says YHWH,
וכנחל שוטף	"See, I am extending to her peace like a river,
כבוד גוים	and like an overflowing stream
וינקתם	the glory of nations,
על-צד תנשא	and you will nurse.
ועל-ברכים תשעשעו	On the hip you will be carried,
כאיש אשר אמו תנחמו	and on the knees you will be dandled.
כן אנכי אנחמכם	13 As a man whose mother comforts him,
ובירושלם תנחמו	so I will comfort you,
	and by Jerusalem you will be comforted."

The people ("all who love" Zion, v. 10) will nurse at Zion's breasts (v. 11), but it is YHWH who provides the nourishing river of peace and prosperity from which they will drink (v. 12). Most translations understand the כ in the last line of v. 13 as a locative indicating that YHWH's comfort will be experienced "in Jerusalem."⁷³ Taking it instrumentally ("by Jerusalem"), however, makes more sense in light of v. 12, declaring that YHWH's maternal comfort will be mediated through Zion's motherhood as he abundantly supplies her with the means to care for her children.⁷⁴

Frye contends that texts like this use similes (which merely compare) rather than metaphors (which identify) in order to create distance between YHWH and the female image of a mother.⁷⁵ Although this verse does offer more of a comparison than an identification, contra Frye, the salient issue

71. See also Harrelson, "Why, O Lord," 172.

72. See further pp. 104, as well as 47 and 174.

73. See, e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 302; also the NASB, ESV, NRSV, JPSV. The NIV, by contrast, translates the כ as "over."

74. Michael J. Chan, "Isaiah 65–66 and the Genesis of Reorienting Speech," *CBQ* 72 (2010) 461; also Koole, *Isaiah 56–66*, 498, who notes the connection with Zion's "comforting (תנחמיה) breast" in v. 11. However, a double meaning may be intended here (see Christl M. Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion: Gender, Space, and the Sacred in Ancient Israel* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008] 203–4, who suggests further that for a "doubting and desperate audience . . . the empathetic and loving Mother Zion offers a role model for YHWH because it reinforces the idea of a compassionate and forgiving deity"; on which, see also John J. Schmitt, "The Motherhood of God and Zion as Mother," *RB* 92 [1985] 569).

75. Roland Frye, "Language for God and Feminist Language: Problems and Principles," in *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism* (ed. Alvin F. Kimel Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) 36–43; see also Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Exchanging God for 'No Gods': A Discussion of Female Language for God," in *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism* (ed. Alvin F. Kimel; Grand Rapids:

is not that it contains a simile but that it offers only a single point of comparison—the comfort YHWH gives his people is compared to that of a mother for her son. Thus, it is best characterized as an illustrative simile, describing a particular facet of YHWH's demeanor toward his children, rather than encouraging the reader to view YHWH on the model of a human mother.

In any case, this simile provides a somewhat ambivalent response to the lamenter's claim on YHWH as father (63:8, 16; 64:7[8]). The rhetorical aim of chaps. 65–66 is to affirm that YHWH will indeed act on behalf of those who love Zion, in accordance with the lamenter's plea, but also to modify the people's understanding of what that will look like.⁷⁶ On the one hand, the lamenter complains that YHWH is withholding from his people "the agitation of [his] inner parts" and his "compassion" (רחמים, 63:15), and here YHWH responds with a "comfort" (נחם) that entails maternal affection and concern (66:13).⁷⁷ On the other hand, while YHWH does not dispute the lamenter's identification of him as their father, neither does he affirm it. Instead he merely alludes to a maternal disposition toward them.⁷⁸ In so doing, he even seems to go out of the way to avoid calling the people his בנים, using איש rather than the expected בן in the first clause of the simile.⁷⁹ Thus YHWH does not acknowledge the lamenter's claim on him as father but promises to console the faithful with a comfort so powerful and intimate that it can only be depicted as the tender concern of a mother for her child.

Summary

Although only two passages in Isaiah 1–39 employ the metaphor of the people of Israel as YHWH's children, its appearance in the book's opening verses (1:2–4) casts a long shadow, providing a primary lens for understanding the significance of the people's continual rebellion against

Eerdmans, 1992) 4–5; Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007) 128.

76. See further p. 174.

77. See also Chan, "Isaiah 65–66," 457–58.

78. Baumgart, "Wenn JHWH Kinder erzieht," 422; see also Carr, "Reading Isaiah," 213–14, who contends that the maternal simile functions "to reassure and comfort a specific group within larger Israel, while rejecting the possibility of divine forgiveness for the sinners in the community, a group who has false confidence in the mercy of God, their 'father.'" Contra Marvin A. Sweeney, "Prophetic Exegesis in Isaiah 65–66," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; 2 vols.; VTSup 70; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 1:471, who sees YHWH here as "the father who brings about the new birth in Jerusalem." Instead, YHWH's role in the birth of Zion's children should be understood as that of a midwife (John F. A. Sawyer, "Daughter of Zion and Servant of the Lord in Isaiah: A Comparison," *JSOT* 44 [1989] 98; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 202).

79. Noting the strangeness of this use of איש to designate, apparently, a young boy, Darr suggests that it echoes Gen 4:1 (*Isaiah's Vision*, 222–23). By contrast, Henri Blocher sees the term as indicating that even as adults, the men of Israel need the maternal comfort extended by YHWH ("Glorious Zion, Our Mother: Readings in Isaiah [Conspectus, or Abridged]," *EuroJTh* 11 [2002] 11).

YHWH.⁸⁰ These opening verses contrast the people's stubborn and foolish rejection of their divine parent with his care in raising them. The people's recalcitrant nature also dominates 30:1–9, expressed in their refusal to seek their divine parent's counsel or protection.

The metaphor receives more positive treatment in 43:6 against the background of exile, highlighting YHWH's tender love for his children (see v. 4), which prompts a promise of deliverance. However, this affectionate tone does not persist. In 45:11, YHWH again emphasizes his authority over the people, there as both parent and potter. Although the lamenter in 63:7–64:11[12] also employs this language in order to call on YHWH to exercise fatherly compassion (63:15–16, 64:6–7[7–8]), YHWH's response does not affirm his role as father or the people's status as children. Instead, he promises maternal comfort, mediated through Zion (66:12–13), to those who "love" their city-mother (v. 10). To this mother-child relationship between Zion and her citizens we now turn.

The People of Israel as Zion's Sons/Children

Beginning in chap. 49, the mother-child metaphor becomes the primary lens through which the book portrays the relationship between the people and their land, represented by its capital city.

ANE Background

Describing the citizens of a particular place as its "sons/children" and "daughters" was relatively common in the ancient world, as attested in both Akkadian and Ugaritic.⁸¹ A quick perusal of a few of the relevant texts suggests that the phrase was probably idiomatic in much of the ANE world because the texts offer no elaboration of the metaphor.⁸² Therefore, the best guide for interpreting the biblical use of the metaphor is the biblical text itself.

The Use of the Metaphor Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible

The HB also contains idiomatic references to a people group as the children of their city or land. For example, that language is used without

80. Similarly Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 56–59.

81. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Daughter Zion," in *Thus Says the Lord* (ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook; LHBOTS 502; London: T&T Clark, 2009) 129; see further CAD M/1 304, 315–16; Issam K. H. Halayqa, *A Comparative Lexicon of Ugaritic and Canaanite* (AOAT 340; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008) 108.

82. See, e.g., EA 59.3, a letter from the *mârê* ^{alv}*dunip*^{ki} (translated by J. A. Knudtzon as "Die Einwohner von Tunip") to Pharaoh; RINAP 3 16.iii.65, an account of Sennacherib's third campaign, which speaks of the DUMU.MEŠ URU, i.e., "the inhabitants of the city" of Ekron (translation mine; for the text, see A. Kirk Grayson and Jamie Novonty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria [704–681 BC], Part 1* [RINAP 3/1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012] 115); CTU 1.40.26, 35, a ritual text referring to the *bn ugrt* and *bt ugrt* (D. Pardee, "The Structure of RS 1.002," in *Semitic Studies* [ed. Alan S. Kaye; 2 vols.; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991] 2:1184–88).

further comment to designate the inhabitants of Bethlehem (Ezra 2:21), Jericho (Ezra 2:34), the east (Gen 29:1; Judg 6:3, 33), Babylon (Ezek 23:15, 17, 23), and Jerusalem/Zion (Ps 147:13, 149:2; Joel 2:23; Zech 9:13).⁸³ However, if this metaphor was dead when Israel inherited it from its neighbors, several biblical writers resurrected it.⁸⁴ Outside Isaiah, it is developed in Jer 5:7; Lamentations 1, 2:19–22, 4:2–4; Hos 2:4–7[2–5]; and Ezekiel 16 and 23. Although both sides of the mother-child relationship are present in each text, only Lam 4:2–4, Hos 2:4–7[2–5], and Jer 5:7 give significant attention to the children themselves and thus will be discussed here.⁸⁵

Lamentations 4:2 declares that the בני־צִיּוֹן, who were “precious” and “weighed in goldn” are now viewed merely as “earthen jars.” The attention then shifts from Mother Zion to “the daughter, my people” (בת־עַמִּי; cf. בת־צִיּוֹן in v. 22)⁸⁶ and then to the mothers within Jerusalem who do not feed their children because they have nothing to give (vv. 3–4). These verses thus draw an implicit analogy between Zion and these mothers, suggesting that the city also fails to treasure and care for her children in light of her own distress.

In Hos 2:4[2], the children of YHWH’s adulterous wife, the land of Israel, are called to “contend with [their] mother” because of her promiscuous behavior. Like their mother (v. 5[3]), they too will be denied YHWH’s compassion “because they are children of promiscuity” due to their mother’s shameful actions (vv. 6–7[4–5]). By contrast, in Jer 5:7 YHWH accuses Jerusalem’s children (see v. 1) of engaging in the adulterous behavior typically attributed to the city herself but then asks Jerusalem, “Why should I forgive you?” leading to a pronouncement of judgment on both city and people (vv. 9–10). Thus, both passages highlight the tight connection between mother and children with respect to their reputations and their fates.

Textual Analyses

Isaiah 37:3

Within the book of Isaiah, the metaphor of the people as Zion’s בָּנִים appears primarily in chaps. 49–66, but there may be a hint of it already in 37:3, part of a larger narrative comprising 36:1–37:38. In response to the threat posed by Sennacherib’s army camped outside Jerusalem, Hezekiah sends a distressed message to Isaiah:⁸⁷

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר חִזְקִיָּהוּ 3 And they said to [Isaiah], “Thus says Hezekiah,
 יוֹם־צָרָה וְתוֹכַחָה וְנִאָצָה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה ‘This is a day of distress and rebuke and contempt,
 כִּי בָאוּ בָנִים for children have come

83. See further H. Haag, “בֶּן,” *TDOT* 2:151.

84. See J. Andrew Dearman, “Daughter Zion and Her Place in God’s Household,” *HBT* 31 (2009) 154.

85. On the other passages, see p. 88.

86. On בת־עַמִּי, see p. 76.

87. See further pp. 66, 91.

עד־משבר to the breaking open [of the womb]
 וכח אין ללדה but there is no strength to bear [them].”

The children Hezekiah mentions undoubtedly refer to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who are critically endangered by the Assyrian siege, but the identity of the mother who has no strength to bear them is less clear. She could represent Hezekiah himself, perhaps along with the ruling elite.⁸⁸ In light of later developments in the book and particularly the vocabulary shared with 66:8–9,⁸⁹ however, it is better to understand the mother as the city itself.⁹⁰

This verse evokes the dire threat to mother and child associated with childbearing in the ancient world. Trapped in the city with limited resources of food and water, the people can survive for only a short time, like children stuck in a prolonged labor, who waste away in the birth canal. The people are utterly defenseless and dependent on their mother to deliver them from danger, but she is unable to help them. The child metaphor offers a poignant description of the plight of Jerusalem’s inhabitants, and as Bergmann observes, it serves “to heighten the sense of urgency and to describe the crisis in the most dire terms.”⁹¹ However, in the context of Hezekiah’s appeal to Isaiah, which aims to persuade YHWH to come to the people’s rescue (see v. 4), it may also seek to elicit YHWH’s compassion.⁹²

Isaiah 49:17, 20, 22, 25; 50:1

The first clear reference to Zion’s בנים is found in 49:14–50:3, which initially addresses the city’s complaint that YHWH has forgotten her (49:14) with promises of renewal involving her children:⁹³

מהרו בניך	17	“Your children/builders hasten;
מהרסִיך ומחרבִיך		those who tore you down* and made you desolate
מנך יצאו		go out from you.
שאי־סביב עיניך ורא	18	Lift up your eyes all around and see.
כלם נקבצו באו־לך		All of them are gathered; they come to you.
חִי־אני נא־יְהוָה		As I live,” declares YHWH,

88. Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, “No Strength to Deliver: A Contextual Analysis of Hezekiah’s Proverb in Isaiah 37.3b,” in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996) 243; similarly Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter* (HSM 62; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004) 83–84, who sees this gendered image as casting shame on the men of the city for their military failings.

89. Both use בנים and שבר; also compare לדה in 37:3 with ילד in 66:9.

90. Noting the links to chap. 66, Darr contends that the reader of Isaiah may connect the mother in 37:3 with Jerusalem, regardless of the understanding of the original author (“No Strength to Deliver,” 253).

91. Claudia D. Bergmann, *Childbirth as a Metaphor for Crisis: Evidence from the Ancient Near East, the Hebrew Bible, and 1QH XI, 1–18* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008) 93.

92. Darr, “No Strength to Deliver,” 244; contra Bergmann, *Childbirth as a Metaphor*, 93.

93. See further p. 91, as well as pp. 69, 81, and 117.

כי כלם כעדי תלבשי ותקשרים ככלה	39	“surely you will put them all on as ornaments and will bind them like a bride.
כי חרבתיך ושממתיך וארץ הרסתיך		For [as for] your wastelands and your desolate places and your destroyed land,
כי עתה תצרי מיושב ורחקו מבלעיך		surely now you will be cramped from inhabitants, and those who swallowed you up will be far away.
עוד יאמרו באזניך בני שכליך	20	Again they will say in your ears, the children of your bereavement,
צר-לי המקום גשה-לי ואשבה		‘this place is too cramped for me; make room for me that I may dwell.’”
...
כה-אמר אדני יהוה הנה אשא אל-גוים ידי	22	Thus says the Lord YHWH, “See, I will lift my hand to the nations,
ואל-עמים ארים נסי		and to the peoples I will raise my banner.
והביאו בניך בחצן ובנתיך על-כתף תנשאנה		And they will bring your sons in [their] bosom, and your daughters will be carried on [their] shoulder.
והיו מלכים אמניך ושרותיהם מיניקתיך	23a	And kings will be your keepers [of children], and their queens your wet-nurses.
...
ואת-יריבך אנכי אריב	25b	And the one who contends with you, I myself will contend with,
ואת-בניך אנכי אושיע		and your children I will save.”

* This translation follows the Piel ptc. in the MT (cf. the Tg. and most English translations). Some commentators follow 1QIsa^a, which has מן + a Qal ptc., reading the preposition as a comparative: “Your builders move faster than your destroyers” (Watts, *Isaiah* 34–66, 183, 185; see also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 307, 309; the NRSV). However, there are no similar instances of מן + מור used comparatively (Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah* 40–55, 2:187), and that reading blunts the parallelism of the verse (see Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 301 n. 58).

In the consonantal Hebrew text, בניך in the first line of v. 17 could refer either to “children” (בְּנֵיךָ)⁹⁴ or “builders” (בְּנֵיךָ),⁹⁵ and both options fit the context. On the one hand, “builders” provides an apt contrast with “those who tore you down” and coheres well with the reference to Zion’s “walls” in v. 16. On the other hand, Zion’s “children” reappear in vv. 20, 22, and 25, and v. 22 specifies that they will be brought to Zion, making it likely that they are also those who “are gathered” in v. 18. Thus, an intentional wordplay seems likely⁹⁶—Zion’s children will hurry back to rebuild her.

The child image is combined with the further metaphor of the people as bridal ornaments (v. 18); these interact to highlight the shared associ-

94. So the MT, followed by Σ; also the NIV, NLT, JPSV.

95. So the LXX (also A and Θ), Vg., Tg., and 1QIsa^a; also the NASB, ESV, NRSV; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 307; Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 175; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 164, 166; Jan de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah* (TCT 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997) 184; Kathleen M. O’Connor, “‘Speak Tenderly to Jerusalem’: Second Isaiah’s Reception and Use of Daughter Zion,” *PSB* 20 (1999) 288.

96. Childs, *Isaiah*, 392; Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 307; Hans-Jürgen Hermissen, “Die Frau Zion,” in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah* (ed. J. Van Ruiten and M. Vervenne; BETL 132; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997) 32.

ated commonplaces of joy and honor. The once desolate and lonely Zion (vv. 19a, 21) will now experience all the happiness and blessing associated with a wedding and the arrival of children—the most profound celebrations of human life. Moreover, having children once again will beautify her and elevate her to a place of distinction. The text further emphasizes Zion's prospective joy by describing how her children will fill her land to overflowing (v. 19). "The children of [her] bereavement" who complain of crowded conditions in v. 20 could designate children born during her period of bereavement,⁹⁷ but given the reference to the return of her children in vv. 22–23, they more likely signify those of whom she believed herself to be bereaved but who are, in fact, alive.⁹⁸

In response to Zion's question concerning where these children have been (v. 21), YHWH states that at his command the nations will come to Zion, carrying her children and even serving as caretakers and wet nurses (vv. 22–23; cf. v. 25). Although much of the passage emphasizes the unqualified nature of YHWH's promises of renewal for Zion and "all of" her children (v. 18), v. 23b offers a brief hint that YHWH acts on behalf of "those who wait on [him]."⁹⁹

The positive depiction of the children in 49:14–26 gives way to a more accusatory tone in 50:1–3:¹⁰⁰

1	כה אמר יהוה	Thus says YHWH,
	אי זה ספר כריתות אמכם	"Where is the certificate of divorce of your mother,
	אשר שלחתי	whom I sent away?
	או מי מנושי	Or which of my creditors
	אשר־מכרתי אתכם לו	is the one to whom I have sold you?
	הן בעונותיכם נמכרתם	See, because of your iniquities, you have been sold,
	ובפשעיכם	and because of your rebellions,
	שלחה אמכם	your mother has been sent away.
2a	מדוע באתי ואין איש	Why have I come and there is no one?
	קראתי ואין עונה	[Why] have I called and no one answers?*
	הקצור קצרה ידי מפרות	Is my hand really too short to redeem,
	ואם־אין־בי כח להציל	or is there not strength in me to rescue?"

* Dille proposes reading the first two lines of v. 2a as coming from the lips of Zion (*Mixing Metaphors*, 166–68), but it is more natural to take it as a continuation of YHWH's speech (cf. 65:1–2), particularly because v. 1 addresses Zion's children, not Zion herself.

Now YHWH addresses Zion's children, who are apparently questioning his power and character in light of the exilic desolation of both people

97. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 312; Christopher R. Seitz, "The Book of Isaiah 40–66," in *NIB* (13 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2001) 6:431; cf. the NIV and NRSV.

98. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985) 160; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 166; cf. the JPSV.

99. Marjo C. A. Korpel, "The Female Servant of the LORD in Isaiah 54," in *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkelen van Dijk-Hemmes* (ed. Bob Becking and Meindert Dijkstra; BIS 18; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 167.

100. On these verses, see further pp. 94 and 117.

and city. He declares that he sent their mother away because of their own “rebellions” (פִּשְׁעֵי). Moreover, while they may think YHWH has sold them off to repay his own debts, his pointed rhetorical question prompts them to acknowledge that he has no creditors (v. 1a).¹⁰¹ They have been sold on account of their own sins (v. 1b), not because YHWH was unable to deliver them, as vv. 2b–3 make clear with their emphasis on YHWH’s power.

The passage seeks to transform the perspectives of both Zion and her children concerning their current desperate situation. Zion sees herself as forsaken by YHWH (49:14), and the rhetorical aim of YHWH’s response is to reassure her of his continued concern and promise to bring restoration (49:15–26). In that context, the primary focus of the child metaphor is on the honor, blessing, and joy that her abundance of children will bring her (cf. Ps 127:3–5). In general, these verses downplay both the people’s responsibilities and privileges as Zion’s children. However, if v. 17 contains an intentional wordplay on “children” and “builders,” it suggests that the returning children will have a role to play in Zion’s redevelopment. In contrast, by portraying them as infants nursed by foreign queens, v. 23 highlights their vulnerability and dependence.¹⁰² Without their land, represented by its capital city, the people are like lost children, lacking parents to give them an identity and care for their needs until their divinely appointed foster parents lead them home.

Turning to these children in 50:1–3, however, YHWH’s aim is to overturn their perception of what has brought about their current situation by declaring that they alone are to blame for their suffering.¹⁰³ Thus, he offers an implicit warning about the fruit of rebellion, perhaps as part of a secondary rhetorical aim of persuading the people to turn from their sin. Despite the prominence of rebellion in this passage, the child metaphor contributes little to this theme because the people’s behavior is not described as filial defiance against the one parent mentioned in the text—their mother Zion. Rather, the people have rebelled against YHWH, who, as Zion’s ex-husband and the one accused of selling them into debt-slavery, may be understood as their father (cf. 1:2),¹⁰⁴ though this identification is not explicitly made by the text and thus carries little rhetorical weight in its argument. In portraying the people as the children of Zion, the passage emphasizes the close

101. See also Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 375.

102. See Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 53.

103. See Richtsje Abma, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery, Isaiah 50:1–3 and 54:1–10, Hosea 1–3, Jeremiah 2–3* (Assen: van Gorcum, 1999) 66.

104. See Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 65; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 191. Some Old Babylonian adoption contracts and Sumerian law codes stipulate that an adopted child who repudiated his parents was to be sold into slavery (Maria deJ. Ellis, “An Old Babylonian Adoption Contract from Tell Harmal,” *JCS* 27 [1975] 130; Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* [2nd ed.; SBLWAW 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997] 44; Melynk, “When Israel Was a Child,” 256), and that practice may provide the background here (Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 164).

relationship between the people and their city-mother, whose fates are inextricably linked.¹⁰⁵

Isaiah 51:18, 20

In 51:9–52:12 the focus returns to Mother Zion, and her children are mentioned not in promises of her coming renewal, but in a description of her current pitiable state:¹⁰⁶

התעוררי התעוררי	51:17	Wake yourself, wake yourself;
קומי ירושלם		stand up, O Jerusalem,
אשר שתית מיד יהוה		you who have drunk from the hand of YHWH
את-כוס חמתו		the cup of his wrath.
את-קבעת כוס התרעלה		The goblet, the cup of staggering
שתית מצית		you have drunk, you have drained.
אין-מנהל לה	18	There is no one to guide her
מכל-בנים ילדה		out of all the sons she has borne.
ואין מחזיק בידה		And there is no one to take her by the hand
מכל-בנים גדלה		out of all the sons she has brought up.
...		...
בניך עלפו	20	Your sons have fainted;
שכבר בראש כל-חוצות		they lie at the head of all the streets
כתוא מכמר		like an antelope [in] a net.
המלאים חמת-יהוה		They are full of the wrath of YHWH,
גערת אלהיך		the rebuke of your God.

The Ugaritic 'Aqhatu legend lists "to take his hand when (he is) drunk" as one of the duties a son owes his father.¹⁰⁷ Here, Mother Zion lies drunk (see v. 21) from "the cup of [YHWH's] wrath" (חמה, v. 17), and none of the many sons she has borne and raised are there to support and lead her in her weakened state (v. 18). Klaus Baltzer views these verses as "criticizing the 'sons' who have not helped their mother in her degradation."¹⁰⁸ Verse 20 clarifies, however, that they are not guilty of negligence but are unable to help because they too have been incapacitated.¹⁰⁹ Like their mother, they lie prostrate on the ground, either passed out or dead, apparently because

105. See Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 165.

106. See further p. 95, as well as pp. 72, and 168.

107. "The 'Aqatu Legend," translated by Dennis Pardee (COS 1:344). On the context of this responsibility, see further M. J. Boda, "Ideal Sonship in Ugarit," *UF* 25 (1993) 18–19.

108. Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 367; see also Reinoud Oosting, *The Role of Zion/Jerusalem in Isaiah 40–55: A Corpus-Linguistic Approach* (SSN 59; Leiden: Brill, 2013) 150–51, 244–45, who contends that these verses refer to the Israelites who fled to Egypt in contrast to the returning Babylonian exiles who are designated as the children of Zion in 49:17–25.

109. See Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah Chapters 49–55* (vol. 2 of *Isaiah III*; trans. Anthony P. Ru-nia; 3 vols.; HKAT; Leuven: Peeters, 1998) 200. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer sees the sons here as "the present population in Jerusalem who are unable to lead the city (v. 18), yet also the slain sons whose corpses were lying around in Jerusalem immediately after the Babylonian onslaught in 586 BC (v. 20)," therefore understanding it as a critique of the former (*For the Comfort of Zion: The Geographical and Theological Location of Isaiah 40–55* [VTSup 139;

they drank from the same toxic cup as their mother.¹¹⁰ Many of them have been cut down by “famine and sword” (see v. 19), and they are like trapped animals, their immobile bodies strewn about “at the head of all the streets” for all to see their wretchedness (v. 20a; cf. Lam 2:19, 4:1; Nah 3:10).

Although the larger passage aims to persuade the people of Israel to do their part in accomplishing their own restoration (52:11–12) in response to YHWH’s deliverance (52:3, 8–10), the child metaphor is not employed in the service of that primary aim. Surprisingly, when the passage portrays Zion’s redemption and the people’s return to the land (see 52:9–12), it does not identify the people as Zion’s children. Instead, the child metaphor is used in this passage to emphasize the responsibility of Zion’s sons, here depicted as adolescent or adult males, to support their mother but also indicates that they are no longer capable of providing that assistance. Therefore, as in 49:14–26, Zion is essentially childless, utterly alone and vulnerable.¹¹¹

Isaiah 54:1, 13

When Zion next appears in chap. 54, her incapacitated sons have disappeared, and the city is presented as a barren woman (vv. 1–3) whose situation is about to be overturned:¹¹²

1 רני עקרה	“Shout for joy, O barren one,
לא ילדה	who did not bear;
פצחי רנה וצהלי	break forth in a cry of joy and shout,
לא-חלה	you who have not been in labor.
כי-רבים בני-שוממה	For more are the children of the desolate one
מבני בעולה אמר יהוה	than the children of the married one,” says YHWH.
2 הרחיבי מקום אהלך	“Enlarge the place of your tent,
וריעות משכנותיך יטו	and let the curtains of your dwellings stretch out.
אל-תחשכי	Do not hold back;
האריכי מתריך	lengthen your tent-cords,
ויתדתיך חזקי	and strengthen your tent-pegs.
3 כי-ימין ושמאול תפרצי	For to the right and to the left you will spread out.
וזרעך גוים יירש	And your offspring will dispossess nations,
וערים נשמות יושבו	and they will settle in the desolate cities.

13 וכל-בניך למודי יהוה
ורב שלום בניך

And all your children will be taught by YHWH,
and great will be the peace of your children.*

* 1QIsa^a has a superscripted *ו*, producing בניכי (“your builders”; see also R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66* [NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975] 188–89), which coheres with the description of Zion’s reconstruction in vv. 11–12. The LXX, Vg., and Tg., however, all follow the MT, reading “children” as in the first line of the verse (see also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 358; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 425). A wordplay may be intended (cf. 49:17; see Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 385–86).

Leiden: Brill, 2010] 295). However, the most straightforward reading is to interpret v. 18 in light of v. 20, taking both as signifying the sons killed or exiled in the Babylonian siege.

110. Note that they also “are full of the wrath (המח) of YHWH” (see Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 191; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 354).

111. Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 133.

112. See further pp. 97, 118, and 170.

As in 49:17–26, Zion will soon experience the blessing of overcrowding as she teems with children, who will repopulate all of the land's abandoned cities and even take territory from the nations (v. 3). Moreover, these children will be “taught by YHWH” and will experience an abundance of “peace” (v. 13). Directed to Mother Zion, this passage aims to convince her that YHWH is bringing about a complete restoration of both city and people. The child metaphor is used to emphasize the honor and delight that the new citizens of Zion will bring to their city-mother. Whereas in 51:18 Zion had no offspring to guide her, now she will be led by children who are well-instructed in YHWH's ways, resulting in security and well-being. The passage closes by identifying Zion's children with YHWH's “servants” (v. 17).¹¹³ The latter image limits the former, qualifying what it means to be a true child of Zion.

Isaiah 57:3

Although Zion is no longer barren in 57:3–13, her children are not living by YHWH's instruction (54:13) but are following in the idolatrous footsteps of their mother. The bulk of the passage is directed toward the adulterous conduct of Mother Zion, but it begins with an address to her children:¹¹⁴

3	ואתם קרבו־הנה	But you, come here,
	בני עננה	children of a sorceress,
	זרע מנאף	offspring of an adulterer
	ותזונה	and [a woman who] is promiscuous.
4	עלי־מי תתענגו	Of whom do you make fun?
	עלי־מי תרחיבו פה	At whom do you open wide your mouth
	תאריכו לשון	[and] stick out your tongue?
	הלא־אתם ילדי־פשע	Are you not children of rebellion,
	זרע שקר	offspring of deceit,
5	הנחמים באלים	who have become hot among the terebinths,*
	תחת כל־עץ רענן	under every luxuriant tree,
	שחטי הילדים בנחלים	who sacrifice [your] children in the wadis,
	תחת סעפי הסלעים	under the clefts of the rocks?

* This translation understands אלים as a defective plural of איל due to the parallel with עץ in the next line (see the English translations), but the LXX, Vg., and Tg. all translate it as “idols” (from אל). Given the prevalence of wordplays in the passage, the word may be intentionally ambiguous (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 157; Theodore J. Lewis, “Death Cult Imagery in Isaiah 57,” *HAR* 11 [1987] 279; Koole, *Isaiah 56–66*, 57).

While chaps. 49–54 may imply that YHWH is the father of Zion's children, despite his reluctance to adopt that title, here YHWH explicitly disavows

113. Maier suggests that the passage avoids referring to YHWH as father because it would imply sexual activity between him and Zion (*Daughter Zion*, 191). There may be some truth to this statement, but as already noted, YHWH never identifies himself as the people's father after chap. 45. Thus the omission may have more to do with a broader reluctance to use that metaphor in this section of the book.

114. See further pp. 122; also, p. 99.

them, declaring that they are the products of Zion's adulterous trysts.¹¹⁵ As with vulgar English expressions used to disparage someone by insulting his or her mother, describing the children's parentage in this way casts a dark shadow over their character.¹¹⁶

The passage demonstrates that this disrepute is deserved by noting that the people are openly mocking YHWH their God (v. 4a) by their blatant engagement in idolatrous practices, even including child sacrifice (v. 5b).¹¹⁷ The verbal form הִנְחָמִים in v. 5a is often translated "who burn with lust,"¹¹⁸ and it is typically understood as either implying their engagement in sexual fertility rites or metaphorically casting the people's idolatrous practice as promiscuity.¹¹⁹ However, Israel's participation in fertility rites is questionable,¹²⁰ and while the passage describes Zion's idolatrous practice as adultery (see v. 3), it does not elsewhere use sexual language to portray the religious failings of her children.¹²¹ Thus, it may be best to follow Sharon Moughtin-Mumby in understanding הִנְחָמִים as indicating simply that the people "are warmed," perhaps suggesting that they are deriving heat from the same fires in which they are sacrificing their children (see v. 5b).¹²²

The people are further described as "children of rebellion" (יְלִדֵי-פֶשַׁע, v. 4; cf. 1:2), but as in 50:1, their rebellion is not against parental authority but against YHWH their God.¹²³ Moreover, they are "offspring of deceit," perhaps because they profess allegiance to YHWH even while turning against him. Both phrases also hint at their origin in the rebellious and deceitful

115. See Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., *Whoredom: God's Unfaithful Wife in Biblical Theology* (NSBT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 80 n. 12.

116. Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, "'Alas, She Has Become a Harlot,' but Who's to Blame? Unfaithful-Female Imagery in Isaiah's Vision," in *Passion, Vitality, and Foment: The Dynamics of Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Lamontte M. Luker; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001) 69.

117. Contra Childs, *Isaiah*, 466; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 476, who see the righteous as the object of the mocking. Note that the rhetorical questions in v. 4 resemble those in 37:23 asking whom Sennacherib has reviled, and there the object of his derision is identified as "the Holy One of Israel" (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 157; Joachim Becker, "Zur Deutung von Jes 57,4a," *BN* 118 [2003] 18).

118. See the ESV, NIV; similarly the NASB, JPSV.

119. For the former, see Susan Ackerman, "Sacred Sex, Sacrifice and Death: Understanding a Prophetic Poem," *BRev* 6 (1990) 38; Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 551; for the latter, see Elaine June Adler, "The Background for the Metaphor of Covenant as Marriage in the Hebrew Bible" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1990) 274–77.

120. See p. 111 n. 109.

121. Other passages outside Isaiah depict the people as promiscuously pursuing other gods (e.g., Exod 34:16, Lev 17:7), but here that language is wrapped up in the marriage metaphor and applied to Zion, YHWH's errant wife.

122. Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 144–45, and n. 172. She observes that "to become hot" is the standard meaning of חָמַם in the HB (see 44:15–16). Following the Syr. and Vg. (cf. the LXX), Blenkinsopp derives הִנְחָמִים instead from נָחַם, translating, "You who seek consolation" (*Isaiah 56–66*, 152, 157–58).

123. See Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 69, 185.

act of their mother's infidelity.¹²⁴ Although the passage does not comment on the fate of Zion's children, continued rebellion will undoubtedly lead them, like their mother, to cry out for help without receiving deliverance as they discover that their idols are powerless to save (see v. 13a). Yet there is still hope for these children if they will only turn back to YHWH, for "the one who takes refuge" (החוסה) in him "will possess" his "holy mountain" (v. 13b).¹²⁵

The appalling portraits of both Zion and her children in this passage aim to shock the people into recognizing how contemptible their behavior truly is, and v. 13 seeks to convince them of the futility of their idolatry and drive them to return to YHWH. The child metaphor is used here to highlight the similarities between the children and their mother (cf. 50:1). As the offspring of an adulterous (that is, idolatrous) union, the people have inherited a tendency toward idolatry, suggesting that they will also share their mother's fate.

Isaiah 60:4, 9

Whereas 57:3–13 emphasized the connectedness between mother and children, dwelling on the negative aspect of their shared guilt, the next mention of Zion's children in chap. 60 highlights the physical distance between them, though promising an imminent joyous reunion:¹²⁶

4	שאי־סביב עיניך וראי	Lift up your eyes all around and see.
	כלם נקבצו באור־לך	All of them gather together; they come to you.
	בניך מרחוק יבאו	Your sons will come from afar,
	ובנותיך על־צד תאמנה	and your daughters will be supported on the hip.
...
9a	כי־לי איים יקוו	For the islands wait for me,
	ואניות תרשיש	and the ships of Tarshish first,
	בראשנה	
	להביא בניך מרחוק	to bring your children* from afar,
	כסףם וזהבם אתם	their silver and their gold with them.
* 1QIsa ^a has בני ("my [YHWH's] children"), undoubtedly a harmonization with 43:6, the only other instance of Hiphil מרחוק + בן + בוא.		

Verse 4a is an exact quotation of 49:18a, in which "all of them" (כלם) who "come" (Qal בוא) to Zion, clearly refers back to the children/builders in v. 17. Here, however, the "kings" and "nations" drawn to Zion's resplendence, according to v. 3, are the most natural antecedent.¹²⁷ Verse 9 further explains their role, noting that the islands and ships of Tarshish await

124. Similarly Adler, "Background for the Metaphor," 273.

125. This verse provides a contrast to 30:2, which describes YHWH's children as going "to seek refuge (לחסות) in the shade of Egypt."

126. See further pp. 101; also, p. 81.

127. See also Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 231; Roy D. Wells, "'They All Gather, They Come to You': History, Utopia, and the Reading of Isaiah 49:18–26 and 60:4–16," in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* (ed. A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim; SBLAIL

YHWH's command to "bring" (Hiphil בוא) both Zion's children and their own wealth to the glorious city. Nevertheless, as in 49:18, Zion's sons are not entirely passive; they too respond to the lure of the city's glorious light and "come (Qal בוא) from afar" (v. 4b).¹²⁸ While Zion's בנים are joyfully reunited with their city-mother, the בני-נכר will be put to work rebuilding the city they once destroyed (v. 10a). Although that phrase is simply an idiomatic expression for "foreigners," the context suggests an intentional contrast between these "children of the foreigner" and Zion's children, particularly in light of the unique phrase בני מעניך ("the children of those who afflicted you") in v. 14.

As in 49:14–26 and 54:1–17, this passage aims to transform Zion's understanding of her situation, giving her hope that she will soon experience complete restoration and even a glory beyond what she has ever known. The child metaphor is employed as part of the passage's depiction of the future increase of her splendor. As in 49:22–23, 60:4 depicts Zion's daughters as infants or toddlers carried by the nations, and the description of foreigners "bring[ing]" her בנים in v. 9 suggests that that image of youth and dependence also extends to her male inhabitants.¹²⁹ There is no hint of the children's responsibility toward their mother (as in 51:18). Instead, the passage emphasizes the associated commonplaces of joy and delight accompanying the children's return, as Mother Zion greets them with a heart trembling in wondrous elation (see v. 5).

Isaiah 62:5

The joyful reunion of mother and children in chap. 60 reaches new heights in chap. 62, which depicts Zion's future restoration with an astonishing image of the city marrying her sons:¹³⁰

4 לא-יאמר לך עוד עזובה	You will no longer be called "Forsaken,"
ולארצך לא-יאמר עוד	and your land will no longer be called
שמה	"A Desolation."
כי לך יקרא חפצי-בה	But you will be called "My Delight Is in Her,"
ולארצך בעולה	and your land "Married."
כי-חפץ יהיה בך	For YHWH delights in you,

4; Atlanta: SBL, 2009) 203. However, the LXX has "your children" as subject in place of כלם (similarly, the Tg.).

128. Carol J. Dempsey, "From Desolation to Delight: The Transformative Vision of Isaiah 60–62," in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* (ed. A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim; SBLAIL 4; Atlanta: SBL, 2009) 220.

129. Gary Smith takes the reference to Zion's daughters being supported on the hip as communicating merely "that no one will be left behind, not even the helpless children who are not yet able to walk" (*Isaiah* 40–66, 616). However, that seems to reflect some confusion of tenor and vehicle. The daughters are the vehicle by which the tenor—Zion's female inhabitants, both young and old—is portrayed. They are depicted as being carried, not because they represent literal Israelite babies, but to evoke associations of utter vulnerability and dependence, which are then applied to all Zion's women.

130. See further p. 126 and pp. 74, 104, and 129.

וארצך תבעל	and your land will be married.
5 כִּי־יִבְעַל בַּחֹר בְּתוּלָה	For [as] a young man marries a maiden,
יִבְעִלוּךְ בָּנֶיךָ	your sons will marry you.
וּמִשׁוּשׁ חֲתָן	And [with] the rejoicing of a bridegroom
עַל־כַּלָּה	over a bride,
יִשְׂשׁוּ עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ	your God will rejoice over you.

Given the obvious infelicities in this portrait of Zion's unorthodox marriage, BHS suggests emending the MT's בָּנֶיךָ to בְּנֶיךָ ("your builder") on analogy with Ps 147:2, which describes YHWH building Jerusalem.¹³¹ The LXX, Tg., and Vg., however, all support the MT,¹³² though interpreting it as an image of Zion's sons inhabiting her.

The interaction between the metaphors of Zion's inhabitants as her sons and husband will be discussed further in chap. 4.¹³³ For now, it is worth noting that the mother-sons image receives no further elaboration in the passage. Therefore, the passage seems simply to assume the use of this metaphor elsewhere in Isaiah 40–66 as suggesting the close association between mother and children, though here, unlike in 49:17–26 and 60:4–9, the sons take a more active role in reuniting with Zion.

Isaiah 66:8

The final appearance of Zion's children in the climactic vision of chaps. 65–66 again portrays them as infants, now miraculously birthed by their city-mother:¹³⁴

7 בְּטֶרֶם תַּחֲלִי לִידָה	"Before she was in labor, she bore a child.
בְּטֶרֶם יִבּוֹא חֶבֶל לָהּ	Before labor pains came upon her,
וְהִמְלִיטָה זָכָר	she delivered a boy.
8 מִי־שָׁמַע כִּזָּאת	Who has ever heard such a thing?
מִי רָאָה כֵּאלֵּה	Who has ever seen such things?
הֲיִוָּחַל אֶרֶץ בְּיוֹם אֶחָד	Can a land be birthed in one day?
אִם־יִוָּלֵד גּוֹי כָּעַם אֶחָד	Can a nation be born all at once?

131. So the NRSV, NJB, NIV; also Gerlinde Baumann, *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003) 189; Nelly Stienstra, *YHWH Is the Husband of His People: Analysis of a Biblical Metaphor with Special Reference to Translation* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993) 176–77; J. C. de Moor, "Structure and Redaction: Isaiah 60,1–63,6," in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah* (ed. J. Van Ruiten and M. Vervenne; BETL 132; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997) 332; similarly Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 372, who retains the plural ("builders"; cf. 49:17).

132. Followed by the ESV, NASB, JPSV; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 232–33; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 181; T. David Andersen, "Renaming and Wedding Imagery in Isaiah 62," *Bib* 67 (1986) 79; Mark E. Biddle, "The Figure of Lady Jerusalem: Identification, Deification and Personification of Cities in the ANE," in *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspectives* (ed. K. Lawson Younger, William W. Hallo, and Bernard F. Batto; ScrCon 4; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991) 183.

133. See p. 129.

134. See further p. 104, as well as pp. 33 and 174.

כִּי־חָלָה	But as soon as she was in labor,
גַּם־יָלְדָה צִיּוֹן אֶת־בְּנֶיהָ	Zion bore her children.
...	...
שִׂמְחוּ אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם	10 Rejoice with Jerusalem,
וְגִילוּ בָּהּ כָּל־אֹהֲבֶיהָ	and be glad over her, all you who love her.
שִׂישׁוּ אִתָּהּ מְשׁוֹשׁ	Rejoice with her in joy,
כָּל־הַמְתַּאבְּלִים עָלֶיהָ	all you who mourn over her,
לִמְעַן תִּינָקוּ	11 that you may nurse
וְשִׂבְעֶתֶם מִשֵּׁד תְּנַחֲמֶיהָ	and be satisfied from her comforting breast,
לִמְעַן תִּמְצְוּ	that you may drink deeply
וְהִתְעַנְגַתֶּם מִזֵּדוֹ כְּבוֹדָהּ	and take delight from her glorious bosom."
כִּי־כֵן אָמַר יְהוָה	12 For thus says YHWH,
הִנְנִי נֹטֶה־אֵלַיָּה כְּנָהָר שְׁלֹמֹם	"See, I am extending to her peace like a river,
וּכְנָחַל שׁוֹטֵף	and like an overflowing stream
כְּבוֹד גּוֹיִם	the glory of nations,
וְיִנָּקֶתֶם	and you will nurse.*
עַל־צֵד תִּנְשָׂאוּ	On the hip you will be carried,
וְעַל־בְּרָכִים תִּשְׁעָשְׁעוּ	and on the knees you will be dandled."

* The LXX reads a substantive ("their children") and understands it as the subject of the next two verbs, which are transcribed as 3rd per. rather than 2nd. 1QIsa^a, though fragmented, may support the LXX (so Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 304), but 1QIsa^b follows the MT, as does the Vg. (cf. the Tg.). The reference in the LXX to "their" (the nations'?) children makes little sense in the context; therefore, the MT should be preferred (see Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 268 n. 54).

Verses 7–9 portray Zion giving birth to a whole nation at once; however, unlike 54:1–3, here the accent lies not on the vast multitude of Zion's children but on the miraculous nature of the birth, occurring without labor pains.¹³⁵ Verse 10 turns to address a masculine plural audience, described as those "who love" and "mourn over" Zion, who should also be identified with those who fear YHWH and are rejected by their brothers in v. 5. They are called to "rejoice with" the city "in joy" in order that they may nurse at her breast to satiation (v. 11) and rest in her loving embrace (v. 12b). Thus, vv. 5 and 10 qualify which people of Israel belong among Zion's children.

As part of YHWH's response to the lamenter's entreaties in 63:7–64:11[12], 66:7–14 aims to assure the people that YHWH will indeed intervene on behalf of desolate Zion (see 64:9–11[10–12]), offering her an incredible future. As elsewhere, her promised future involves the acquisition of children; however, this passage develops the child metaphor in different directions. First of all, rather than portraying the homecoming of Zion's exiled children (49:17–22; 60:4, 9), it depicts the oppressed minority of YHWH-fearers as her yet-to-be-born babies (cf. 54:1), suggesting a fundamental break with their current situation as they experience rebirth into the blessings of the eschatological Zion.¹³⁶ Moreover, it expressly denies the negative associa-

135. Ulrich Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja: Komposition und Endgestalt* (HBS 16; Freiburg: Herder, 1998) 525.

136. See Helen Schüngel-Straumann, "Mutter Zion im Alten Testament," in *Theologie zwischen Zeiten und Kontinenten* (ed. Theodore Schneider and Helen Schüngel-Straumann;

tions with childbearing by describing a pain-free labor and giving assurance of a positive outcome (vv. 7–9).¹³⁷

Second, for the first time the children are portrayed as receiving sustenance from their mother, which she provides in abundance. And finally, the picture of the people being dandled on their mother's knees foregrounds the intimacy, tender love, and mutual joy of the mother-child relationship in a way unparalleled in the rest of the book. Thus, Isaiah closes with the promise that the faithful and long-beleaguered people of YHWH will finally find security, rest, and delight in the lavish care of their city-mother as they, like helpless infants, depend on her to provide for all their needs.¹³⁸

Summary

Set against the background of exile and the initial return to the land, the latter chapters of Isaiah repeatedly describe the people of Israel as the children of their devastated capital city. For a people who have experienced a loss of identity in Babylonian exile, the metaphor reestablishes a close-knit bond with their homeland.¹³⁹ Most of the passages employing this metaphor address Mother Zion rather than the children themselves, but by enabling the people to eavesdrop on these words, the prophetic speaker gives them a glimpse of what their homecoming will mean to their city-mother.¹⁴⁰ Although they are currently marginalized and subject to the whims of their foreign rulers, they are still of inestimable worth to Mother Zion. Now she despondently grieves their loss (49:21) and languishes helplessly under YHWH's judgment with no sons to support her (51:18–20). But soon she will joyfully welcome her children home, and they will adorn her with beauty and honor like bridal ornaments (49:17–18; cf. 54:1–3, 60:4–5).

Those who return to the city, however, do not initially experience all the anticipated bliss of the familial reunion. The bond between Zion and her children provides not only a source of identity and comfort but also a lure to engage in the idolatrous worship out of which the children were borne (57:3–5). Only by taking refuge in YHWH and acting as his servants will the people escape judgment and inherit YHWH's promises of a renewed, eschatological Zion (57:13, 66:7–14). Then their relationship to the restored city

Freiburg: Herder, 1993) 27; Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 255–56. Berges contends that the rather unusual use of Hiphil מלט to refer to the delivery of Zion's children (v. 7) also suggests their salvation, noting the use of Niphal מלט in 49:24–25. Here, however, their deliverance is not from foreign rulers in exile but from opponents within their own community (*Jesaja*, 524–25).

137. On negative uses of childbirth imagery, see 37:3; also Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 102–3.

138. Similarly Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 204.

139. Gregory Lee Cuéllar, *Voices of Marginality: Exile and Return in Second Isaiah 40–55 and the Mexican Immigrant Experience* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008) 79–81; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 190.

140. Patricia Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 181.

will resemble the unity of the marriage bond (62:5). Moreover, in striking contrast to the earlier portrait of the people languishing in their mother's birth canal (37:3), now they will nurse contentedly at their mother's breasts, taking comfort in her soothing embrace (66:10–12).

Conclusion

Although some passages in Isaiah portray the people of Israel as the children of YHWH and others as the children of his wife, Zion, surprisingly they are never depicted as the children of YHWH and Zion together.¹⁴¹ In chaps. 1–45, they are always YHWH's children (1:2–4; 30:1, 9; 43:6; 45:11), while in chaps. 49–66 they are regularly portrayed as the children of Zion (49:17–25, 50:1, 51:18–20, 54:1–13, 57:3, 60:4–9, 62:5, 66:7–12). Given Zion's marital relationship with YHWH, her children are presumably his as well, yet there seems to be an intentional distancing of them from YHWH after chap. 45.¹⁴² While 54:1–13 offers the clearest vision of familial restoration to be found in Isaiah, it does not explicitly identify YHWH as the father of Zion's children. Moreover, the identification of her children in 57:3 as the offspring of an adulterer suggests that we should be cautious in drawing connections to YHWH too quickly.

Both positive and negative connotations of the metaphor are evoked in descriptions of the people's relationship with YHWH. They are rebellious children, who reject their filial responsibilities and dispute their divine parent's authority, thus meriting punishment (1:2–4; 30:1, 9; 45:11). After the judgment of exile, YHWH offers mercy and restoration in his parental love (43:6, also 66:13), but there are limits to his compassionate commitment. Those who doggedly persist in rebellion will find that they can no longer lay claim to their status as his children (63:7–66:24).

By contrast, when the metaphor is applied to the people's relationship with Zion, the associations are predominantly positive. Even in negative contexts dealing with judgment, the child metaphor is used primarily to emphasize the close connection between the children and their city-mother (50:1, 57:3). Only in 51:18–20 are the children portrayed as having any responsibility toward Mother Zion, and there they are unable, rather than unwilling, to fulfill their duty. Most often, the people are portrayed as soon-to-be-restored or newly born children, who bring unspeakable joy and honor to their once desolate city-mother (49:17–25; 54:1, 13; 60:4–9; 66:7–12).

141. John J. Schmitt points out with regard to the HB more generally that the motherhood of Zion is not always correlated with her relationship to YHWH ("Gender Correctness and Biblical Metaphor: The Case of God's Relation to Israel," *BTB* 26 [1996] 103).

142. See further p. 180.

Chapter 3

Zion and the People as Daughter(s)

While בניִים can include daughters as well as sons, at times Isaiah specifically employs the image of “daughter(s)” (בִּנוֹת/בת). Zion is repeatedly given the title “daughter” (1:8, 10:32, 16:1, 37:22, 52:2, 62:11; see also 22:4, 49:15), and the women of Israel are sometimes called the “daughters” of Mother Zion (3:16–17, 4:4, 49:22, 60:4) and even of YHWH (43:6). These depictions draw on a different set of associated commonplaces than images of the people as בניִים.

Associated Commonplace of the Vehicle: Daughters

In ancient Israel, daughters remained in the household and under the governance of their parents until they were given in marriage by their father and sometimes their brothers (Gen 24:50–51, 29:19; Josh 15:16). Fathers had significant legal authority over their daughters, including the ability to sell them as slaves in times of financial crisis (Exod 21:7) and to release them from rash vows (Num 30:4–6[3–5]). The tragic story of Jephthah demonstrates that, despite certain protections for daughters provided by the law (e.g., Lev 19:29), a father’s failings could leave his daughter vulnerable to violence and abuse (Judg 11:30–40; see also Gen 19:8).¹ However, that narrative also portrays a father’s deep affection for his daughter (Judg 11:35; see also Gen 31:50, 2 Sam 12:3).² Although sons enjoyed a higher status in the family, as those who would carry on the family line and typically inherit the family land, daughters were also a source of great honor and joy (1 Sam 2:20–21, Ps 144:12) and could inherit in the absence of sons (Num 27:1–11). And like women in general, daughters were often praised for their beauty (2 Sam 14:27, Job 42:15, Esth 2:7).

Since a woman’s illicit sexual activity brought shame on her entire household, fathers bore the responsibility to protect their daughters’ chastity (see Genesis 34, Lev 21:9, Deut 22:20–21) and could serve as a witness if their daughter’s premarital virginity was in question (Deut 22:13–19). Because women were dependent on a male protector to provide for them economically and stand up for their legal rights, they were vulnerable without a male advocate. Therefore, widowed women would sometimes return

1. Daniel I. Block, “Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel,” in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (ed. Ken M. Campbell; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003) 55–56; also Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision and the Family of God* (LCBI; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 96.

2. Chrys C. Caragounis, “בִּת,” *NIDOTTE* 1:780.

to their parents' household (Gen 38:11, Ruth 1:8).³ This aspect of vulnerability is often highlighted in biblical depictions of cities as daughters.⁴

Daughter Zion/Jerusalem

Isaiah applies the daughter metaphor most commonly to Israel's capital city, frequently employing the phrase בת־צִיּוֹן, which is found in each of the book's three major sections.

The Meaning of the Phrase בת־צִיּוֹן

The enigmatic phrase בת־צִיּוֹן has long puzzled interpreters, prompting the questions, "Who is the daughter?" and "Whose daughter is she?" In an influential article, William Stinespring chastises translators for frequently rendering the expression as "the daughter of Zion," arguing that it denotes not Zion's daughter but Zion, portrayed as a בת. Thus, he takes בת־צִיּוֹן as an *appositional genitive* on analogy with phrases such as אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן ("the land of Canaan," Gen 17:8),⁵ and many scholars have followed his lead.⁶ However, Aloysius Fitzgerald suggests instead that the phrase should be understood as a case of *simple apposition*,⁷ while others take the בת to refer to an inhabitant of the city, categorizing the expression as either a *genitive of location* or a *genitive of relation*.⁸ But the clear construct form of בתולת בת־צִיּוֹן in בתולת בת־צִיּוֹן

3. Block, "Marriage and Family," 54–55.

4. Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 130. Elaine R. Follis contends that, while sons are typically associated with an "adventurous spirit" and "conquest," daughters invoke images of "stability," "the building up of society," and "culture" ("The Holy City as Daughter," in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* [ed. Elaine R. Follis; JSOTSup 40; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987] 176–77), but she offers no biblical evidence to substantiate that this perception was shared by ancient Israel.

5. William Franklin Stinespring, "No Daughter of Zion: A Study of the Appositional Genitive in Hebrew Grammar," *Enc* 26 (1965) 133, 135, citing GKC §128k.

6. *IBHS* §12.1b; Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 128; Christl M. Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion: Gender, Space, and the Sacred in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008) 62; Maria Häusl, *Bilder der Not: Weiblichkeits- und Geschlechtermetaphorik im Buch Jeremia* (Herders Biblische Studien 37; Freiburg: Herder, 2003) 61; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 183; H. G. M. Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 2006) 68; Adele Berlin, *Lamentations* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002) 10–12; R. B. Salters, *Lamentations: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 2010) 52 n. 56. Magnar Kartveit denies that Hebrew has a genitive case but understands the phrase as an *appositional construct phrase* (*Rejoice, Dear Zion! Hebrew Construct Phrases with 'Daughter' and 'Virgin' as Nomen Regens* [BZAW 447; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013] 178, 181–83).

7. Aloysius Fitzgerald, "The Mythological Background for the Presentation of Jerusalem as a Queen and False Worship as Adultery in the OT," *CBQ* 34 (1972) 409; idem, "BTWLT and BT as Titles for Capital Cities," *CBQ* 37 (1975) 181. Note the article on the related expression הבת ירושלם in Lam 2:13 (Marc Wischnowsky, *Tochter Zion: Aufnahme und Überwindung der Stadtklage in den Prophetenschriften des Alten Testaments* [WMANT 89; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2001] 16 n. 67).

8. For the former, see F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Daughter Zion," in *Thus Says the Lord* (ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook; LHBOTS 502; London: T&T Clark, 2009) 128–30, who compares בת־צִיּוֹן to the Akkadian *mārat* + city name, the Ugaritic *bt ugrt*, and the biblical

("virgin daughter Zion"; Isa 37:22 // 2 Kgs 19:21, Lam 2:13) favors a *genitive* over *simple apposition*. Moreover, because the personified city and בת ציון are depicted similarly and sometimes appear as parallels (e.g., Isa 10:32, 52:2), the best explanation is to follow Stinespring in understanding the phrase as a *genitive of apposition*, which views the city itself as the בת.⁹

According to Stinespring, the expression portrays Zion not as a "daughter" but simply as a "'girl' or 'maiden,'" which he argues "gives connotations of affection and/or misfortune or both."¹⁰ There is, however, no clear evidence that בת can designate a "girl."¹¹ Julie Galambush translates בת ציון as "Daughter Zion" but suggests the metaphor was no longer living when the prophetic oracles were written down.¹² But as Darr rightly observes, a distinction should be made between "dead" and "conventional" metaphors.¹³ The fact that the poets generally mention Daughter Zion (and other city-daughters) without explanation indicates merely that they believed their audience was familiar with the expression, not that בת no longer had metaphorical resonances.¹⁴ Moreover, many passages employ the phrase in the context of a more developed female personification of the city.¹⁵

Although the בת ציון texts never name Zion's parents, the use of בת, as opposed to נערה or בתולה, highlights the relational aspect,¹⁶ encouraging

plural בנות + geographical name, all of which can denote the female inhabitants of the specified location (also idem, "The Syntagma of Bat Followed by a Geographical Name in the Hebrew Bible: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning and Grammar," *CBQ* 57 [1995] 469–70; Kathleen M. O'Connor, "'Speak Tenderly to Jerusalem': Second Isaiah's Reception and Use of Daughter Zion," *PSB* 20 [1999] 284). For the latter explanation, see Michael H. Floyd, "Welcome Back, Daughter of Zion!" *CBQ* 70 (2008) 491–94; idem, "The Daughter of Zion Goes Fishing in Heaven," in *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Flesher; SBLAIL 13; Atlanta: SBL, 2012) 181–83, though he does not use this category (on which, see *IBHS* §9.5.1i).

9. See J. Andrew Dearman, "Daughter Zion and Her Place in God's Household," *HBT* 31 (2009) 149, and note the biblical references to the "gates" (Ps 9:15[14], Lam 2:9), "wall" (Lam 2:8, 18), and "mount" (Isa 10:32, 16:1) of בת ציון.

10. Stinespring, "No Daughter of Zion," 134–37; similarly Berlin, *Lamentations*, 12; Kartveit, *Rejoice, Dear Zion!* 117–28; idem, "Daughter Zion," *TL* 27 (2004) 37.

11. Stinespring cites a parallel with the Arabic word *bint* and draws attention to the use of בת in Ruth 2:8, but on the latter, see Floyd, "Welcome Back," 488–89; Robert L. Hubbard, *The Book of Ruth* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 154.

12. Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife* (SBLDS 130; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 36 n. 34.

13. Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 129.

14. See Hans-Jürgen Hermissin, "Die Frau Zion," in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah* (ed. J. van Ruiten and M. Vervenne; BETL 132; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997) 22.

15. See, e.g., Isaiah 62, Jer 4:30–31, Lamentations 1. Kartveit denies the common trend among recent scholars to view בת ציון as a "persona" or "character," contending that linguistically the phrase denotes "not a person, but a description of a city and her inhabitants" (*Rejoice, Dear Zion!*, 180–81). But Zion is described metaphorically as a בת, and the limits of the metaphor cannot be established on purely linguistic grounds. In light of the further personification of Zion as a woman in some בת ציון texts and the generative power of metaphor, it seems warranted to speak of בת ציון as a female character in the text.

16. See also Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter* (HSM 62; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004) 81.

the reader to reflect creatively on who might fulfill the parental roles. Ezekiel 16 portrays Jerusalem as abandoned by her parents and subsequently adopted by YHWH (vv. 3–7), while in Isa 49:15 YHWH declares that his remembrance of Zion is greater than that of a woman for her nursing infant.¹⁷ Similarly, although speaking to the “house of Israel” rather than to Zion, YHWH declares in Jer 3:19–20, “I said, ‘How I would set you (fem. sg.) among [my] children (בָּנִים, that is, the nations?) and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of the nations.’ And I said, ‘You shall call me “my father”’” (cf. v. 4).¹⁸ Dearman contends that the prominence of kinship terms in the personification of Zion points to a “root metaphor” of “YHWH’s household.” This core metaphor, he argues, forms “a matrix from which the semantic fields related to her various roles [including that of daughter] are derived.”¹⁹ This understanding of Zion as YHWH’s daughter is consistent with Isaiah’s use of the בַּת metaphor, forming the background for a fuller appreciation of Isaiah’s בַּת-צִיּוֹן texts.²⁰

ANE Background

In seeking the origin of the female personification of Zion, Aloysius Fitzgerald contends that in the West Semitic world, capital cities were viewed as goddesses married to their patron god. The biblical writers, he argues, adopted this idea for the literary purpose of heightening descriptions of the city’s disaster, though presumably without actually deifying the city.²¹ The evidence he offers for these conclusions includes Phoenician coins depicting women wearing mural crowns (i.e., crowns depicting the

17. See p. 69.

18. This translation follows the *Qere* readings. Julia M. O’Brien cites Jeremiah 3 as “one case in which Jerusalem seems to be the daughter of *Yahweh*” but contends that many other daughter passages do not imply such a relationship (*Challenging Prophetic Metaphor: Theology and Ideology in the Prophets* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008] 131–34).

19. Dearman, “Daughter Zion,” 154–55.

20. For others who view Zion as YHWH’s daughter, see Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 72–74, 92, 238 n. 64; Irmtraud Fischer, “Das Buch Jesaja: Das Buch der weiblichen Metaphern,” in *Kompendium Feministische Bibelauslegung* (ed. Luise Schottroff and Marie-Theres Wacker; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1998) 253; Caragounis, *NIDOTTE* 1:780–81; Elke Seifert, *Tochter und Vater im Alten Testament: Eine ideologiekritische Untersuchung zur Verfügungsgewalt von Vätern über ihre Töchter* (NTDH 9; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1997) 246–47; Follis, “Holy City,” 182; Jacqueline E. Lapsley, “Look! The Children and I Are as Signs and Portents in Israel: Children in Isaiah,” in *The Child in the Bible* (ed. Marcia J. Bunge, Terence E. Fretheim, and Beverly Roberts Gaventa; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 93; Leo G. Perdue, “The Household, Old Testament Theology, and Contemporary Hermeneutics,” in *Families in Ancient Israel* (ed. Leo G. Perdue et al.; FRC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 232; M. Daniel Carroll R., “Family in the Prophetic Literature,” in *Family in the Bible: Exploring Customs, Culture, and Context* (ed. Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll R.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003) 117–18; Chapman, *Gendered Language*, 82.

21. Fitzgerald, “Mythological Background,” 404–5, 416; see also Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel*, 20–23.

walls of a city), whom he takes as representing deified cities,²² and similar titles applied to both cities and goddesses.²³

In a point-by-point critique, Peggy Day reveals the insufficiency of Fitzgerald's evidence to establish his claims.²⁴ She points out that although Fitzgerald includes "*btwlt/bt*" in his list of titles applied to both cities and goddesses,²⁵ he cites no extrabiblical examples of *bt* and none in which *btwlt* is applied to a city.²⁶ Moreover, while he grounds the use of these titles in his notion of divine marriage, the biblical text employs בַּת־צִיּוֹן in connection with the marriage metaphor only in Isaiah 62,²⁷ which suggests that בַּת־צִיּוֹן is not primarily a bridal image.²⁸ Finally, Fitzgerald fails to explain how the images of "daughter" and "virgin" (*btwlt*) would function when applied to a married and maternal city-goddess.²⁹

Elaine Follis suggests instead a hellenosemitic background, arguing that בַּת־צִיּוֹן "may represent a 'broken myth'" in which the goddess is viewed as a daughter.³⁰ As an exemplar of this myth, Follis points to Athena, virgin daughter of Zeus and goddess of Athens, concluding that "clearly, Athens and Jerusalem were both cities regarded as divinely favored. . . . And both were regarded in figurative language as the daughter of that high god."³¹ Athena is never identified with Athens, however, and as patron deity of the city, her position is closer to that of YHWH than Zion.³² Given the limits of the parallel, the cultural distance between Israel and Greece until the Postexilic Period, and the lack of further evidence for this "hellenosemitic myth," Follis's suggestion remains merely an interesting speculation.

22. See further Mark E. Biddle, "The Figure of Lady Jerusalem: Identification, Deification and Personification of Cities in the ANE," in *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspectives* (ed. K. Lawson Younger, William W. Hallo, and Bernard F. Batto; ScrCon 4; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991) 178–81; also Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 64–69, though she concludes that the image does not signify the city's deification.

23. Fitzgerald, "Mythological Background," 406–12.

24. Peggy L. Day, "The Personification of Cities as Female in the Hebrew Bible: The Thesis of Aloysius Fitzgerald, F. S. C.," in *Reading from This Place* (2 vols.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 2:283–302; see also F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1993) 87; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 63–69; Wischnowsky, *Tochter Zion*, 13–15, 44.

25. See Fitzgerald, "Mythological Background," 409; also idem, "*BTWLT* and *BT*," 182.

26. Day, "Personification of Cities," 2:292.

27. Jeremiah 3 and Ezek 16:3–8 combine the two metaphors but without using the phrase בַּת־צִיּוֹן.

28. See Floyd, "Welcome Back," 495; also Gerlinde Baumann, *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003) 176, though she understands the marriage metaphor as the background for the reference to בַּת־צִיּוֹן in Lam 1:6.

29. Day, "Personification of Cities," 2:298.

30. Follis, "Holy City," 174.

31. Ibid., 182, and pp. 178–81.

32. See Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 71–72, who, nevertheless, thinks that the biblical portrayal of Daughter Zion, particularly in later texts, may have been influenced by views of Athena.

Finally, F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp observes several parallels between biblical laments and the Mesopotamian city-lament genre and suggests that biblical writers adapted the Mesopotamian “weeping goddess” motif to their own monotheistic situation by personifying Jerusalem.³³ He also notes two Akkadian texts that refer to a goddess as *mārat* + city name (“daughter of” the city).³⁴ Because Zion is never deified, a closer parallel to the biblical texts may be found in the personification of cities or their constituent parts (e.g., their gates, walls, or temple) in some Mesopotamian laments.³⁵ The female personification of Zion, however, is found in a variety of contexts, including some passages that are generally dated prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.³⁶ Thus, it probably cannot be fully explained by recourse to the Mesopotamian city lament genre.³⁷

33. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, esp. pp. 77–85; idem, “Syntagma of Bat,” 455–56; see also William C. Gwaltney, “The Biblical Book of Lamentations in the Context of Near Eastern Lament Literature,” in *Scripture in Context II: More Essays on the Comparative Method* (ed. William Hallo, James C. Moyer, and Leo G. Perdue; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 191–211; Patricia Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 106–7. Paul Wayne Ferris acknowledges the parallels but argues for “participation in a common literary culture” rather than direct borrowing (*The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* [SBLDS 127; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992] 175).

34. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 84. He cites the *Hymn of Nanā* 2.6, 3.10, 9.27 (see Erica Reiner, “A Sumero-Akkadian Hymn of Nanā,” *JNES* 33 [1974] 221–36), and a Neo-Babylonian lament (see Wilfred G. Lambert, “A Neo-Babylonian Tammuz Lament,” *JAOS* 103 [1983] 211–15; lines 1.3–4, 12).

35. “Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur,” 40–79, 369–72 (Samuel N. Kramer, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* [AS 12; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940] 20–27, 62–63; Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once . . . : Sumerian Poetry in Translation* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987] 450–53, 471); “The Uruk Lament,” 1.18–19, 4.29 (Margaret W. Green, “The Uruk Lament,” *JAOS* 104 [1984] 253–79). See further Leland Edward Wilshire, “Jerusalem as the ‘Servant City’ in Isaiah 40–66: Reflections in the Light of Further Study of the Cuneiform Tradition,” in *The Bible in the Light of Cuneiform Literature: Scripture in Context III* (ed. William W. Hallo, Bruce William Jones, and Gerald L. Mattingly; ANETS 8; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1990) 242–45. In the “Lamentation over the Destruction of Nippur,” the city, rather than its patron goddess, mourns its deplorable state (Steve Tinney, *The Nippur Lament: Royal Rhetoric and Divine Legitimation in the Reign of Išme-Dagan of Isin [1953–1935 B.C.]* [OPKF 16; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum Press, 1996] lines 117–37).

36. See Floyd, “Welcome Back,” 498 n. 34; John J. Schmitt, “The City as Woman in Isaiah 1–39,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; 2 vols.; VTSup 70; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 1:97 n. 9. Sarah J. Dille contends that the city’s personification “is always associated with situations of destruction—present, future, or past” (*Mixing Metaphors: God as Mother and Father in Deutero-Isaiah* [JSOTSup 398; London: T&T Clark, 2004] 161; see also Mary Donovan Turner, “Daughter Zion: Lament and Restoration” [Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1992] 276–77). However, the associated destruction is not always that of the city itself as would be likely if it originated in the Mesopotamian laments (see, e.g., Ps 9:15[14]; Isa 1:8, 16:1).

37. Note Dobbs-Allsopp’s later uncertainty on this point in “Daughter Zion,” 129 n. 16, 133. The Mesopotamian laments may, however, have influenced the development of the biblical lament genre (see, e.g., Donna Lee Pettey, *The Book of Ezekiel and Mesopotamian City Laments* [OBO 246; Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2011]).

While none of these explanations completely accounts for the emergence of the female personification of Zion or the title **בת-ציון**, elements such as these in the surrounding cultures may have contributed to the development of a uniquely Israelite trend,³⁸ aided by Hebrew's feminine terms for "city" (**עיר**, **קריה**) and its general use of the feminine for geographical locations.³⁹ Moreover, the ANE custom of describing the inhabitants of a city as its "children" may also have sparked the creativity of the biblical poets.⁴⁰ Regardless of the personification's origins, Zion's roles as daughter, wife, and mother are best understood against the background of the HB.

The Use of the Metaphor Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible

The title **בת-ציון** appears 26 times in the HB, solely in poetic texts and most frequently in Lamentations.⁴¹ Zion is not the only geographical place portrayed as a daughter in the HB; other daughter-cities and nations include Judah (Lam 1:15; 2:2, 5), Gallim (Isa 10:30), Babylon (Ps 137:8, Isa 47:1, Jer 50:42), Tarshish (Isa 23:10), Sidon (Isa 23:12), Dibon (Jer 48:18), Edom (Lam 4:21–22), Egypt (Jer 46:11, 19, 24), and possibly Tyre (Ps 45:13[12]).⁴² Aside from that possible reference to Daughter Tyre, foreign cities and nations are called daughters only when judgment is declared on them. As with **בת-ציון**, the text never explicitly identifies their parents, and the previously mentioned Jer 3:19 offers only the briefest hint that they could be seen as YHWH's daughters.⁴³ Alternatively, paralleling **בת-ציון**, these foreign places could be viewed as the daughters of their respective gods.⁴⁴

38. Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 73.

39. On the latter point, see Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 468.

40. See p. 36.

41. **בת-ציון**: Ps 9:15[14]; Isa 1:8; 10:32; 16:1; 37:22 (// 2 Kgs 19:21); 52:2; 62:11; Jer 4:31; 6:2, 23; Lam 1:6; 2:1, 4, 8, 10, 13, 18; 4:22; Mic 1:13; 4:8, 10, 13; Zeph 3:14; Zech 2:14[10]; 9:9; cf. **בית ירושלים**: Isa 37:22 (// 2 Kgs 19:21); Lam 2:13, 15; Mic 4:8; Zeph 3:14; Zech 9:9. For the related **בת-עמי**, see p. 76.

42. On Tyre, see John Goldingay, *Psalms 42–89* (vol. 2 of *Psalms*; 3 vols.; BCOT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007) 61. Jeremiah 31 addresses **בתולה ישראל** (vv. 4, 21; cf. 18:13; Amos 5:2), also calling her a "faithless daughter" (**הבת השוכחה**, v. 22; cf. 49:4, which probably refers to Rabbah).

43. Seifert, *Tochter und Vater*, 295; Iulia O. Basu, "The Harlot and the Mother: Gendered Metaphors in First and Second Isaiah," *JTAK* 35 (2011) 28–30.

44. O'Brien argues that because these passages "do not criticize the nation or city for insubordination to a father (or mother) figure," they call to mind "the more generic image of 'any daughter,'" emphasizing that these places are "defenseless, weak, and unable to protect themselves" (*Challenging Prophetic Metaphor*, 128). These characteristics, however, are associated with women in general in the biblical world; therefore, O'Brien's view does not explain why the daughter image specifically is used, a question she later addresses with respect to the Daughter Zion passages (*ibid.*, 143). Irmtraud Fischer, by contrast, contends that these texts evoke the image of "an independent young woman desirable to men" ("Isaiah: The Book of Female Metaphors," in *Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature* [ed. Luise Schottroff, Marie-Theres Wacker, and Martin Rumscheidt; trans. Tina Steiner; Grand

In any case, the biblical text works out the fate of Daughter Zion against the horizon of these foreign daughters. Lamentations 4:21–22 announces the end of Daughter Zion's punishment, declaring that the cup of YHWH's wrath will now be given to Daughter Edom (cf. Isa 51:17–23). Similarly, Zechariah 2 exhorts Daughter Zion to rejoice because of YHWH's presence (v. 14[10]) and, addressing her as an "inhabitant of Daughter Babylon," urges her to escape from exile (v. 11[7]).⁴⁵ There may be some irony in the use of *בת* to describe these foreign places,⁴⁶ particularly where jubilation and taunting overshadow any connotations of tenderness or pity (see especially Ps 137:8–9), but the image also suggests their vulnerability and defenselessness against YHWH's attack. Whether their father is YHWH, who executes judgment against them, or a powerless foreign god, no male protector comes to their rescue. Moreover, many of these texts highlight the associated commonplace of feminine shame to portray the daughters' just punishment (see Isa 23:4; 47:2–3; Jer 46:12, 24; 50:12; 51:47).

Outside Isaiah, roughly half of the passages mentioning *בת-ציון* either announce YHWH's impending judgment or describe Zion's condition following judgment,⁴⁷ while the other half proclaim (or hope for) YHWH's coming salvation.⁴⁸ In several cases, Daughter Zion/Jerusalem is linked to other female images: for example, mother (Lam 1:5, 16; 2:19; 4:2; Mic 1:16; Zech 9:13; cf. Ezek 16:20, 36), widow (Lam 1:1), and a woman in labor (Jer 4:31, Mic 4:9–10). At times, these texts focus on Zion as a city, particularly when speaking of her gates, wall, or hill (Ps 9:15[14]; Lam 2:8, 18; Mic 4:8), and at times on Zion as a symbol for the people.⁴⁹

Although *בת-ציון/ירושלם* makes the most appearances in Lamentations 2 (eight), that lament highlights the city-ness of Daughter Zion (see vv. 4, 8, 18) more than her feminine character, personifying the city and its walls primarily as mourners bewailing their desperate situation. Here, the daughter metaphor conveys Zion's powerlessness and utter dependence on YHWH

Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012] 310), but she does not explain how independence coheres with ancient Israelite perceptions about daughters.

45. For this understanding of Zion as the addressee in v. 11[7], see the NIV and NASB; also Thomas Edward McComiskey, "Zechariah," in *Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi* (vol. 3 of *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*; ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey; 3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993) 1058. The ESV and NRSV view *ציון* as a locative: "Escape to Zion."

46. Berlin, *Lamentations*, 12.

47. Jer 4:5–31; 6; Lamentations 1, 2; Micah 1; see also Jer 2:1–4:4 and Ezekiel 16, which employ the metaphor without using the title *בת-ציון*.

48. Psalm 9; Zephaniah 3; Zechariah 2, 9; also Micah 4, though v. 10 incorporates elements of judgment. Lamentations 4 is difficult to categorize. Although the chapter is dominated by a portrait of Zion's desolation following YHWH's punishment, *בת-ציון* appears in a promise of deliverance in its final verses.

49. Note especially Lam 4:22, Mic 4:10, which describe her as exiled; see also Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: Free Press, 1992) 174, 178; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 73; Hermisson, "Frau Zion," 30, 38; Dobbs-Allsopp, "Daughter Zion," 131 n. 20.

and elicits pity from the reader. Zephaniah 3 presents a fuller picture, introducing Jerusalem as “rebellious” (מְרֹאֵה)⁵⁰ and “defiled” (v. 1). Like the rebellious (מרה) son in Deut 21:18–21, “she does not listen to any voice” (לֹא שְׁמָעָה בְּקוֹל) or “accept correction” (מוֹסֵר, v. 2a), for “she does not trust in YHWH” (v. 2b). Nevertheless, Daughter Zion is exhorted to sing because YHWH has removed her punishment from her (vv. 14–15). Therefore, she “will not be put to shame” (בֹּשׁ, v. 11); instead, YHWH “will rejoice over (שׂוֹשׁ עַל) [her] with gladness” (v. 17). Although Isa 62:5 portrays YHWH “rejoic[ing] over” (שׂוֹשׁ עַל) Zion as a bridegroom over his bride, the absence of explicit marital imagery in Zephaniah 3 suggests that here it expresses YHWH’s parental delight and love for Zion as his daughter.⁵¹

The metaphor is also connected to descriptions of Zion’s beauty. In Jer 6:2 YHWH declares that he “will cut off the beautiful and delicate one, Daughter Zion,”⁵² and in Jer 4:30 she seeks in vain to beautify herself to impress her lovers. By contrast, hypothetical passersby in Lam 2:15 observe that Daughter Jerusalem used to be a city described as “the perfection of beauty.” Moreover, as with the foreign daughters, the Daughter Zion texts also evoke connotations of shame and defilement, particularly associated with nakedness and menstrual impurity.⁵³

Textual Analyses

Isaiah 1:8

Daughter Zion makes her Isaianic debut in the book’s introduction (chap. 1), along with the metaphor of the people as YHWH’s בָּנִים.⁵⁴ The children’s rebellion (vv. 2–4) has led to the nearly complete destruction of the land:

וְנוֹתְרָה בַּת־צִיּוֹן 8 And Daughter Zion* is left
 כְּסֹכָה בְּכֶרֶם like a hut in a vineyard,
 כְּמִלְוֹנָה בַּמִּקְשָׁה like a watchman’s lodge in a cucumber field,
 כְּעִיר נִצּוּרָה like a city besieged.[†]

* Here and throughout, the Tg. renders “Daughter Zion” as “the congregation of Zion,” except for 10:32, which has “the sanctuary which is in Zion” (Chilton, ArBib). The translator clearly avoids applying the daughter metaphor to Zion but also redirects attention from the city to its people.

50. For this understanding of מְרֹאֵה as a form of מרה, see Marvin A. Sweeney, *Zephaniah: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003) 156.

51. Contra idem, “Metaphor and Rhetorical Strategy in Zephaniah,” in *Relating to the Text: Interdisciplinary and Form-Critical Insights on the Bible* (ed. Timothy J. Sandoval and Carleen Mandolfo; JSOTSup 384; London: T&T Clark, 2003) 122–25; also Seifert, *Tochter und Vater*, 313, who denies that the daughter metaphor involves “emotionale Aspekte,” seeing it merely as an image for YHWH’s authority given its application to foreign places.

52. This verse presents significant difficulties, but see similarly the ESV, NIV, NASB; also Leslie C. Allen, *Jeremiah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008) 82–83.

53. *Nakedness*: Lam 1:8 (נִדָּה, “impurity”), Mic 4:11 (חִנָּף, “to be defiled,” which may also suggest rape; cf. Jer 3:2; O’Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor*, 141). *Menstrual impurity*: Lam 1:9 (טְמֵאָה, “uncleanness”), 17 (נִדָּה, “impurity”; cf. Lev 12:2).

54. See further p. 23.

† The MT pointing reflects a Qal pass. ptc. from נָצַר, “to watch, guard,” but the LXX has “besieged” (reading צֹר), which makes better sense in the context (cf. the Tg., Syr., and Vg.; see also the Eng. translations; Willem A. M. Beuken, “The Literary Emergence of Zion as a City in the First Opening of the Book of Isaiah [1,1–2,5],” in *Gott und Mensch im Dialog* [ed. Markus Witte; 2 vols.; BZAW 345; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004] 1:460–61).

Daughter Zion stands alone like an exposed and unprotected temporary hut in the middle of an agricultural plot,⁵⁵ and the fate of the people reflects that of their capital city (v. 9). YHWH has brought Israel to the very brink of annihilation but has kept the nation from falling over the edge by preserving a small remnant of survivors along with their capital city.

Hugh Williamson suggests that the daughter metaphor emphasizes Zion’s “solitariness” in order to elicit the reader’s compassion.⁵⁶ While these associations are not outside the scope of the metaphor, the rhetorical aim of the passage is to drive the people to repentance (vv. 18–20) by opening their eyes to the disastrous effects of their rebellion (vv. 5–9). In this context, the daughter metaphor highlights Zion’s vulnerability and defenselessness in order to persuade the people to seek YHWH’s help. Because a young woman left by herself would be vulnerable to violence or sexual assault, this portrait of Zion points to her need for paternal protection.⁵⁷ It also implies YHWH’s parental authority over Zion, which he exercises both in punishing her and in safeguarding her from total destruction.

Although these verses do not highlight the city’s culpability, focusing instead on the people’s rebellion, v. 21 does describe the city’s sin:⁵⁸

איכה היתה לזונה קריה נאמנה 21 How the faithful city has become a harlot.

מלאתי משפט	Full of justice,
צדק ילין בה	righteousness lodged in her,
ועתה מרצחים	but now, murderers.

Because there is no hint of the marriage metaphor here (or elsewhere in Isaiah 1–39), the city’s harlotry is best understood within the context of the daughter metaphor in v. 8, the only other instance of the city’s personifi-

55. Dobbs-Allsopp identifies parallels in a few Mesopotamian laments and in Lam 2:6 (taking שָׁכַר as an alternate form of סִכָּה), which compare destroyed temples with broken-down garden huts. Therefore, he argues that Isa 1:8 portrays Jerusalem’s destruction, rather than her preservation (*Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 69–70, 146). None of these suggested parallels, however, share enough linguistic correspondence with Isa 1:8 to argue strongly for dependence, and nothing else in the chapter points clearly to the city’s destruction.

56. Williamson, *Isaiah* 1–5, 70; see also Häußl, *Bilder der Not*, 83, who contends more generally that “das Bild der Tochter als Opfer ruft Gefühle des Schmerzes, des Entsetzens und der Anteilnahme hervor.”

57. Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 76.

58. For rebellion, see Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 136. Beuken differentiates between “the daughter of Zion” in v. 8 as a representative of the people and קְרִיָּה in v. 21 as a reference to the city itself (“Literary Emergence,” 1:465), but the image of Daughter Zion is used flexibly to symbolize both the city and its population.

cation in the passage.⁵⁹ Thus, the verse evokes the image of Jerusalem not as YHWH's adulterous wife but as a wayward daughter whose unrestrained sexuality brings shame on her divine parent.⁶⁰

This understanding is supported by the way the image is used, which departs radically from accusations of harlotry linked to the marriage metaphor. Here, there is no reference to the partners of the city's illicit sexual unions, elsewhere identified as idols or other nations.⁶¹ Instead, her promiscuity is described as a failure to maintain justice and righteousness.⁶² Murderers run free in the city, and thievery and bribery rule the day among

59. The LXX extends the personification, describing Zion as a "faithful mother-city" (μητρόπολις) in v. 26.

60. Contra Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel*, 52–53; Gerlinde Baumann, "Prophetic Objections to YHWH as the Violent Husband of Israel: Reinterpretations of the Prophetic Marriage Metaphor in Second Isaiah (Isaiah 40–55)," in *Prophets and Daniel* (ed. Athalya Brenner; FCB 2/8; London/New York: Sheffield Academic, 2001) 186–87; Victor Armenteros, "YHWH, el amante: Modelos de relación derivados de la simbología matrimonial veterotestamentaria," *DL* 3 (2004) 157; Chapman, *Gendered Language*, 91–92. Dearman calls for careful differentiation of these images of personified Zion, with particular reference to Lamentations, noting that "an unmarried daughter may be promiscuous and a harlot, offending the honor of the household, but she is not an adulteress" ("Daughter Zion," 156–57).

61. Sharon Moughtin-Mumby suggests that יָלַד ("to dwell, lodge") carries sexual overtones (citing Song 1:13), implying that instead of bedding down with righteousness, "her 'prostitution' is now with 'murderers'" (*Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008] 118–19). However, יָלַד does not generally have sexual connotations, and the sexual tone of Song 1:13 derives from other explicit imagery.

62. See Hermisson, "Frau Zion," 22; Wischnowsky, *Tochter Zion*, 149; Susan Ackerman, "Isaiah," in *Women's Bible Commentary* (ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998) 172; also Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., *Whoredom: God's Unfaithful Wife in Biblical Theology* (NSBT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 79, who views the harlotry here as "moral and social" but argues that the city's sins "spring ultimately from deeply personal defection from Yahweh." Although the context of Ortlund's book suggests that he means marital defection, his comment would also be appropriate to a filial relationship.

Darr claims that the reference to the city's lack of justice does not illustrate her harlotrous behavior but rather laments her current situation, placing the blame for Jerusalem's impurity on her leaders. She then reads the harlotry image against the background of its traditional use elsewhere in connection with the marriage metaphor, linking it in particular with 57:6–13 (*Isaiah's Vision*, 138–40, 188; idem, "'Alas, She Has Become a Harlot,' but Who's to Blame? Unfaithful-Female Imagery in Isaiah's Vision," in *Passion, Vitality, and Foment: The Dynamics of Second Temple Judaism* [ed. Lamontte M. Luker; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001] 61–63, 72–73). Because this passage does not correspond to how the harlotry image is employed elsewhere, Darr seems to assume that it must not provide any elaboration of the city's promiscuity. If, however, the daughter metaphor provides the framework for understanding the harlotry in 1:21, then the differences in its depiction make sense. As Darr herself observes, the HB occasionally describes foreign cities as harlots (e.g., Tyre: Isa 23:15–18, Nineveh: Nah 3:4), but the marriage metaphor is never applied to them. Since foreign cities may also be called "daughters," these foreign harlots probably provide a better parallel to this passage.

her rulers, leading to the neglect of the oppressed (v. 23). The introductory particle *אִכָּה* in v. 21 suggests the genre of lament (see Lam 1:1, 2:1, 4:1–2) but is not followed by the expected description of the city's destruction. Instead, the passage laments the city's moral decline,⁶³ an appropriate response for a parent when faced with a daughter's shame.

The city's harlotry presents a striking depiction of her defiance against the authority of her divine parent. However, despite her aberrant behavior, which in Israelite society could merit the death penalty, YHWH determines not to destroy or reject her. Because she is his cherished daughter, he vows instead to cleanse her from her harlotrous impurities and restore her to her former place of honor and prominence (vv. 24–28).

Isaiah 10:32

When Daughter Zion next appears in 10:32, she exhibits some similar characteristics to her portrayal in 1:8. This verse is part of a rhetorical unit comprising 10:5–34, which is marked off from its context by its concern with Assyria.⁶⁴ Verses 28–32 depict the terror of the text's rhetorical situation as the Assyrian army marches toward Jerusalem from the north, throwing Judah's cities into panic:⁶⁵

צְהִי קוֹלְךָ בַּת־גָּלִים	30	Raise your voice, O Daughter Gallim!
הַקְשִׁיבִי לִישָׁה		Pay attention, O Laishah!
עֲנִיָּה עֲנָתוֹת		Poor* Anathoth!
נָגְדָה מַדְמֵנָה	31	Madmenah has fled;
יֹשְׁבֵי הַגְּבִים הֵעִיזוּ		the inhabitants of Gebim have sought refuge.
עוֹד הַיּוֹם בְּנוֹב לַעֲמֹד	32	Yet today standing at Nob,
יִנְכֹּף יָדוֹ		[Assyria] will shake his hand
הַר בַּת־צִיּוֹן		at the mountain of Daughter Zion, [†]
גִּבְעַת יְרוּשָׁלַם		the hill of Jerusalem.

* The NRSV follows the Syr. in reading an imperative from *ענה*, “answer her” (assuming an original pointing of *עֲנִיָּה*; cf. the LXX; also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 259; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986] 273). But most translations follow the vocalization of the MT (*עֲנִיָּה*), which reflects a fem. form of the adjective *עני* (see the NIV, ESV, NASB; also Jan de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah* [TCT 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997] 51).

† The *Qere*, *בַּת־צִיּוֹן*, is followed by 1QIsa^a, the LXX, Vg., and Syr. The highly paraphrastic Tg. reads the *Kethiv*, *בֵּית*, (“house”; see further Arie van der Kooij, “Ancient Emendations in MT,” in *L’Ecrit et L’Esprit* [ed. Dieter Böhler, Innocent Himbaza, and Philippe Hugo; Göttingen: Academic, 2005] 152–55). But *בֵּית צִיּוֹן* is otherwise unattested, and its meaning is unclear (Hermisson, “Frau Zion,” 23 n. 11).

63. Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, 134; Wischnowsky, *Tochter Zion*, 149; Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary* (trans. Thomas H. Trapp; CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 62.

64. See Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1–39* (NAC 15a; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2007) 252.

65. See the discussion and map in Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, 453–55.

These verses apply the city-as-daughter metaphor not only to Zion but also to Gallim.⁶⁶ Paralleling “Poor Anathoth,” Gallim may be described as a daughter to express the city’s utter helplessness and distress without a male protector in the face of the Assyrian onslaught.⁶⁷ At first glance, connotations of this sort also seem to dominate the reference to Daughter Zion in v. 32,⁶⁸ but a closer look reveals that other aspects of the metaphor are also active. Disaster looms close as Assyria threateningly “shake[s] his hand” at the terrified population of Jerusalem, who are undoubtedly watching the army’s progress from the city walls (v. 32), but the expected climax of an Assyrian siege of Jerusalem is never reached. Verse 33 abruptly announces that YHWH will “cut down branches in terrifying power,” metaphorically portraying his defeat of the Assyrians.

Anticipations of this conclusion can, however, be found earlier in the passage. First, v. 32 refers to “the mountain of Daughter Zion,” and elsewhere in Isaiah “Mount Zion” is described as YHWH’s dwelling place (8:18; cf. 18:7, 24:23). Therefore, in order to approach Jerusalem the army must first contend with YHWH (cf. 29:5–8, 31:4–5).⁶⁹ Second, the exhortation to Daughter Gallim to “raise [her] voice” employs צַהַל, a verb used elsewhere not for cries of distress but of rejoicing (e.g., 12:6, 24:14, 54:1).⁷⁰ Finally, YHWH promises judgment against Assyria in vv. 12, 16–19, and 25–26.⁷¹

Because the passage portrays YHWH intervening on Zion’s behalf and executing judgment against her enemies immediately after the reference to Zion as daughter, the metaphor calls to mind YHWH’s parental protection of the city.⁷² This idea fits with the rhetorical aim of the larger passage, which seeks to encourage the inhabitants of Zion, persuading them not to fear the Assyrians (see v. 24). Although Zion is helpless to protect herself against the Assyrian onslaught, YHWH will come to her defense because he cares for and watches over her as his daughter.

66. This city is known otherwise only from 1 Sam 25:44. Intriguingly, though the Tg. resists applying the term “daughter” to Zion, it retains “Daughter Gallim.”

67. See further Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 144.

68. See Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 79.

69. Willem A. M. Beuken, *Jesaja 1–12* (trans. Ulrich Berges; HTKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2003) 295–96.

70. Mark J. Boda, “The Daughter’s Joy,” in *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Flesher; SBLAIL 13; Atlanta: SBL, 2012) 330–31.

71. See Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 144–45.

72. Contra Chapman, *Gendered Language*, 91, esp. n. 76, who contends that by referring to “the mountain of Daughter Zion” (cf. 16:1), the passage “limits the set of possible associated commonplaces evoked by the Daughter Zion metaphor suppressing [its] sexualized and personified aspects,” including its “kinship potential.” While the personification of Zion is certainly less pronounced here than in later chapters of Isaiah, mention of the “mountain” on which the city stands does not preclude such personification. See Mic 4:8–10, in which a reference to the “hill of daughter Zion” is followed by a figurative portrayal of Zion as a woman in labor.

Isaiah 16:1

In contrast to the previous two passages, 16:1 contains no hint of Daughter Zion's feminine vulnerability. The verse is found in an oracle against Moab in chaps. 15–16, which function as a single rhetorical unit in their current form, united under the passage's sole heading (15:1).⁷³ The text offers little insight into the rhetorical situation behind the oracle, but it may address a Moabite revolt.⁷⁴ Sandwiched between two ironic laments (15:1–9, 16:6–11),⁷⁵ 16:1–5 describes Moab's attempt to turn to Israel for support:

שלחור־כר משל־ארץ	1	Send a ram [to] the ruler of the land,*
מסלע מדברה		from Sela, by way of the desert,
אל־הר בת־ציון		to the mountain of Daughter Zion.
והיה כעוף־נווד	2	And it will be like fleeing birds
קן משלח		sent out [from] the nest—
תהיינה בנות מואב		the daughters† of Moab will be
מעברת לארנון		[at] the fords of the Arnon:
הביאי עצה עשו פלילה	3	“Bring counsel; make‡ a decision.
שיתי כליל צלך בתוך צהרים		Make your shade at the height of noon like night.
סתרי נדחים נדד אל־תגלי		Hide the outcasts; do not reveal the one who flees.
יגורו כך נדחי מואב	4a	Let the outcasts of¶ Moab sojourn within you;
הי־סתור למו		be a hiding place for them
מפני שודד		from before the devastator.”

* Blenkinsopp reads the ambiguous MT as “The ruler of the land has sent lambs” (*Isaiah* 1–39, 294), but most translations understand the ruler as the recipient of the tribute, despite the lack of a preposition (see, e.g., the NRSV, NASB, NIV; Jones, *Howling Over Moab*, 203).

† The LXX has a sg. form (“Daughter Moab”), though it omits “Daughter” in its reference to Zion in v. 1.

‡ The *Kethiv* form of the first verb is a Hiphil masc. pl. impv. from בּוֹא, but the fem. sg. impv. in the *Qere* should be preferred due to its support in some MSS and the Vg. (cf. 1QIsa^a and the Tg.) and the fem. sg. forms dominating the second half of the verse. The second verb is masc. pl. in the MT; however, multiple MSS, LXX^A, the Syr., Tg., and Vg. all support a fem. sg. impv. here.

The MT points this as “my outcasts” (נִדְחֵי; cf. the Vg.; followed by the NKJV), but 2 MSS, the LXX, and the Syr. have “the outcasts of,” which makes better sense in context (see the ESV, NIV, NASB, NRSV, JPSV; also Jones, *Howling Over Moab*, 204, 208).

An anonymous speaker—either the prophet or a representative of Moab—instructs the Moabite people to send tribute to Daughter Zion, probably to establish or reaffirm a vassal relationship with Judah.⁷⁶ As in

73. Brian C. Jones, *Howling Over Moab: Irony and Rhetoric in Isaiah 15–16* (SBLDS 157; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996) 104–7. Textual difficulties, however, lead many scholars to posit a complex redactional history (see, e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 1–39, 297).

74. See William J. Dumbrell, “The Purpose of the Book of Isaiah,” *TynBul* 36 (1985) 118; Oswalt, *Isaiah* 1–39, 330, 335.

75. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 1–39, 298–99; Jones, *Howling Over Moab*, 156.

76. Thomas G. Smothers, “Isaiah 15–16,” in *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve* (ed. James W. Watts and Paul R. House; JSOTSup 235; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996) 80.

10:32, the text emphasizes Zion's security by mentioning the mountain on which she rests (v. 1).⁷⁷ The focus then turns to the outcast "daughters of Moab," that is, the fleeing Moabite women,⁷⁸ using the gendered image both to provide a contrast with Daughter Zion and to highlight the helplessness and fear of the refugees, who are like birds frantically seeking cover after being pushed from their nest (v. 2). Stopped at the northern border of Moab, these women cry out for help from Daughter Zion, the antecedent of the feminine singular forms in 16:3–4a, pleading with the city to render a verdict in their favor and offer them asylum. Their repeated entreaty that Zion would hide them from their enemies reflects a view of the city as a mighty refuge, capable of withstanding their foe.⁷⁹

Heightening this portrayal of Zion as a place of security and peace, the prophet declares that when the political oppressor now plaguing Moab is gone, "a throne will be established in steadfast love" and a Davidic ruler will carry out justice in the land (16:4b–5).⁸⁰ However, because of Moab's pride (v. 6), that nation will not share in Zion's inheritance but will mourn and cry for help with no response (vv. 7–12).⁸¹ If a Moabite revolt stands behind the text, the implied rhetorical aim may be to warn the Judahite leadership against participating in any such rebellious alliances.⁸² In that case, the contrast between the "daughters" (that is, women) of Moab, who are helplessly fleeing the enemy without a male protector, and Zion, who stands firm, reinforces the point. Zion's security lies not in the strength of her political ties but in her filial relationship to Y_{HWH}.

Isaiah 37:22

Like the previous passage, 37:22 also calls Zion "daughter" in the context of declaring Y_{HWH}'s judgment against a foreign nation. Again the im-

77. The expression *הר בת ציון* appears only in these two verses in the HB.

78. See also Stinespring, "No Daughter of Zion," 134; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 299–300. Alternatively, the image could present a taunting portrayal of Moabite emissaries as women (cf. 19:16; see Jones, *Howling Over Moab*, 260–61). Fitzgerald interprets the "daughters of Moab" as its cities ("*BTWLT* and *BT*," 182; see also H. Haag, "*בַּת*," *TDOT* 2:335), but common usage indicates that the phrase *בנות* + geographical name denotes female inhabitants (see p. 78).

79. Cf. 4:6 (Ulrich Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja: Komposition und Endgestalt* [HBS 16; Freiburg: Herder, 1998] 164).

80. Another possibility would be to understand vv. 4b–5 as a continuation of the Moabite speech beginning in v. 3, taking it as a promise to establish a Moabite government faithful to Judah (see Smothers, "Isaiah 15–16," 82; Jones, *Howling Over Moab*, 261–63). These verses, however, resemble Davidic oracles found elsewhere in the book (9:6–7, 11:1–5), so it is more likely that they transmit the prophet's speech concerning Zion (see Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001] 131–32).

81. Smothers, "Isaiah 15–16," 82–83; Jones, *Howling Over Moab*, 263–64.

82. G. R. Hamborg, "Reasons for Judgement in the Oracles against the Nations of the Prophet Isaiah," *VT* 31 (1981) 151; Smothers, "Isaiah 15–16," 84; also Paul R. Raabe, "Look to the Holy One of Israel, All You Nations: The Oracles about the Nations Still Speak Today," *Conf* 30 (2004) 340–42, who sees such a warning as the general aim behind many of the oracles concerning the nations.

age evokes positive associations as Daughter Zion is compared to foreigners, though here the comparison is not to vulnerable Moabite women but to Sennacherib, the haughty King of Assyria. The verse is situated within a larger narrative describing the Assyrian campaign against Hezekiah in 701 B.C.E. (chaps. 36–37 // 2 Kgs 18:17–19:37), perhaps addressing a rhetorical situation of fear in the face of an enemy threat later in Israel's history. In response to the Assyrians' taunting, Hezekiah seeks YHWH's guidance and receives words of reassurance through the prophet Isaiah in the form of an oracle against Sennacherib:⁸³

22	זה הדבר אשר ידבר יהוה עליך	This is the word that YHWH has spoken concerning [Sennacherib]:
	בזה לך לעגה לך בתולה בת-ציון	"She despises you; she ridicules you, the virgin Daughter Zion.
	אחריך ראש הניעה בת ירושלם	Behind you she shakes [her] head, Daughter Jerusalem.
23	את־מי חרפת וגדפת ועל־מי הרימותה קול ותשא מרום עיניך אל־קדוש ישראל	Whom have you taunted and reviled? And against whom have you raised your voice and lifted up your eyes haughtily? Against the Holy One of Israel!
24a	בִּיד עבדיִךְ חרפת אדני	By the hand of your servants you have taunted the Lord."

YHWH answers Sennacherib's threats by describing the scornful attitude Daughter Zion should adopt toward the Assyrian king, expressed by the disdainful gesture of shaking her head (ראש הניעה) behind his back (v. 22; cf. Ps 109:22, Lam 2:15).⁸⁴ He may also invite her to challenge Sennacherib's pretensions to glory by taking the address in vv. 23–25 on her own lips.⁸⁵ These verses apprise the Assyrian king that in his pride over his monumental achievements (vv. 24b–25), he has tauntingly defied the authority of "the Holy One of Israel" (v. 23), mistakenly assuming that Judah's God was like the gods of all the other nations.⁸⁶

By pairing בת-ציון with its poetic complement בת ירושלם (v. 22), YHWH draws attention to the daughter metaphor.⁸⁷ His further description of the city as a בתולה both heightens the female personification and limits the scope of the daughter metaphor by specifying what kind of daughter she is.⁸⁸

83. See also pp. 36 and 91.

84. Or perhaps the idea is that Zion will shake her head as Sennacherib flees (see the NIV).

85. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 477; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 80; Berges, *Jesaja*, 304.

86. See further Walter Brueggemann, "Isaiah 37:21–29: The Transformative Potential of a Public Metaphor," *HBT* 10 (1988) 8–11.

87. The latter phrase appears only here in Isaiah.

88. Rather than interpreting בתולה within the framework of the daughter metaphor, Ulrich Berges understands it against the background of the marriage metaphor, contending that בתולה בת-ציון "comes very close to the West-Semitic idea of the capital city as a goddess married to the patron god of that city" ("Personifications and Prophetic Voices of Zion in Isaiah and Beyond," in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Liter-*

Although בתולה is usually translated “virgin,” there is debate about whether sexual status is its defining characteristic.⁸⁹ John Walton probably takes the best approach, understanding the term as combining multiple connotations, designating “an ostensibly reputable young girl who is past puberty and is, by default at least, still in the household of her father.”⁹⁰ He suggests further that when בתולה is metaphorically applied to a city or country (appearing 12 times in the HB),⁹¹ it may convey that the place is “politically reputable and under the guardianship of its people or gods.”⁹² Others have suggested that, when applied to a city, the term carries connotations of “everlasting youth, beauty and fecundity,” “protection,” or “pitifulness.”⁹³

In the end, context must determine the degree to which sexual status plays a role. In 2 Sam 13:18–19, after being raped by Amnon, Tamar tears the long robe that marked her as a בתולה among the king’s daughters, indicating that that label no longer applies to her. Perhaps a similar dynamic is at play in Isa 37:22 and other texts describing cities or countries as בתולות. As Pamela Gordon and Harold Washington have shown, images of rape—or at least some form of sexual violence—are used in the HB to depict the military conquest of a city (e.g., Jer 13:22–27, Nah 3:5–6; also Ezek 16:37–41).⁹⁴ In Isaiah 47, Babylon is addressed as בתולת בִּתְּבֵל (v. 1)

ary Character and Anonymous Artist [ed. Johannes C. de Moor; OtSt 45; Leiden: Brill, 2001] 64). There is, however, no hint of the marriage metaphor in this passage or elsewhere in chaps. 1–39.

89. See Gordon J. Wenham, “*B’tūlāh*, ‘a Girl of Marriageable Age,’” VT 22 (1972) 326–48, who contends that the term simply designates a “girl of marriageable age,” noting Joel 1:8, which applies it to a widow (also Dobbs-Allsopp, “Daughter Zion,” 126; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, “Virginity in the Bible,” in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* [ed. Victor H. Matthews, Bernard M. Levinson, and Tikva Frymer-Kensky; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998] 80). For a counter-argument championing the traditional understanding of “virgin,” see Tom Wadsworth, “Is There a Hebrew Word for Virgin? *Bethulah* in the Old Testament,” ResQ 23 (1980) 161–71.

90. John H. Walton, “בתולה,” NIDOTTE 1:782.

91. In construct with “daughter,” the term is used of Zion (Isa 37:22 [// 2 Kgs 19:21], Lam 2:13), “my people” (Jer 14:17), Judah (Lam 1:15), Sidon (Isa 23:12), Babylon (Isa 47:1), and Egypt (Jer 46:11). It is also found 5 times in construct with “Israel,” all without “daughter” (Deut 22:19; Jer 18:13; 31:4, 21; Amos 5:2). The anomalous use in Deut 22:19 designates a young woman within Israel, but the rest, all found in prophetic literature, should be taken as as appositional genitives portraying the specified place as a בתולה (see also Chris Franke, *Isaiah 46, 47, and 48: A New Literary-Critical Reading* [BibJudS 3; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994] 107–8; Dearman, “Daughter Zion,” 151).

92. Walton, NIDOTTE 1:783.

93. See Fitzgerald, “Mythological Background,” 409; John J. Schmitt, “The Virgin of Israel: Referent and Use of the Phrase in Amos and Jeremiah,” CBQ 53 (1991) 387; and Berlin, *Lamentations*, 12, respectively.

94. Pamela Gordon and Harold C. Washington, “Rape as a Military Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets* (ed. Athalya Brenner; FCB 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995) 315–20; see also Brad E. Kelle, “Wartime Rhetoric: Prophetic Metaphorization of Cities as Female,” in *Writing and Reading War: Rhetoric, Gender, and Ethics in Biblical and Modern Contexts* (ed. Brad E. Kelle and Frank Ritchel Ames; SBLSymS 42; Atlanta: SBL, 2008) 98. Daniel Smith-Christopher argues that the metaphori-

and then commanded to expose her nakedness in a metaphorical depiction of YHWH's coming judgment (vv. 2–3). Although that city is currently free from unwanted intruders like a pure maiden, the passage implies that she will soon be overpowered and subdued—perhaps even raped—by her enemies.⁹⁵ Thus “virgin” may be an appropriate translation for בתולה there.⁹⁶

Turning to Isa 37:22, YHWH may call Zion a בתולה in order to highlight the fact that the city is still undefiled by the Assyrian king and will remain that way.⁹⁷ Sennacherib will “not come into this city” (לא יבוא אל העיר הזאת), v. 33), which is perhaps an intentional double entendre.⁹⁸ In threatening Daughter Zion, Sennacherib has impugned the honor of her divine parent, who is responsible to protect the chastity of his daughter and faces disgrace if she is violated. Therefore, YHWH comes to Zion's rescue for the sake of his

cal portrayal of cities being stripped “is *not* directly related to rape” but rather derives from “the practice of stripping POWs in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian military practice” (“Ezekiel in Abu Ghraib: Rereading Ezekiel 16:37–39 in the Context of Imperial Conquest,” in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality* [ed. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton; SBLSymS 31; Atlanta: SBL, 2004] 148, 150, emphasis in the original). This need not be a case of either/or, however. Since exposing a woman's nakedness is not attested as a punishment for adultery in the HB, the practice of stripping prisoners in warfare could explain why it appears in these texts. Nevertheless, when placed in a context highlighting the city-woman's sexuality, the image takes on connotations of sexual aggression. Just as voluntary political alliances may be portrayed as adultery (e.g., Ezek 16:26–29, 23:5–21), so involuntary submission to a political oppressor may be depicted as sexual violence.

95. James Muilenburg, “Isaiah 40–66,” in *IB* 5:544; Basu, “Harlot and Mother,” 32; similarly Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2002) 280; see also Baumann, “Prophetic Objections,” 100, who takes YHWH as the rapist; similarly Majella Franzmann, “The City as Woman: The Case of Babylon in Isaiah 47,” *ABR* 43 (1995) 12–13.

96. Contra Tsevat, “בתולים, בתולה,” *TDOT* 2:341; John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 2005) 322; Franzmann, “City as Woman,” 8–9. The references to Babylon's bereavement (שכל, i.e., bereavement of children, see Gen 27:45, 1 Sam 15:33, Hos 9:12) in 47:8–9 reveal the limits of the “virgin” metaphor, but Isaiah's combination of conflicting metaphors is not unique to this passage (see, e.g., 62:5).

97. See also P. J. Botha, “Isaiah 37:21–35: Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem as a Challenge to the Honour of Yahweh,” *OTE* 13 (2000) 269–82; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993) 282; Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 660; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 81; Chapman, *Gendered Language*, 95; as well as Häusl, *Bilder der Not*, 82–83, who makes this point concerning the use of בתולה more generally. Blenkinsopp sees in 37:22 “the scornful rejection of a clumsy attempt at seduction” (*Isaiah 1–39*, 477; similarly John F. A. Sawyer, “Daughter of Zion and Servant of the Lord in Isaiah: A Comparison,” *JSOT* 44 [1989] 91; Chapman, *Gendered Language*, 86), an apt description if it is noted that Sennacherib's “seduction” is not that of a suitor but of an aggressor determined to have his way with the city no matter how she responds to his advances.

98. See also Chapman, *Gendered Language*, 88; as well as Gordon and Washington, “Rape as a Military Metaphor,” 316, who argue for a similar use of the phrase in Jer 6:3. For the biblical idiom בוא אל as a reference to sexual intercourse, see Gen 16:4, Judg 16:1, Ruth 4:13.

own honor (v. 35).⁹⁹ Despite the threat of a powerful enemy, Zion stands secure, shielded by a more powerful parent.

The rhetorical aim of the taunt song in 37:22–29 is to counter the fear of Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem (as well as any later readers facing a similar threat) by overturning their perception of the situation. The proud Assyrian king had despised and ridiculed Jerusalem, assuming that the city was unable to withstand his vast armies, an assessment confirmed by Hezekiah, who described Jerusalem as a mother lacking strength to bear her children (37:3).¹⁰⁰ Now rather than portraying Zion as a languishing mother, helpless to save her children, YHWH recasts her in the role of a daughter, dependent on her divine father's protection.¹⁰¹ Moreover, he describes her as a pure virgin, who stands with head held high, undefiled by enemy attack. By depicting a young maiden taunting the seemingly invincible Assyrian king, the text emphasizes his impotence,¹⁰² thereby encouraging the leaders of Jerusalem to take heart.

Isaiah 49:15

When the daughter metaphor next appears in 49:15, Zion is no longer the confident young woman portrayed in 37:22, who scorns her arrogant attacker. Instead, she expresses feelings of abandonment in a short lament in v. 14, which provides the rhetorical situation behind the larger unit (49:14–50:3).¹⁰³ Although earlier in the book she emerged as a character who is spoken to (e.g., 40:2, 41:27), her first recorded words are found here.¹⁰⁴

יהוה ואדני שכחני 14 ותאמר ציון עזבני יהוה	14 But Zion said, "YHWH has forsaken me; the Lord has forgotten me."
15 האשכח אשה עולה מרחם בן־בטנה	15 Can a woman forget her nursing baby [or forget] to show compassion* to the son of her womb? [†]

99. See also Botha, "Isaiah 37:21–35," 275; Chapman, *Gendered Language*, 88.

100. See pp. 36 and 91.

101. By contrast, O'Brien contends that this text "focuses more on the stereotype of a young woman as headstrong, flip, and haughty than on the kinship between Jerusalem and Yahweh" (*Challenging Prophetic Metaphor*, 133), though without offering evidence that such connotations were associated with young women in ancient Israel. In any case, the attitude Zion expresses toward Sennacherib proceeds not from headstrong willfulness or feminine hauteur but from the decree of YHWH. Thus, the passage places her under YHWH's authority and emphasizes their close relationship by casting the threat against her as an affront to him (see v. 23).

102. Botha, "Isaiah 37:21–35," 279; O'Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor*, 136.

103. See further p. 91; also pp. 37, 81, and 117.

104. Mary Donovan Turner lauds Zion's speech, declaring, "Through her own resistant voice, Zion has begun to usher in her own redemption. She is drawn out of the world of the silent and the powerless into the world of future, a world of agency" ("Daughter Zion: Giving Birth to Redemption," in *Pregnant Passion: Gender, Sex, and Violence in the Bible* [ed. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan; SemeiaSt 44; Atlanta: SBL, 2003] 204).

גם־אלה תשכחנה Even these may forget,
 ואנכי לא אשכחך but I will not forget you.

* The MT reads מן+ the inf. const. of רחם here. Whybray repoints it as a participle, understanding it as “‘one who loves,’ i.e., a loving mother.” Seeing the sense of the finite verb תשכח as carrying over from the preceding line, he thus translates, “or a loving mother [forget] the son of her womb” (R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66* [NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975] 143; similarly Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40–66: Translation and Commentary* [ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012] 334; cf. the JPSV). While he is undoubtedly right that תשכח carries over, the MT makes sense as is. For a similar use of שכח + מן + inf. to mean “to forget to do (something),” see Ps 102:5 (Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 150; cf. most English translations).

† Dille takes Zion’s speech as continuing on to include this question, suggesting that Zion is complaining that YHWH, “her husband, is inadequate compared to a human mother” (*Mixing Metaphors*, 141; see also Uta Schmidt, “Servant and Zion: Two Kinds of Future in Isaiah 49,” in *My Spirit at Rest in the North Country* (Zechariah 6.8) [ed. Hermann Michael Niemann and Matthias Augustin; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011] 86–87). In light of v. 15b, however, v. 15a reads most naturally as the beginning of YHWH’s response (cf. the rhetorical questions in 40:28; Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 385).

In chaps. 36–37, YHWH’s presence with his city-daughter guaranteed her safety from Sennacherib’s attack. Now the reality of destruction and exile (see vv. 19a, 21b) have convinced Zion that YHWH must have “forsaken” (עזב) her and even “forgotten” (שכח) all about her.¹⁰⁵

YHWH does not address the first charge Zion lays at his door, but he refutes the second—that he has forgotten her—by drawing on the strongest relational bond in human experience to highlight the intimate relationship between YHWH and Zion.¹⁰⁶ He asks Zion whether a mother could forget and neglect her own nursing infant, the child who had developed in her womb and was so completely dependent on her. Maternal love and instinct should make such a situation unfathomable. Indeed, she would be regularly reminded of her baby’s need to nurse both by the infant’s cries of hunger and her own physical discomfort.¹⁰⁷ As a mother herself, who has experienced the grief of losing her children due to exile (see vv. 20–21, also

105. Cf. Lam 5:20; for the view that Isaiah 40–66 is responding to Lamentations, see Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things*; Carleen R. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (SemeiaSt 58; Atlanta: SBL, 2007) 103; O’Connor, “Speak Tenderly,” 287–92; Judith E. McKinlay, “The Usefulness of a Daughter,” in *Isaiah and Imperial Context: The Book of Isaiah in the Times of Empire* (ed. Andrew T. Abernethy and Mark G. Brett, Tim Bulkeley, and Tim Meadowcroft; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013) 93–106.

Also, cf. Isa 17:10, in which a fem. sg. addressee is accused of forgetting (שכח) “the God of [her] salvation.” Although the subject is not clearly identified, Zion is the most likely candidate (Schmitt, “City as Woman,” 1:105–6).

106. See also Helen Schüngel-Straumann, “Mutter Zion im Alten Testament,” in *Theologie zwischen Zeiten und Kontinenten* (ed. Theodore Schneider and Helen Schüngel-Straumann; Freiburg: Herder, 1993) 25.

107. Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 150; Hanne Løland, *Silent or Salient Gender? The Interpretation of Gendered God-Language in the Hebrew Bible, Exemplified in Isaiah 42, 46, and 49* (FAT 2/32; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 185–89.

51:18–20), this image should have particular poignancy for the character of Lady Zion.¹⁰⁸

Thus YHWH's rhetorical question anticipates a negative answer, but YHWH subverts expectations by acknowledging that such a situation of maternal neglect is possible (cf. 2 Kgs 6:28–29, Lam 4:10) in order to heighten the comparison he is making.¹⁰⁹ YHWH's notice of Zion is more dependable than that of a mother for her nursing son ("the son of her womb").¹¹⁰ This idea, underscored by the threefold repetition of שָׁכָה, is the primary point of comparison made by the metaphor. Secondarily, describing the mother's compassion for her infant implies that YHWH's attention to Zion also results from compassion. Since the metaphor specifies these particular points of comparison, it does not encourage further imaginative reflection on how YHWH resembles a mother or Zion a daughter.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, in light of Zion's current desolation, the image of the city as a nursing baby—utterly dependent on YHWH's care for her well-being—seems quite appropriate.¹¹² The mother-infant metaphor is central to the text's rhetorical aim of transforming Zion's perception of her current situation and persuading her that she is the object of YHWH's concern, which will ultimately result in her restoration (vv. 17–26).¹¹³ YHWH further emphasizes his point by noting that Zion is inscribed on his hands as a perpetual reminder (v. 16).

Because the marriage metaphor gains prominence in later chapters, which use עֶזְבָּה to describe YHWH's (temporary) marital desertion of Zion (54:6–7, 62:4), some scholars read Zion's complaint in 49:14 against that background.¹¹⁴ To this point in Isaiah, however, the marriage metaphor

108. See also Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah Chapters 49–55* (vol. 2 of *Isaiah III*; trans. Anthony P. Runia; 3 vols.; HKAT; Leuven: Peeters, 1998) 54; Hermisson, "Frau Zion," 31.

109. Katie Heffelfinger contends that YHWH's admission "begins to potentially undermine the security of [the people's] relationship with Zion their mother" and contains an "indictment of Zion herself as a forgetful mother," pointing to Zion's question in v. 21, "who bore these for me [i.e., Zion]?" (*I Am Large, I Contain Multitudes: Lyric Cohesion and Conflict in Second Isaiah* [BIS 105; Leiden: Brill, 2011] 235–36; also Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 148–49). However, Zion's statement in v. 21 that she "was bereaved" demonstrates her remembrance of her lost children. Thus, her question about their origin in the same verse conveys not, as Heffelfinger contends, a failure to recall her exiled children but her astonishment that she should find herself with children again after all hope of children was lost (see further p. 93).

110. See also Mayer I. Gruber, "The Motherhood of God in Second Isaiah," *RB* 90 (1983) 356.

111. See also Heffelfinger, *I Am Large*, 233 n. 174.

112. Cf. 60:16, where Zion feeds at the breasts of foreign kings, her nursemaids.

113. See also Annemarieke van der Woude, "Can Zion Do without the Servant in Isaiah 40–55?" *CTJ* 39 (2004) 110.

114. Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 164; Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 139; Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 321; A. van der Woude, "The Comfort of Zion: Personification in Isaiah 40–66," in "Enlarge the Site of Your Tent": *The City as Unifying Theme in Isaiah* (ed. Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen and Annemarieke van der Woude; OtSt 58; Leiden: Brill, 2011)

has not yet appeared, and although Zion's words may be open to a marital interpretation, her self-understanding is not made explicit. Thus, YHWH chooses initially to take her speech as that of a neglected daughter, drawing on an image that has already appeared in Isaiah 1–39 to emphasize his parental concern.¹¹⁵

Isaiah 52:2

Whereas in chap. 49 Zion is compared to a helpless infant, in 51:17–52:12, which concludes a rhetorical unit beginning in 51:9, she is given a sense of agency. Here, she is called to join with YHWH's salvific efforts by rising out of her current circumstances of desolation and bondage in exile:¹¹⁶

עורי עורי לבשי עוז ציון	1	Awake, awake, clothe yourself with strength, O Zion.
לבשי בגדי תפארתך		Put on garments of beauty,
ירושלם עיר הקדש		O Jerusalem, the Holy City,
כי לא יוסיף יבא-בך עוד		for they will not continue to enter you anymore,
ערל וטמא		the uncircumcised and unclean.
התנערי מעפר קומי שבי	2	Shake yourself free from the dust, arise, sit,
ירושלם		O Jerusalem.*
התפתחי מוסרי צוארך		Loose! the chains from your neck,
שביה בת-ציון		O captive Daughter Zion.

* The NRSV reads, "Shake yourself from the dust, rise up, O captive Jerusalem" (cf. the NASB), which is based on an emendation of שבי ("sit") to שביה ("captive"), following the final line in the verse. This reading seeks to avoid the apparent discrepancy between the adjacent commands to "arise" and then "sit," but I discuss the significance of the instruction to "sit" further below. The ESV, NIV, and JPSV follow the MT (see also Knut Holter, "A Note on שבי/שביה in Isa 52:2," ZAW 104 [1992] 106; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998] 357).

† The *Kethiv* has a masc. pl. form found also in 1QIsa^a, but the fem. sg. *Qere*, followed by the LXX, Syr., and Vg., coheres better with the context.

This portrait of the restoration in which Zion is invited to participate draws an intentional contrast with Babylon's downfall in 47:1–2. Both cities are called "daughter" (בת), modified by a further descriptor depicting their current status. Daughter Babylon rests at the height of her glory as an undefiled "virgin" (בתולה), while Daughter Zion struggles as a "captive" (שביה) in Babylonian exile. Whereas Babylon is commanded to remove her skirt, however, Zion is instructed to put on beautiful garments. More-

160–61; John J. Schmitt, "The Motherhood of God and Zion as Mother," *RB* 92 (1985) 561; Schüngel-Straumann, "Mutter Zion," 26. Løland argues that Zion speaks from the "source domain" of marriage but that YHWH responds by transitioning to the domain of the mother-child metaphor, since it represents a more powerful attachment (*Silent or Salient Gender?* 183).

115. On Zion as daughter in v. 14, see also Norbert Clemens Baumgart, "Wenn JHWH Kinder erzieht: Zum Gottesbild im Jesajabuch aus religionsgeschichtlicher und kanonisch-intertextueller Perspektive," in *Das Echo des Propheten Jesaja: Beiträge zu seiner vielfältigen Rezeption* (ed. Norbert Clemens Baumgart and Gerhard Ringshausen; Münster: Lit, 2004) 32 n. 153; Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 53.

116. See further p. 95; also pp. 41 and 168.

over, Babylon is told to “Go down, sit in the dust” (על־עפר) in a posture of mourning, while Jerusalem is bidden to arise “from the dust” (מעפר).¹¹⁷

Finally, Zion is instructed to remove the bonds around her neck, whereas Babylon is commanded to “take millstones and grind flour” like a servant (see Exod 11:5). These parallels reinforce the interpretation that when Jerusalem is called to “sit” (שבי) after rising from the ground, the text evokes the image of Lady Jerusalem sitting on a throne,¹¹⁸ in direct contrast to Babylon, who must “sit” (שבי) on the ground without a throne” (47:1). The two cities are about to experience a “role reversal”—Babylon will suffer the shame and desolation she poured out on Jerusalem, while Jerusalem enjoys the honor and prominence previously accorded her oppressor.¹¹⁹

Designating Jerusalem as “the Holy City” (v. 1) highlights the restoration of her purity, as does the subsequent promise that the uncircumcised and “unclean” (טמא) will no longer enter her.¹²⁰ The call for the city to act in vv. 1–2 is paralleled by a similar exhortation directed toward the people in v. 11. They are urged to leave their place of exile without “touch[ing] any unclean thing” (טמא). Moreover, they are instructed to purify themselves and carry the articles of the temple with them.

The rhetorical aim of the passage is to motivate Zion and the people to act in accordance with YHWH’s deliverance by reestablishing the city as a holy, royal dwelling for YHWH. With the first explicit reference to “Daughter Zion” in chaps. 40–66, 52:2 clarifies that Zion is still YHWH’s daughter despite her destruction at the hands of Babylon. Though she is currently a captive, that situation is fundamentally at odds with her identity as YHWH’s

117. This provides a contrast to 3:26, which declares that Zion “will sit on the ground,” lamenting the loss of her warriors.

118. Contra Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, *For the Comfort of Zion: The Geographical and Theological Location of Isaiah 40–55* (VTSup 139; Leiden: Brill, 2010) 298–99; see the Tg.; also Christl M. Maier, “Daughter Zion as Queen and the Iconography of the Female City,” in *Images and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean* (ed. Martti Nissinen and Charles E. Carter; FRLANT 233; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009) 147, 154; Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 177; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 338–40; as well as Holter, “Note on שבי/שביה,” 107, who observes that the alliteration of שבי and שביה draws attention to the contrast between Zion’s current state as a captive and her future enthronement.

119. Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 139; see further Odil Hannes Steck, “Beobachtungen zu den Zion-Texten in Jesaja 51–54: Ein redaktionsgeschichtlicher Versuch,” *BN* 46 (1989) 66; Chris A. Franke, “The Function of the Satiric Lament over Babylon in Second Isaiah (xlvi),” *VT* 41 (1991) 416–17; Mark E. Biddle, “Lady Zion’s Alter Egos: Isaiah 47:1–15 and 57:6–13 as Structural Counterparts,” in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996) 132.

120. Unlike the idiom בוא אל in 37:33–34, בוא ב is not typically used to denote sexual relations. Nevertheless, the image of uncircumcised and unclean foreigners entering the city and so defiling it may evoke sexual connotations (see Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 177; Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, 114; John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40–55: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* [2 vols.; ICC; New York: T&T Clark, 2006] 2:256; McKinlay, “Usefulness of a Daughter,” 101).

daughter. Thus, the passage urges her to free herself from her bondage, in the confidence that her divine father will deal with her oppressors, and, as Paul Hanson puts it, “reclaim her birthright” as a princess seated on a throne.¹²¹

Isaiah 62:11

Daughter Zion takes the stage one last time in chap. 62, which forms a single rhetorical unit. Like the prior passage it also connects Zion’s role as daughter with Y^{HWH}’s deliverance:¹²²

הנה יהוה השמיע	11	See, Y ^{HWH} has proclaimed
אל־קצה הארץ		to the end of the earth,
אמרו לבת־ציון		“Say to Daughter Zion,
הנה ישעך בא		‘See, your salvation comes.
הנה שכרו אתו		See, his reward is with him,
ופעלתו לפניו		and his recompense before him.”
וקראו להם עַם־הקדש	12	And they will call them “The Holy People,”
גאולי יהוה		“The Redeemed of Y ^{HWH} .”
ולך יקרא דרושה		And you will be called “Sought After,”
עיר לא נעזבה		“A City Not Forsaken.”

The message Y^{HWH}’s emissaries are called to deliver to Daughter Zion echoes the announcement Zion was earlier instructed to make to the surrounding cities: “See, your God! See, the Lord Y^{HWH} comes with might, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him” (הנה שכרו אתו ופעלתו לפניו, 40:9–10). Quoting 40:10b verbatim, this verse reaffirms its promise of deliverance,¹²³ but now what “is coming” (בוא) is identified as Zion’s “salvation” rather than “the Lord Y^{HWH}.” Nevertheless, “salvation” here probably also signifies Y^{HWH} himself since he is the most likely antecedent of the pronominal suffixes on שכרו (“his reward”) and פעלתו (“his recompense”). This change then from “the Lord Y^{HWH}” to “salvation” simply clarifies that Y^{HWH}’s approach portends deliverance for Zion.¹²⁴ That the personified Daughter Zion is now the addressee rather than the herald indicates that she still needs to be convinced of this coming salvation.

Zion’s changed circumstances will also result in a renaming. Attesting to the truth of her earlier complaint that Y^{HWH} had “forsaken” (עזב) her (49:14), v. 4 observes that “Forsaken” (עזובה) has become a well-known moniker for the forlorn city. Thus, Y^{HWH} rechristens the city, “My Delight Is in Her,” which is further explained in marital terms (v. 5). Now address-

121. Paul D. Hanson, *Isaiah 40–66* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1995) 148.

122. See further p. 126; also pp. 46, 104, and 129.

123. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19B; New York: Doubleday, 2003) 243.

124. Richard L. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets* (JSOTSup 180; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999) 287–88; see also Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 589. The LXX, Vg., and Tg. all render “salvation” as “Savior” here (cf. the NIV; JPSV).

ing Zion as daughter, he dubs her “Not Forsaken” (לא נעזבה) and, heightening the contrast to her previous situation, “Sought After” (v. 12).

Rhetorically, the passage aims to convince Zion that, despite her desolate past and dismal present, YHWH’s salvation is coming and will result in her glorification. While the daughter metaphor could signify Zion’s current situation of vulnerability,¹²⁵ the context is predominantly positive. More suited to the tone of the passage is the idea that Zion’s close family relationship with YHWH forms the basis for her assurance of salvation. Here, her filial ties enable her to share in her divine father’s “reward” and “recompense,” resulting in her deliverance.¹²⁶ Moreover, YHWH exercises his parental prerogative of (re)naming her, bestowing on her sobriquets expressive of his enduring commitment.

Summary

The metaphor of Zion as daughter appears in each of the book’s major sections and is found most frequently in chaps. 1–39, where the marital image is absent. Unlike the metaphor of the people as בנים, Isaiah’s application of the daughter metaphor to Zion does not draw extensively on the need for filial obedience. Only chap. 1 associates בת ציון with sin, noting her engagement in harlotry (v. 21), and even there, the daughter image merely forms the background for understanding the implications of her promiscuity. The immediate context of the reference to Daughter Zion (v. 8) emphasizes instead her vulnerability due to YHWH’s punishment but also his ultimate protection of her. Perhaps obedience plays such a small role in Isaiah’s בת ציון texts, in part, because Zion is the focus rather than the people. Although Zion often represents her inhabitants, the identification is not complete. Already in chap. 1, YHWH indicates that his commitment to Zion is firm and unchanging, whereas her inhabitants will be judged individually by how they respond to Isaiah’s message (vv. 27–28).

A more prominent association is that of destruction, either impending or past. In 1:8, the land around Jerusalem has been ravaged, but the city itself has been left standing. In 10:32 and 37:22, the approaching Assyrian army threatens Zion, and 49:15, 52:2, and 62:11 assume the city’s defeat at the hands of Babylon as the background for her current troubles. Only in 16:1 does the depicted destruction affect neighboring Moab rather than Zion. While the daughter metaphor may evoke associations of pity or tenderness in passages where Jerusalem has been devastated or faces the threat of destruction, each of these texts also involves YHWH acting on the city’s behalf to deliver or restore her. Thus, the primary emphasis of the metaphor lies on YHWH’s compassionate concern for his city-daughter and his responsibility to protect her.

125. Similarly Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah Chapters 56–66* (vol. 3 of *Isaiah III*; trans. Anthony P. Runia; 3 vols.; HKAT; Leuven: Peeters, 2001) 323.

126. See Seifert, *Tochter und Vater*, 294.

Daughter, My People

Alongside בַּת־צִיּוֹן, Isaiah also employs the daughter metaphor once in the strange construction בַּת־עַמִּי (22:4). Outside Isaiah, this phrase appears 14 times in the HB, solely in Jeremiah and Lamentations.¹²⁷

The Meaning of the Phrase בַּת־עַמִּי

The simplest explanation of בַּת־עַמִּי is that it functions, like בַּת־צִיּוֹן, as an appositional genitive, portraying the people of Israel as a daughter.¹²⁸ Thus, the phrase may be translated simply as “the daughter, my people,” or even “my daughter-people.”¹²⁹ Female personification is much more common with respect to cities than people groups, making it likely that בַּת־עַמִּי arose on analogy to בַּת־צִיּוֹן. Because the latter phrase often symbolizes the people of Zion, applying the daughter image directly to the people is not a large leap. Indeed, in a few passages, the two expressions appear together.¹³⁰ In light of this parallel, בַּת־עַמִּי should probably also be understood as implying a familial relationship with YHWH.

The Use of the Metaphor Elsewhere in the HB

Unlike בַּת־צִיּוֹן, בַּת־עַמִּי appears only in oracles of judgment against the people. Although בַּת־עַמִּי takes feminine verbal forms, the text rarely elaborates further on its female personification. In Jer 6:26, however, בַּת־עַמִּי is called to “perform mourning rites [as] for an only son” because of her imminent destruction, thereby comparing her to a grieving mother. Moreover, Lam 4:3 contrasts her with female jackals. Though they “nurse their young,” בַּת־עַמִּי “has become cruel,” failing to feed her starving children because food supplies are scarce (vv. 4–5).

Often the phrase appears as part of a longer construct chain highlighting the people’s desperate situation, most commonly denoting “the brokenness of the daughter, my people” (Jer 8:11, 21; Lam 2:11; 3:48; 4:10).

127. Jer 4:11; 6:26; 8:11, 19, 21, 22, 23[9:1]; 9:6[7]; 14:17; Lam 2:11; 3:48; 4:3, 6, 10.

128. Stinespring, “No Daughter of Zion,” 137; Dearman, “Daughter Zion,” 150–51; Berlin, *Lamentations*, 12; Hermisson, “Frau Zion,” 25; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 61, 235 n. 7; Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 169; Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 403 n. 4. Floyd contends that when בַּת־עַמִּי is spoken by the prophet (e.g., Jer 6:26), it cannot be an appositional genitive because that would make the prophet the people’s father. Thus, he concludes that the phrase personifies the women among the people, represented by a single “daughter” (“Daughter of Zion,” 194–95). It is not clear, however, that the first-person pronominal suffix on עַם must modify בַּת as well. The prophet could be designating “my people, who are a daughter,” or the suffix could refer to YHWH, for whom the prophet speaks. By contrast, Fitzgerald argues that בַּת־עַמִּי refers to Jerusalem, perhaps understanding the phrase as a possessive genitive (“BTWLT and BT,” 172–77; also Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 153; Wischnowsky, *Tochter Zion*, 16–17; Schmitt, “Virgin of Israel,” 374).

129. Similar phrases include בַּת־פְּרִצִּי (“the daughter, my scattered ones”) in Zeph 3:10 and בַּת־כַּשְׁדִּים (“O daughter, the Chaldeans”), which parallels Daughter Babylon in Isa 47:1 (also v. 5).

130. See Jer 4:11, 31; 6:2, 23, 26; Lam 2:1, 4, 8, 10, 11, 13, 18; 4:3, 6, 10, 22.

In Jer 14:17 *בת-עמי* is paired with *בתולה*, when Jeremiah upholds weeping as the only proper response to the coming destruction of “the virgin daughter, my people” in contrast to the complacency of the false prophets, who are promising peace. The dismal fate of *בת-עמי* also produces tearful sorrow in Jer 8:23[9:1], 9:6–9[7–10]; Lam 2:11, 3:48.

Whereas in Jer 4:11 the judgment against *בת-עמי* comes “not to winnow or cleanse,” in 9:6[7] it has a restorative aim. In the latter text the metaphor evokes associations of the pain a parent feels in disciplining a wayward child: “See, I will refine and test them, for what [else] can I do because of the daughter, my people?” For the most part, however, the parent-daughter relationship remains in the background, and the metaphor emphasizes the daughter’s defenselessness. While the image could elicit emotions of tender pity, the first-person suffix indicating the speaker’s connection to the daughter-people transforms that emotional response into personal mourning.

Textual Analysis: Isaiah 22:4

Isaiah 22:4 resembles, in particular, Jeremiah’s critique of the false prophets in Jer 14:17. The verse is part of a rhetorical unit encompassing the whole chapter, which is subsumed under a single heading (v. 1) and united by the recurrent phrase “that day” (*יום ההוא*), vv. 8, 12, 20, 25; cf. v. 5).¹³¹ The rhetorical situation involves a siege against Jerusalem (vv. 2b–11) to which the people have responded inappropriately. Currently, the city’s inhabitants are jubilant (vv. 1b–2a), perhaps due to their enemy’s departure or to some sign they take as portending a favorable outcome.¹³² Moreover, they trusted in their own achievements in preparing for battle and resigned themselves to their fate, instead of turning to YHWH for help (vv. 8b–13). Now, since many of Jerusalem’s citizens have been captured and others slain (vv. 2b–3), the prophet insists that fervent weeping is the only fitting response to the situation of his daughter-people:

4 על-כן אמרתי שער מני
 אמרר בבכי let me weep bitterly.
 אל-תאיצו לנחמני Do not insist on comforting me
 על-שר concerning the destruction
 בת-עמי of the daughter, my people.”*

* The LXX has “the daughter of my race,” while the Tg. reads “the congregation of my people” (Chilton, ArBib).

Taking the siege as a sign of YHWH’s judgment, he asserts that YHWH has “removed the covering of Judah” (v. 8; see also v. 5), which could signify either the destruction of the Judean towns that served as buffers around

131. Smith, *Isaiah* 1–39, 380.

132. On the former, see Childs, *Isaiah*, 160; Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39: A Commentary* (trans. R. A. Wilson; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) 141; Schmitt, “City as Woman,” 1:111; on the latter, see Smith, *Isaiah* 1–39, 384.

Jerusalem or the removal of YHWH's protection from the people of Judah.¹³³ Either would explain why the people stood helpless and vulnerable before the enemy, but the latter coheres better with the daughter metaphor, suggesting the loss of the people's parental defender.

Due to the people's failure to depend on him and their improper response to the siege, YHWH declares over them a sentence of death (v. 14). Rhetorically, the oracle functions as a pronouncement of certain judgment, issuing no call for repentance and even denying the possibility of atonement (v. 14b). The daughter metaphor accentuates the horror of the people's downfall and emphasizes their defenselessness before their enemy without YHWH's paternal protection. Thus the prophet's bitter weeping provides a model for the ideal reader, eliciting profound grief at "the destruction of the daughter, my people."

The Women of Israel as Zion's Daughters

Not only does Isaiah call Zion "daughter," but the book also speaks of Zion having daughters of her own. Elsewhere in the HB, a city's "daughters" refer either to (1) the smaller towns surrounding or otherwise dependent on it (almost 60x) or (2) its female inhabitants (ca. 30x).¹³⁴ The syntax for the former usage is consistently בנות + second or third person feminine singular suffix, often immediately following the name of the mother-city.¹³⁵ For example, Num 32:42a states, "And Nobah went and captured Kenath and its daughter[town]s" (את־קִנְתָּה ואת־בנותיה).¹³⁶ When the female inhabitants of the place are meant, it usually occurs in the form בנות + geographical name, as in the phrase "the daughters of Shiloh" (בנות־שִׁילֹה) in Judg 21:21.¹³⁷ A few prophetic texts clearly denote the women of a city using בנות + second- or third-person feminine singular suffix.¹³⁸ However, each of these texts pairs בנות with בנים, clarifying that the city's inhabitants are intended and thereby disambiguating similar phrases referring to daughter-towns.¹³⁹ In Isaiah all of the references to Zion's "daughters" designate her

133. *Buffers around Jerusalem*: Smith, *Isaiah 1–39*, 386; Christopher R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39* (IBC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993) 159. *Removal of protection*: Childs, *Isaiah*, 160; Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 153; Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, 145.

134. The female inhabitants of a country or land are also sometimes designated as its daughters (around 30 times).

135. See also Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, 289; *DCH* 2:282, 288.

136. Cf. Josh 17:11, 1 Chr 7:28, Ezek 16:46.

137. Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, 289; *DCH* 2:285. On בנות צִיּוֹן, see also Song 3:11; cf. the "daughters of Jerusalem" in Song 1:5; 2:7; 3:5, 10; 5:8, 16; 8:4 and "daughters of my city" in Lam 3:51.

138. Zion: Isa 49:22, 60:4; Jerusalem: Ezek 16:20, 23:25; Samaria: Ezek 23:10.

139. This distinction allows us to determine the referent in cases that might not be immediately clear. For example, speaking of Rabbah, Jer 49:2 declares that "her daughters (בנותיה) will be set on fire," while v. 3 calls the "daughters of Rabbah" (בנות רבבה) to "cry out." Commentators agree that the first instance refers to Rabbah's daughter-towns but dispute the second. Customary usage dictates that it signifies the women of Rabbah (see also F. B. Huey Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations* [NAC 16; Nashville: Broadman, 1993] 397; contra Allen,

female inhabitants and probably the women of Israel more broadly (3:16, 17; 4:4; 49:22; 60:4).

The Use of the Metaphor Elsewhere in the HB

As in the ANE,¹⁴⁰ the designation of the female inhabitants of a place as its daughters appears to be idiomatic in much of the HB.¹⁴¹ Only in prophetic texts that combine references to a city's daughters with female personification of the city itself is the metaphor revived. For example, Ezekiel 16 and 23 mention the children Jerusalem and Samaria bore to YHWH.¹⁴² In the former passage Jerusalem's daughters appear along with her sons in a description of the city sacrificing her children to her idols (v. 20). Thus, the city's inhabitants are presented as helpless victims of their mother's shockingly calloused disregard for her children. Jerusalem's behavior toward her own daughters, along with her other transgressions, has made her an embodiment of wickedness to the daughters of other nations (v. 57). By contrast, Ezekiel 23 depicts Jerusalem and Samaria's lovers, the Assyrians and Babylonians (vv. 9, 22–24), capturing (vv. 10, 25) and later killing their sons and daughters (v. 47),¹⁴³ thus emphasizing the agony of the cities' judgment.

Textual Analyses

Isaiah 3:16, 17; 4:4

Whereas Ezekiel 16 and 23 focus their attention on the city-mother(s), Isa 3:16–4:6 examines the character of Zion's daughters, bringing them under harsh critique like YHWH's בנים in chap. 1. Although the tone changes from judgment in 3:16–4:1 to hope in 4:2–6, these verses form a single rhetorical unit, connected by shared references to בנות ציון (3:16–17, 4:4), occurring only here in Isaiah, and ביום ההוא (4:1, 2). Moreover, the whole passage addresses the rhetorical situation of the vanity displayed by Zion's female inhabitants:¹⁴⁴

16 ויאמר יהוה	16 And YHWH said,
יען כי גבהו בנות ציון	“Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,
ותלכנה נטויות גרון	and they walk with outstretched necks
ומשקרות עינים	and seductive eyes—
הלוך וטפף תלכנה	walking and skipping along, they go,
וברגליהם תעכסנה	and with their feet, they jingle—

Jeremiah, 488; J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980] 714).

140. See further p. 36.

141. Note, e.g., the “daughters of Canaan” in Gen 28:1, 6, 8, which appears without any metaphorical elaboration.

142. See further p. 88.

143. Verses 46–49 alternate between masc. and fem. third-person forms, and בנים and בנות in v. 47 have masc. pl. pronominal suffixes, though the cities are clearly the intended referents (see GKC §144a on v. 49).

144. See also p. 89.

ושפח אדני 17 the Lord will inflict with scabs
 קדקד בנות ציון the heads of the daughters of Zion,
 ויהוה פתהן יערה and YHWH will bare their foreheads.”*

* פת appears only here and in 1 Kgs 7:50, where it designates a door socket. The context here could suggest a reference to exposing the women’s nakedness (see vv. 22–23), presenting a wordplay on פתח (“opening”; Beverly J. Stratton, “Engaging Metaphors: Suffering with Zion and the Servant in Isaiah 52–53,” in *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings* [ed. Stephen E. Fowl; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997] 221; see also J. Cheryl Exum, “Prophetic Pornography,” in *Plotted, Shot and Painted: Cultural Representations of Biblical Women* [JSOTSup 215; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996] 105). Due to a lack of lexical support, however, it is probably better to take the word as cognate to Akkadian *pūtu* (“forehead”), especially in light of the parallel with קדקד (so Smith, *Isaiah* 1–39, 151 n. 94; Beuken, *Jesaja* 1–12, 117).

Zion’s daughters are condemned for strutting around in luxurious ornamentation (see vv. 18–23),¹⁴⁵ seeking to draw attention to themselves in a sexually suggestive manner. Their behavior implies that they are too focused on their own beauty to acknowledge YHWH’s lordship¹⁴⁶ and perhaps have even elevated themselves to a position of exaltation reserved for YHWH alone.¹⁴⁷ Therefore, YHWH’s judgment will render their appearance a source of humiliation rather than a basis for pride as he replaces their beauty and finery with baldness and sackcloth (v. 24).

Without marking the transition, the text turns to describe the effect of YHWH’s judgment on Lady Zion herself, who will mourn the loss of her warriors (vv. 25–26), before revisiting the fate of the city’s women. The dearth of men will propel these women into a frantic search for husbands, seeking to escape “disgrace” (חרפה, 4:1). That term may refer to the shame of childlessness (cf. Gen 30:23),¹⁴⁸ or it could imply the sexual disgrace of indecent exposure due to the removal of their fine garments (vv. 22–23), which could render them unmarriageable.¹⁴⁹

Looking beyond the coming judgment, 4:2–6 proclaims a future restoration:

והיה הנשאר בציון 3 And whoever is left in Zion
 והנוותר בירושלם קדוש יאמר לו and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy,
 כל־הכתוב לחיים בירושלם everyone who is written for life in Jerusalem,
 אם רחץ אדני 4 when the Lord has washed away

145. For a detailed discussion of the jewelry and apparel in vv. 18–23, see Sabine Aletta Kersken, *Töchter Zions, wie seid ihr gewandet? Untersuchungen zu Kleidung und Schmuck alttestamentlicher Frauen* (AOAT 351; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008) 173–254.

146. See also Wildberger, *Isaiah* 1–12, 156; R. E. Clements, *Isaiah* 1–39 (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 51.

147. Cf. גבה in 2:11 with גבהות in 2:11 (Williamson, *Isaiah* 1–5, 289).

148. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 1–39, 202; Clements, *Isaiah* 1–39, 52.

149. David W. Baker sees this passage as suggesting rape, a frequent practice of war (“Isaiah,” in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* [ed. John H. Walton; 5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009] 4:24; see also Johnny Miles, “Re-reading the Power of Satire: Isaiah’s ‘Daughters of Zion,’ Pope’s ‘Belinda,’ and the Rhetoric of Rape,” *JSOT* 31 [2006] 213–14).

את צאת בנות ציון	the filth of the daughters of Zion
ואת־דמי ירושלם ידיו	and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem
מקרבָה ברוח משפט	from her midst by a spirit of judgment
וברוח בער	and by a spirit of burning.

Currently, Zion's daughters are utterly defiled. Hebrew צאה (v. 4) generally refers to excrement¹⁵⁰ and may signify that the women have soiled themselves, polluting the city with their filth. They are probably not the only source of uncleanness, however.¹⁵¹ The next line speaks of the דמי of Jerusalem, which suggests violent bloodshed (see the "murderers" in 1:21). Although the text does not specify who is responsible for the bloodshed, it is unlikely that the city's women would be solely (or even primarily) to blame.¹⁵² In any case, the passage promises that all of this uncleanness will be washed away through a purifying judgment, rendering all who remain in Jerusalem holy.

Thus, the rhetorical aim of the passage is not only to declare judgment on the women of Zion but also to offer hope that YHWH will ultimately cleanse them and their city of their impurities. Because the text does not elaborate on its description of the women as Zion's daughters, it could be understood simply as an idiomatic expression, lacking metaphorical force. However, taken together with the female personification of Zion in 3:26 and the seamless transitions from the daughters to Zion herself and back again, the expression metaphorically emphasizes the close relationship between the city and her female citizens. Against this background, the women's provocative display evokes connotations of shame associated with a daughter's unrestrained sexuality, which would then fall on Mother Zion. Moreover, due to their familial ties, Mother Zion's fate is tightly connected to theirs as she suffers along with her daughters but also shares in their restoration.¹⁵³

Isaiah 49:22 and 60:4

Zion's daughters also appear alongside her sons in 49:22 and 60:4 in contexts far removed from the associations of condemnation dominating

150. See, e.g., Deut 23:14[13], Ezek 4:12, though the word may designate vomit in Isa 28:8.

151. Contra Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4 and the Post-exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition* (BZAW 171; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988) 164.

152. The LXX understands the guilt to be evenly distributed, speaking of "the filth of Zion's sons and daughters." See also Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary* (trans. John Bowden; 2nd ed.; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983) 88. Moreover, the larger context suggests that not only the women are guilty of pride (2:11–17), thus countering Miles's rhetorical question, "But should we honestly believe that *only* 'the daughters of Zion' were vain?" ("Re-reading the Power of Satire," 205). This passage simply singles out the haughty behavior of Zion's women—or rather a subset of the women among the wealthy elite—as an example of the kind of pride YHWH is determined to humble (see also Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 90; Smith, *Isaiah 1–39*, 151; contra Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 140, who contends that the "daughters" figuratively signify all people).

153. See also Berges, "Personifications," 61.

3:16–4:6. These two passages (49:14–50:3, 60:1–22) exhibit literary interdependence and employ the daughter metaphor in quite similar ways:

Isaiah 49:22¹⁵⁴:

כה־אמר אדני יהוה	Thus says the Lord YHWH,
הנה אשא אל־גוים יד־י	"See, I will lift my hand to the nations,
ואל־עמים ארים נס־י	and to the peoples I will raise my banner.
והביאו בניך בחצן	And they will bring your sons in [their] bosom,
ובנתיך על־כתף תנשאנה	and your daughters will be carried on [their] shoulder."

Isaiah 60:4¹⁵⁵:

שאי־סביב עיניך ורא־י	Lift up your eyes all around and see.
כלם נקבצו באו־לך	All of them gather together; they come to you.
בניך מרחוק יבאו	Your sons will come from afar,
ובנתיך על־צד תאמנה	and your daughters will be supported* on the hip. [†]

* 1QIsa^b has a form of נשא ("to carry"), probably a harmonization to 49:22, but 1QIsa^a supports the MT, whose more difficult reading should be accepted. For the translation of Niphal אמן suggested above, see also John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66* (WBC 25; Waco, TX: Word, 1987) 290; similarly, Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 192; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 203. Koole, by contrast, translates the word as "nursed" (*Isaiah 56–66*, 226). Either way, this use may be dependent on 49:23, which uses a Qal form of the same verb to express the role kings will play in looking after Zion's children (Berges, *Jesaja*, 438).

† The LXX has "shoulders" (followed by the JPSV; cf. "arms" in the NRSV), but this is probably a harmonization to 49:22. 1QIsa^a, the Vg., and the Tg. support the MT. Pondering why the author of 60:4 would not have followed 49:22, Odil Hannes Steck proposes that he used צד here to form a word pair with כתף in the prior passage in order to signal an eschatological reversal of Ezek 34:21, in which the scattering of the people is attributed to being driven "by hip and shoulder (בצד ובכתף)" ("Heimkehr auf der Schulter oder/und auf der Hüfte Jes 49,22b/60,4b," *ZAW* 98 [1986] 275–77).

Both texts speak of the nations streaming to Zion and carrying with them the city's long-lost daughters, who are returning home along with her sons. While most of the references to Zion's בנים in chaps. 40–66 are probably gender inclusive,¹⁵⁶ only these two verses emphasize that *all* of Zion's children—male and female—will be reunited with their city-mother and share in her promises of restoration.¹⁵⁷ Although the passages differ in emphasis, both employ the daughter metaphor to highlight the joy and delight Zion will experience at the return of her female citizens. Moreover, by depicting her daughters as small children borne by foreigners, these verses also emphasize their helplessness and dependence on a caregiver.¹⁵⁸ Unable

154. See further p. 91; also pp. 37, 69, and 117.

155. See further p. 101; also p. 45.

156. See 49:17, 20, 25; 54:1, 13 (twice); 57:3; 60:9; 66:8.

157. See also Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:194.

158. Roy D. Wells warns against reading 49:22 into 60:4, contending that the latter portrays the daughters coming of their own accord, "supported at [the] side" of Zion's sons ("They All Gather, They Come to You": History, Utopia, and the Reading of Isaiah 49:18–26 and 60:4–16," in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* [ed. A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim; SBLAIL 4; Atlanta: SBL, 2009] 204). In 60:9, however,

to journey home on their own, they must rely on foreign attendants to restore them to their loving city-mother.¹⁵⁹

Summary

Like בת-ציון, the metaphorical portrayal of the women of Zion as her daughters appears in each of the major sections of Isaiah. Isaiah 3:16–4:6 paints an unflattering portrait of these daughters, who defile themselves and the city with their vanity. The close relationship between mother and daughters ensures that they will experience the same fate, both in their impending punishment and in their ultimate restoration. Isaiah 49:22 and 60:4 assume that YHWH's purifying judgment has already taken place, presumably in the exile, and therefore present a more positive image of Zion's daughters. Having long been separated from their city-mother, they now journey home as Zion eagerly awaits their return with a heart full of ecstatic joy.

The Women of Israel as Yhwh's Daughters

A final occurrence of the daughter metaphor is found in 43:6, which depicts the women of Israel as YHWH's daughters.

The Use of the Metaphor Elsewhere in the HB¹⁶⁰

YHWH's daughters appear elsewhere in the HB only in Deut 32:19 and Ezek 16:20. The former verse describes the people's idolatry and abandonment of their divine parent (vv. 15–18) as “the provocation of [YHWH's] sons and daughters,” which prompted him to “spurn” them. Here the reference to “sons and daughters” emphasizes that YHWH's anger was aroused at the behavior of *all* of his people.¹⁶¹ In Ezek 16:20, YHWH's wrath is turned instead toward Mother Jerusalem, who cruelly slaughtered their sons and daughters as part of her idolatrous worship. Mentioning YHWH's daughters along with his sons here may evoke a stronger feeling of pity, underscoring both the monstrosity of this act and YHWH's grief at the destruction of his children. The HB also mentions “the daughter of a foreign god” (בת-אל נכר),

foreigners are said to “bring” Zion's בנים, as in 49:22. Thus, it seems justified to read 60:4 in light of the earlier passage, taking the nations who accompany Zion's children as carrying her daughters on their hips (see also Koole, *Isaiah* 56–66, 227; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 194).

159. Some בנות also appear in 32:9 as a poetic complement to נשים. Although the text does not identify their parents, the references to a city (Jerusalem) in vv. 13–14 suggest that they may be seen as Zion's daughters (see also Julie Ann Hilton, “Isaiah,” in *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary* [ed. Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002] 360). The city itself, however, is relegated to the background without any further personification, and no attention is given to its relationship with the daughters. Thus, this verse reflects a more idiomatic usage of בנות and will not be discussed further.

160. For a discussion of the ANE background of this metaphor, see p. 20.

161. See James Earl Harriman, “Our Father in Heaven: The Dimensions of Divine Pater-nity in Deuteronomy” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005) 185–86.

Mal 2:11), which refers to a wife taken from among the nations and emphasizes her idolatrous worship. Moreover, Num 21:29 describes Moabites as “sons” (בנים) and “daughters” (בנות) of Chemosh, who “gave” them up as captives, thereby exercising his parental power to disown his children.¹⁶²

Textual Analysis: Isaiah 43:6

Although YHWH’s בנים play a prominent role in Isaiah, his daughters are mentioned only in 43:6, where they appear alongside his sons as in Deut 32:19 and Ezek 16:20 (cf. 23:4). This verse is part of a larger rhetorical unit encompassing 42:18–43:21, which castigates Israel for blindness (42:18), but the subsection in 43:1–7 is more positive, describing the people’s return from exile, like the references to Zion’s daughters in 49:22 and 60:4.¹⁶³

אמר לצפון תני	6	I will say to the north, “Give up,”
ולתימן אל-תכלאי		and to the south, “Do not withhold.
הביאי בני מרחוק		Bring my sons from afar
ובנותי מקצה הארץ		and my daughters* from the end of the earth,
כל הנקרא בשמי	7	everyone who is called by my name
ולכבודי בראתי		and whom I created for my glory,
יצרתי אף-עשיתי		whom I formed and made.”

* The Tg. reads instead “*the exiles of my people*” (Chilton, ArBib), reflecting a reticence on the part of the translator to represent the people of Israel as YHWH’s “daughters.”

Here the focus is not on Zion’s joy at the people’s return but on their familial relationship with YHWH, highlighting particularly his continued care and concern for his children. Neither their rebellion nor YHWH’s punishment has completely severed this parent-child relationship, which now provides a basis for the people’s expectation that YHWH will restore them. By employing the daughter metaphor, the passage underscores YHWH’s unconditional love for *all* his children—both men and women.¹⁶⁴ For the first and only time in Isaiah, YHWH explicitly affirms that the women of Israel enjoy a close, familial bond with him as his cherished daughters. Therefore, he will gather them, along with his sons, from the end of the earth, if need be, in order to bring them back into a restored relationship with himself.

Conclusion

The book of Isaiah flexibly adapts the daughter metaphor to portray a variety of relationships in diverse contexts. The passages that describe Israelite women as daughters foreground the parent-child relationship by explicitly naming Zion or YHWH as parent, thus emphasizing the closeness of the familial bond. By contrast, the texts featuring Daughter Zion and

162. These references are noted by Gordon Paul Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law and Ethics Governing Marriage, Developed from the Perspective of Malachi* (VTSup 52; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 33–36.

163. On 42:18–43:21, see further p. 140; also, p. 26.

164. See also Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 196.

“my daughter-people” do not specify a parent, pushing that relationship into the background. Nevertheless, the idea that YHWH functions as Zion’s divine parent-protector probably forms part of the metaphor’s framework in these passages, particularly given Daughter Zion’s connection with contexts of protection from siege or deliverance from a state of desolation.

In keeping with the general setting and tone of the book’s major sections, the Daughter Zion and “my daughter-people” passages in chaps. 1–39 portray the daughters’ vulnerability and need for protection in the face of enemy threats,¹⁶⁵ whereas in chaps. 40–66 the metaphor conveys YHWH’s continued concern for Daughter Zion despite her destruction at the hands of the Babylonians. YHWH’s plans for Zion’s restoration include the return of her own daughters from exile (49:22, 60:4), a theme that appears also in 43:6, the book’s sole reference to YHWH’s daughters.

The stereotypical associations of shame and disgrace connected with an unmarried daughter’s sexuality are evoked in 37:22 with Sennacherib’s threat to defile “the virgin Daughter Zion”; however, only 1:21 and 3:16–4:6 connect the daughter metaphor with an indictment for inappropriate behavior. In 1:21 the city’s harlotry brings shame upon her divine father, while the provocative display of the daughters of Zion in 3:16–17 similarly dishonors their city-mother. In neither passage, however, is this sexual deviance central to understanding the daughter metaphor. In 1:8 the metaphor conveys Zion’s defenselessness and dependence on YHWH, and the focus of the critique in 3:16–17 lies on the women’s haughtiness, an offense not tied to their identity as daughters, even if it is displayed in a stereotypically feminine manner.

Overall, the book of Isaiah uses the daughter metaphor in a predominantly positive sense. Zion’s daughters are closely connected to their capital city, sharing in her restoration and bringing her great joy and delight, while YHWH’s daughters can depend on the concern, protection, and deliverance of a divine parent more powerful than all earthly threats.

165. In 16:1, however, Moab is the one who is endangered, and Jerusalem is a place of security.

Chapter 4

Zion as Mother and Wife

In the latter half of Isaiah, Lady Zion's roles as wife and mother largely overshadow her role as daughter. The marriage metaphor primarily depicts Zion as the estranged but later-reconciled wife of YHWH (50:1, 54:5–6, 57:3, 62:4–5), while the mother metaphor conveys the city's relationship with her long-lost but soon-to-be-returning citizens. Although the latter image comes to full flower only in chaps. 40–66 (49:17, 20, 22, 25; 50:1; 51:18, 20; 54:1, 13; 57:3; 60:4, 9; 62:5; 66:8), becoming Zion's primary identity, it begins to bud already in 3:16–4:6 and 37:3.¹ Since the marriage metaphor appears in only a few passages in Isaiah, always alongside depictions of Zion as mother, I will discuss both images in this chapter. In an effort to determine their unique resonances, however, I will treat them in separate sections.

Zion as Mother of the People of Israel

Although it might seem natural to begin by discussing Isaiah's portrait of Zion as wife, because it is logically prior to her role as mother, the book gives pride of place to the latter metaphor, evoking it earlier and more often.

Associated Commonplaces of the Vehicle: Mother

In ancient Israel, motherhood was the goal of most women because having children accorded them a position of security and respect.² Because of the great importance attached to the continuance of the family line, barrenness brought shame and disgrace (Gen 30:1–3, 1 Sam 1:6–7), while the birth of many children, especially male heirs, yielded great honor and joy (see Gen 30:19–20, also Ps 113:7). Giving birth, however, was a dangerous undertaking, and many women died in childbirth (e.g., Rachel in Gen 35:16–19). Infant mortality was also high, and those who lost their mothers were particularly vulnerable.³ Babies were dependent on their mother's milk—or that of a nursemaid—for survival and typically were not weaned until they reached the age of three.⁴ Images of mothers tenderly comfort-

1. Contra Christl M. Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion: Gender, Space, and the Sacred in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008) 190.

2. See further Daniel I. Block, "Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel," in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (ed. K. M. Campbell; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003) 72.

3. According to Carol Meyers, the life expectancy of women was 10 years shorter than that of men due to the risks of childbirth, and probably only a little more than half of those born survived to the age of five ("The Family in Early Israel," in *Families in Ancient Israel* [ed. Leo G. Perdue et al.; FRC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997] 28).

4. Leo G. Perdue, "The Israelite and Early Jewish Family: Summary and Conclusions," in *Families in Ancient Israel* (ed. Leo G. Perdue et al.; FRC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 171.

ing, quieting, and attending to the needs of their infants in poetic similes (Ps 131:2; Isa 49:15, 66:13) point to associated commonplaces of maternal affection and devotion toward their young children. Similarly, the story of Rebekah and Jacob (Genesis 27) illustrates the love of a mother for a grown son, as well as her ability to exert influence in promoting his interests.⁵

Mothers often named their children (Gen 29:32–35, 30:6–13; Judg 13:24) and played a significant role in their education (see Prov 1:8, 6:20, 31:1–9).⁶ Children, in turn, were expected to honor and obey their mother as well as their father (Exod 20:12, Prov 30:17), and both parents were involved in disciplining a recalcitrant son and providing testimony against him should he resist all attempts at correction (Deut 21:18–21). Mothers also bore the responsibility to provide for the everyday needs of their household, especially by preparing food and clothing for their families. As Prov 31:10–31 suggests, a woman who excelled in these tasks would be held in high esteem.

Ancient Near Eastern Background

As previously noted, several scholars have located the roots of Zion's female personification in the ancient Near East.⁷ Most pertinent to the current discussion is Dobbs-Allsopp's monograph, which locates its background in the Mesopotamian lament tradition of the "weeping goddess," who is sometimes depicted as a mother.⁸ However, since Zion is never deified and is described as a mother outside lament texts, it is unlikely that the Mesopotamian motif significantly influenced the biblical presentation of Zion.⁹ A closer parallel may be found in ANE texts that call the citizens of a city or country its "sons" or "daughters,"¹⁰ though it typically occurs without any further metaphorical development and thus was probably idiomatic in much of the ANE world. As Maier notes, the metaphor may originally have evoked associations of the city's role in "provid[ing] the

5. Cf. Bathsheba and Solomon (1 Kings 1). See Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Family in First Temple Israel," in *Families in Ancient Israel* (ed. Leo G. Perdue et al.; FRC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 78.

6. Block, "Marriage and Family," 76.

7. See p. 54.

8. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1993) 87. Descriptions of the goddess as a mother are found in "Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur," lines 254, 375–78 (Samuel N. Kramer, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* [AS 12; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940] 44–45, 64–65; also Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once . . . : Sumerian Poetry in Translation* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987] 463, 472); "Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur," lines 117, 137, 141 (Piotr Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989] 42–45); see also Samuel Noah Kramer, "Lisin, the Weeping Mother Goddess: A New Sumerian Lament," in *Zikir Šumim* (ed. F. R. Kraus and G. van Driel; SFSMD 5; Leiden: Brill, 1982) 138–41 (lines 1–2, 25–45).

9. See the discussion on p. 56.

10. See p. 36.

main sources of life such as food, shelter, and a home to the people,”¹¹ but the HB itself provides the most significant background for Isaiah’s use of the metaphor.

The Use of the Metaphor Elsewhere in the HB

Outside Isaiah, the application of the mother metaphor to Zion is most prominent in Lamentations. Bewailing the mournful situation of the besieged city, Lamentations 1 proclaims that “her children (עולליה) have gone away, captives before the adversary” (v. 5). Later, Zion herself deplores the mournful state of her children (v. 16b) and, after describing her inner torment, declares, “Outside, the sword bereaves (שכלה); at home, [it is] like death” (v. 20b).¹² In Lamentations 2, Zion responds to the call to “lift up [her] hands to [YHWH] for the life of [her] children (עולליך), who faint in hunger” (v. 19b), by lamenting, “Those whom I cared for and raised, my enemy destroyed” (v. 22b). By portraying Zion as a mother whose children have been killed or captured or are dying of hunger, these chapters highlight the depths of her suffering.¹³ Moreover, as a woman who is like a widow (1:1) and has lost her sons, she is utterly alone and vulnerable.¹⁴

In Ezekiel 23, YHWH traces the history of his relationships with Samaria and Jerusalem, who both bore him sons and daughters (v. 4). As in Lamentations, the children are taken away from their city-mothers (vv. 10, 25; cf. v. 47), but here the emphasis lies on the reason for these horrors—they are part of YHWH’s judgment against the cities for their promiscuity (see vv. 8–9, 18–24). By evoking the image of a mother’s grief, the passage underscores the severity of the consequences for the cities’ sin. As the chapter continues, however, it becomes apparent that Samaria and Jerusalem are not the compassionate mothers they should be. Rather than cherishing their children as a precious gift, they have sacrificed them to their idols (v. 37; cf. 16:20–21, 45). Here, the mother-child metaphor illuminates the cities’ shocking depravity by revealing how their love for their idols trumps their concern for their children.¹⁵

11. Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 73; see also Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: Free Press, 1992) 172; John J. Schmitt, “The Motherhood of God and Zion as Mother,” *RB* 92 (1985) 587–88; Marjo C. A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990) 261.

12. On שכל as indicating bereavement of children, see Gen 27:45, 1 Sam 15:33, Hos 9:12.

13. Kathleen M. O’Connor, “‘Speak Tenderly to Jerusalem’: Second Isaiah’s Reception and Use of Daughter Zion,” *PSB* 20 (1999) 286; cf. Mic 1:16 concerning the town of Mareshah.

14. Cf. the lament of the unnamed speaker in Jer 10:20, who may be Jerusalem (see Leslie C. Allen, *Jeremiah* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008] 131).

15. For a discussion of Lamentations 4 and Hosea 2, which give more attention to the child side of the metaphor, see p. 36. In 2 Sam 20:19, a wise woman calls Abel Bethmaacah “a city, even a mother in Israel,” though without offering any explanation of the phrase. Moreover, Ps 87:4–5 counts foreign citizens among those who have been born

Textual Analyses

Isaiah 3:16, 17; 4:4

In Isaiah 1–39, Mother Zion appears only twice, first in 3:16–4:6. Although this passage focuses primarily on the shameful deeds and resulting fate of her daughters, Zion also plays a role:¹⁶

3:16	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה	And YHWH said,
	יֵעַן כִּי גִבְרוּ בָנוֹת צִיּוֹן	“Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,
	וְתִלְכְּנָה נְטוּיֹת גְּרוֹן	and they walk with outstretched necks
	וּמִשְׁקָרוֹת עֵינַיִם	and seductive eyes—
	הֵלֹךְ וּטְפָף תִּלְכְּנָה	walking and skipping along, they go,
	וּבְרַגְלֵיהֶם תַּעֲכֹסְנָה	and with their feet, they jingle—
17	וַיִּשְׁפֹּת אֲדָנִי	the Lord will inflict with scabs
	קִדְקֵד בָּנוֹת צִיּוֹן	the heads of the daughters of Zion,
	וַיְהוֶה פֶּתֶחַן יַעֲרָה	and YHWH will bare their foreheads.

25	מִתֵּיךְ בַּחֶרֶב יִפְּלוּ	Your men will fall by the sword,
	וּגְבוּרָתְךָ בַּמִּלְחָמָה	and your strength* in battle.
26	וְאֵנָּה וְאֵבָלָהּ תִּתְחַיֵּה	And her entrances will lament and mourn;
	וְנִקְתָּה לָאָרֶץ תִּשָּׁב	empty, [†] she will sit on the ground.

4:3	וְהוּא הַנִּשְׁאֵר בְּצִיּוֹן	And whoever is left in Zion
	וְהַנּוֹתָר בִּירוּשָׁלַם קֹדֶשׁ יֹאמַר לוֹ	and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy,
	כָּל־הַכְּתוּב לַחַיִּים בִּירוּשָׁלַם	everyone who is written for life in Jerusalem,
4	אִם רָחַץ אֲדָנִי	when the Lord has washed away
	אֶת צִלְתָּ בָנוֹת צִיּוֹן	the filth of the daughters of Zion
	וְאֶת־דְּמֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם יִדַּח	and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem
	מִקְרָבָהּ בְּרוּחַ מִשְׁפָּט	from her midst by a spirit of judgment
	וּבְרוּחַ בָּעַר	and by a spirit of burning.”

* The NRSV and NIV read “warriors” here (cf. “mighty men” in the ESV and NASB; also the LXX), but the MT has the abstract noun גְּבוּרָה in place of the related גָּבוֹר (H. G. M. Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5* [ICC; London: T&T Clark, 2006], 293).

† The NRSV translates נִקְתָּה as “ravaged” (also Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000] 200; J. Cheryl Exum, “Prophetic Pornography,” in *Plotted, Shot and Painted: Cultural Representations of Biblical Women* [JSOTSup 215; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996] 107; Susan Ackerman, “Isaiah,” in *Women’s Bible Commentary* [ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998] 171), while the NIV has “destitute.” However, the Niphal of נָקָה generally means “to be free,” e.g., from an oath or guilt (Gen 24:8, 1 Sam 26:9). Thus, it more likely describes Zion merely as “free (or empty) of people” (see “נָקָה,” HALOT 2:720; also the ESV, NASB, JPSV; cf. the LXX).

After castigating Zion’s “daughters” for their haughty display and proclaiming YHWH’s punishment (3:16–24), the text addresses the city itself. When judgment is visited on her daughters, Zion will lose her “men” in

in Zion, and the LXX interprets these verses as depicting a maternal image. Calling the city “Mother Zion,” it invokes the metaphor in a more positive and inclusive sense than is typical elsewhere (see further Christl M. Maier, “Psalm 87 as a Reappraisal of the Zion Tradition and Its Reception in Galatians 4:26,” *CBQ* 69 [2007] 479–80).

16. See further p. 80.

battle against her enemies. The death of her male citizens, described by the LXX as “your most precious son whom you love,” will also entail the loss of her “strength” or defense (v. 25), leading her to sit on the ground and mourn along with “her entrances” (פתחיה, v. 26). Modern English translations almost uniformly render פתחיה as “her gates” in this verse. But the use of פתח rather than the expected שער (“gate”; see Lam 1:4, 2:9) may indicate that Zion’s gates will no longer be standing,¹⁷ or at least that they will have been opened wide to her enemies, which could also evoke an image of sexual violence.¹⁸

Although 3:16–4:1 focuses on the daughter’s sins, 4:4 indicates that their mother also requires cleansing. Jerusalem’s דמי suggests violent bloodshed, but in light of the female personification of the city, it may also evoke the image of Jerusalem as a menstruating woman who is ritually unclean (see Lev 15:19–24).¹⁹ However, the uncleanness of both Jerusalem and her daughters will be washed away through a purifying judgment. Therefore, the passage aims both to declare judgment on the women of Zion and to inspire hope that YHWH will ultimately bring about the restoration of both people and city. The mother-daughter metaphor conveys how tightly Zion’s fate is connected to that of her female inhabitants, both in judgment and renewal. Moreover, it also suggests the image of Zion’s shame at her daughters’ seductive behavior, as well as her misery as they face humiliation. Indeed, in light of the prior context, her mourning in 3:25–26 could be not only for her warriors but also for the degradation of her daughters.

Isaiah 37:3

The only other passage in chaps. 1–39 that hints at Zion’s motherhood is 36:1–37:38, which describes Sennacherib’s siege of Jerusalem, prompting Hezekiah to appeal to Isaiah:²⁰

3 ויאמרו אליו כה אמר חזקיהו	And they said to [Isaiah], “Thus says Hezekiah,
יום־צרה ותוכחה ונאצה היום הזה	‘This is a day of distress and rebuke and contempt,
כי באו בנים	for children have come
עד־משבר	to the breaking open [of the womb]
וכח אין ללדה	but there is no strength to bear [them].”

In the context of the book, the mother in Hezekiah’s proverb is best understood as Jerusalem, whose defenses are insufficient to deliver her inhabitants from the Assyrian threat. The image of babies stuck in their mother’s body is appropriate to the situation of a siege, in which the inhabitants are

17. John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33* (WBC 24; Waco, TX: Word, 1985) 46.

18. See the use of the verbal form of פתח in Song 5:2–6. This possible sexual nuance could provide some warrant for translating נקה in the next line as “ravaged.”

19. Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 114–15; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*, 159 n. 144; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 204.

20. See further pp. 36 and 66.

trapped in the city by the surrounding army. In her own weakened condition, Jerusalem is unable to push her babies out of the birth canal, and the inevitable result of her fruitless labor is the death of both mother and children.²¹ Thus, the metaphor highlights the desperate situation of both the city and its inhabitants and may be intended to arouse YHWH's compassion in the hope that he will intervene (v. 4).

Isaiah 49:17, 20, 22, 25; 50:1

When Zion's motherhood resurfaces in 49:14–50:3 against the backdrop of exile, the city initially receives assurance that her judgment will soon give way to restoration. Although 50:1 presents a change in addressee and tone, 49:14–26 and 50:1–3 are united by their common concern with Lady Zion and a shared rhetorical situation, given by Zion's brief lament in 49:14: "YHWH has forsaken me; the Lord has forgotten me."²² Her complaint may arise from the incongruity between the preceding description of the servant's work in restoring Israel (49:1–13) and her current desolate situation (see vv. 17–21).²³ In the midst of her despair, YHWH speaks a word of promise:²⁴

- | | | |
|---------------------|----|---|
| מהרו בניך | 17 | "Your children/builders* hasten; |
| מהרסין ומחרבין | | those who tore you down and made you desolate |
| ממך יצאו | | go out from you. |
| שאי־סביב עיניך וראי | 18 | Lift up your eyes all around and see. |
| כלם נקבצו באור־לך | | All of them are gathered; they come to you. |
| חי־אני נאם־יהוה | | As I live," declares YHWH, |
| כי כלם כעדי תלבשי | | "surely you will put them all on as ornaments |
| ותקשרים ככלה | | and will bind them like a bride. |
| כי חרבתיך ושממתיך | 19 | For [as for] your wastelands and your desolate places |
| וארץ הרסתיך | | and your destroyed land, |
| כי עתה תצרי מיושב | | surely now you will be cramped from inhabitants, |
| ורחקו מבלעיך | | and those who swallowed you up will be far away. |
| עוד יאמרו באזניך | 20 | Again they will say in your ears, |
| בני שכליך | | the children of your bereavement, |
| צר־לי המקום | | 'this place is too cramped for me; |
| גשה־לי ואשבה | | make room for me that I may dwell.' |
| ואמרת בלבבך | 21 | And you will say in your heart, |
| מי ילד־לי את־אלה | | 'Who has begotten me these? |
| ואני שכולה וגלמודה | | For I was bereaved and barren, |
| גלה וסורה | | exiled and turned away, [†] |
| ואלה מי גדל | | but these, who has brought [them] up? |

21. Claudia D. Bergmann, *Childbirth as a Metaphor for Crisis: Evidence from the Ancient Near East, the Hebrew Bible, and 1QH XI, 1–18* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008) 93.

22. See also Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40–66* (NAC 15b; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009) 361–62, 374; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 316–17.

23. Patricia Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 190.

24. See also pp. 37, 69, 81, and 117.

הן אני נשארת לבדי	See, I was left alone;
אלה איפה הם	these, where [were] they?"
22 כה־אמר אדני יהוה	Thus says the Lord YHWH,
הנה אשא אל־גוים יד	"See, I will lift my hand to the nations,
ואל־עמים ארים נס	and to the peoples I will raise my banner.
והביאו בנך בחצן	And they will bring your sons in [their] bosom,
ובנתיך על־כתף תנשאנה	and your daughters will be carried on [their] shoulder.
23 והיו מלכים אמניך	And kings will be your keepers [of children],
ושרותיהם מינתיך	and their queens your wet-nurses.
אפים ארץ ישתחוו לך	Faces to the ground, they will bow to you,
ועפר רגליך ילחכו	and they will lick the dust of your feet.
וידעת כי־אני יהוה	Then you will know that I am YHWH;
אשר לא־יבשו קוי	those who wait on me will not be put to shame."
24 היקח מגבור מלקוח	"Can plunder be taken from a strong man?
ואם־שבי צדיק ימלט	Or can the captives of a tyrant [‡] be rescued?"
25 כי־כה אמר יהוה	But thus says YHWH,
גם־שבי גבור יקח	"Even the captives of the strong man will be taken,
ומלקוח עריץ ימלט	and the plunder of the tyrant will be rescued.
ואת־יריבך	And the one who contends with you,
אנכי אריב	I myself will contend with,
ואת־בניך אנכי אושע	and your children I will save."

* On this wordplay, see p. 39.

† The LXX renders the first pair of terms as ἄτεκνος καὶ χήρα ("childless and a widow"), perhaps drawing a connection to Babylon's fate in 47:9, and omits the second pair. 1QIsa^a and the other versions support the MT.

‡ The MT's צדיק ("righteous person"; cf. the Tg.) makes little sense in context. This translation reads עריץ along with 1QIsa^a (cf. the Syr. and Vg.), which parallels v. 25a (see also Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2002] 313–14; Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66* [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969], 218).

Those who decimated Zion will depart from her and be replaced by her children, who hasten toward her (v. 17). No longer will her land be empty and desolate; now it will be bursting at the seams, unable to contain the abundance of her offspring (v. 19). These events will prompt Zion to respond with bewildered wonder: "Who has begotten (ילד) me these? For I was bereaved (שכולה) and barren (גלמודה), exiled (גלה) and turned away, but these, who has brought [them] up?" (v. 21). Since Zion's first question uses a masculine singular form of ילד, it should probably be understood as seeking the identity of the children's father, rather than their mother.²⁵ She

25. *Father*: So John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40–55: A Critical And Exegetical Commentary* (2 vols.; ICC; New York: T&T Clark, 2006) 2:191–92; cf. the NASB, NKJV. *Mother*: So R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 146; cf. the NRSV, NIV, JPSV. Maggie Low argues that the masc. form points to YHWH as the one who birthed Zion's children ("Isa 49:14–26: Who Gave Birth to Zion's Children?" *TTJ* 17 [2009] 24–27), but why would Zion ask about the identity of her children's birth-mother using a masc. form? That would imply that she already knew YHWH had borne them and so would make her question superfluous.

may have both questions in mind, however, especially because she immediately thereafter alludes to her own inability to bear children.²⁶

The terms Zion uses to illustrate her wretched condition are not entirely consistent: שכולה indicates someone whose children have died, whereas גלמודה typically signifies a woman who has never borne any children. However, the former metaphorical portrayal limits the latter, hiding that particular associated commonplace and suggesting instead an image of a woman who has lost her children and is now unable to bear any more. Similarly, Zion describes herself as both “exiled” (גלה) and “left alone” (נשארת לבדי), a conflict Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer resolves by seeing Zion as “exiled” from her children.²⁷ But because Lady Zion is a flexible figure, it seems more likely that when she calls herself “exiled,” she symbolizes her displaced people. She also, however, represents the land, which has been “left alone.”²⁸

YHWH does not respond to Zion’s puzzled inquiry concerning the children’s origin, but he indirectly answers her question about who has brought them up by implying that they are being raised by the nations.²⁹ As caretakers and nursemaids to Zion’s children, foreign rulers will return them to their mother, bowing down at her feet in subservience (vv. 22–23). This astonishing promise leads to the question whether it is even possible for plunder to be recovered from such a mighty enemy (v. 24). Although that question could be a continuation of YHWH’s speech, it makes better sense to read it as coming from Zion, expressing her continued surprise and doubt.³⁰ YHWH responds in the affirmative, declaring that he will confront her oppressors and deliver her children (v. 25).

The tone changes drastically in 50:1–3, where Zion’s motherhood no longer symbolizes the hope of renewal.³¹

26. See Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 326. Maier understands Zion’s question as asking “more generally for the person who stood in for her at the time of her barrenness and exile” (*Daughter Zion*, 260 n. 31), but that does not sufficiently account for the use of ילד.

27. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, *For the Comfort of Zion: The Geographical and Theological Location of Isaiah 40–55* (VTSup 139; Leiden: Brill, 2010) 292.

28. Similarly Knud Jeppesen, “Mother Zion, Father Servant: A Reading of Isaiah 49–55,” in *Of Prophets’ Visions and the Wisdom of Sages* (ed. Heather A. McKay and David J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 162; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 115.

29. See also Jacqueline E. Lapsley, “‘Look! The Children and I Are as Signs and Portents in Israel’: Children in Isaiah,” in *The Child in the Bible* (ed. Marcia J. Bunge, Terence E. Fretheim, and Beverly Roberts Gaventa; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 98.

30. See also Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 218; John F. A. Sawyer, “Daughter of Zion and Servant of the Lord in Isaiah: A Comparison,” *JSOT* 44 (1989) 92; Ulrich Berges, “Personifications and Prophetic Voices of Zion in Isaiah and Beyond,” in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character and Anonymous Artist* (ed. Johannes C. de Moor; OtSt 45; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 68–69; Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, “Isaiah 40–55: A Judahite Reading Drama,” in *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Flesher; SBLAIL 13; Atlanta: SBL, 2012) 69.

31. On these verses, see further pp. 40 and 117.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה	1	Thus says YHWH,
אֵי זֶה סֵפֶר כְּרִיתוֹת אִמְכֶם		"Where is the certificate of divorce of your mother,
אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּיהָ		whom I sent away?
אוּ מִי מִנְּשֵׁי		Or which of my creditors
אֲשֶׁר-מָכַרְתִּי אֶתְכֶם לּוֹ		is the one to whom I have sold you?
הֵן בְּעוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם נִמְכַּרְתֶּם		See, because of your iniquities, you have been sold,
וּבִפְשָׁעֵיכֶם		and because of your rebellions,
שְׁלַחָה אִמְכֶם		your mother has been sent away."

As Maier observes, only here in Isaiah is Zion explicitly called "mother."³² Whereas elsewhere Mother Zion is addressed concerning her children, in this verse the children are addressed concerning their mother (cf. 57:3–5). In contrast to Hos 2:4[2], in which YHWH instructs Israel's children to "contend with [their] mother" because of her promiscuous behavior, here he directs his attention toward the children's own offenses. He declares that their "rebellions" have led him both to divorce their mother and sell them into slavery. The question of Zion's guilt or innocence is never explicitly dealt with. However, the book has already testified to the city's "sins" (40:2; cf. 1:21) and later suggests that the children's idolatrous rejection of YHWH mirrors that of their mother (57:3–11). Read in that broader context, these verses need not be taken as blaming the innocent mother's suffering on the children.³³ After all, both mother and children can represent the people with whom the guilt lies.³⁴

Rather than highlighting Zion's blamelessness, 49:14–50:3 may instead illuminate the tension between conditionality and unconditionality in YHWH's promises to his people. His commitment to Zion is permanent and unconditional (49:14–26; cf. 1:27a).³⁵ As 49:23 points out, however, only "those who wait on [YHWH] will not be put to shame." Therefore, the participation of particular individuals in the fulfillment of YHWH's promises to Zion is conditional (cf. 1:27b–28). When whole generations of her people

32. Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 190.

33. Contra Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, *Isaiah's Vision and the Family of God* (LCBI; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 66; Sarah J. Dille, *Mixing Metaphors: God as Mother and Father in Deutero-Isaiah* (JSOTSup 398; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 163; Jeppesen, "Mother Zion," 124–25; O'Connor, "Speak Tenderly," 289, 293; Gerlinde Baumann, *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003) 183–84; Nelly Stienstra, *YHWH Is the Husband of His People: Analysis of a Biblical Metaphor with Special Reference to Translation* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993) 171.

34. Athalya Brenner contends that "the mother and sons seem to be the two faces of the same implied 'reality'" ("Identifying the Speaker-in-the-Text and the Reader's Location in Prophetic Texts: The Case of Isaiah 50," in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies* [ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine; Chicago: Dearborn, 2001] 145).

35. See also Block, "Marriage and Family," 51; Marjo C. A. Korpel, "The Female Servant of the LORD in Isaiah 54," in *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkelen van Dijk-Hemmes* (ed. Bob Becking and Meindert Dijkstra; BIS 18; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 167.

become corrupt, the city itself can be characterized as sinful and must be purged of her impurities (1:21–26).

This passage aims to persuade Zion that YHWH has not forgotten her and to trust in YHWH's promises to restore her (49:14–26), while at the same time correcting the people's understanding of the reason for their current distress (50:1–3). In 50:1–3, as in 3:16–4:6, the mother metaphor highlights the close relationship between city and people, which manifests itself in the connection between their fates. Judgment against the children necessarily spells judgment against the mother.³⁶ Fortunately, however, the prior context of 49:14–26 indicates that this is not the final word for either of them. There the mother metaphor provides the primary image for conveying Zion's coming restoration. The grief of bereavement, shame of barrenness, and loneliness of familial separation will soon give way to joy, honor, and fellowship as she welcomes her children home.

Isaiah 51:18, 20

In 51:9–52:12, the familial reunion described by 49:14–26 has yet to take place, and Zion's current situation is again described in terms of the loss of children. Despite frequent changes in addressee, these verses form a single rhetorical unit, connected by the three doubled imperatives to “awake” (עור) introducing each subsection,³⁷ as well as several shared ideas and terms.³⁸ The passage addresses the rhetorical situation of the people's misery in exile (52:4–5) and begins by soliciting YHWH's deliverance (51:9–11). YHWH responds by reasserting his claim over Zion, declaring to her, “You are my people” (v. 16b), which offers the strongest affirmation in Isaiah that the figure of Zion can represent the people.³⁹ Although the passage promises that YHWH's hand will move in response to his people's plight (51:22–23, 52:9–10), 51:17 contends that the city also has a part to play in her restoration (cf. 52:1–2):⁴⁰

התעוררי התעוררי	17	Wake yourself, wake yourself;
קומי ירושלם		stand up, O Jerusalem,
אשר שתית מיד יהוה		you who have drunk from the hand of YHWH

36. Gerlinde Baumann sees Zion here as “tak[ing] responsibility for her children” (“Prophetic Objections to YHWH as the Violent Husband of Israel: Reinterpretations of the Prophetic Marriage Metaphor in Second Isaiah [Isaiah 40–55],” in *Prophets and Daniel* [ed. Athalya Brenner; FCB 2/8; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001] 106). However, Zion is entirely passive in these verses. Her response to her children's rebellion is never stated, and YHWH is the one who initiates their divorce.

37. Qal in 51:9 and 52:1; Hithpolel in 51:17.

38. E.g., לבשי עו (51:9, 52:1), נחם (51:12, 19; 52:9), and זרוע (51:9, 52:10). See further Trygve N. D. Mettinger, “In Search of the Hidden Structure: YHWH as King in Isaiah 40–55,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; 2 vols.; VTSup 70; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 1:146–47; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 339–40.

39. See Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 176.

40. See also pp. 41, 72, and 168.

את־כוס חמתו	the cup of his wrath.
את־קבעת כוס התרעלה	The goblet, the cup of staggering
שחית מצית	you have drunk, you have drained.
איך־מנהל לה	18 There is no one to guide her
מכל־בנים ילדה	out of all the sons she has borne.
ואין מחזיק בידה	And there is no one to take her by the hand
מכל־בנים גדלה	out of all the sons she has brought up.
שתיים הנה קראתיך	19 These two things have happened to you—
מי ינוד לך	who will condole with you?—
השד והשבר והרעב והחרב	devastation and destruction, and famine and sword—
מי אנחמך	who will comfort you?*
בניך עלפו	20 Your sons have fainted;
שכבו בראש כל־חוצות	they lie at the head of all the streets
כתור מכמר	like an antelope [in] a net.
המלאים חמת־יהוה	They are full of the wrath of YHWH,
גערת אלהיך	the rebuke of your God.

* This translation follows 1QIsa^a (cf. the other versions; see also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 335–36; Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 350; Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 239). The MT has “who? I will comfort you,” perhaps with the sense, “who but I will comfort you?” (cf. the Tg.; see also Jan de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah* [TCT 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997] 189–90; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah* 40–55, 2:250), which may reflect an attempt to bring the verse into line with affirmations of YHWH’s comfort elsewhere in the passage (51:12, 52:9; cf. 51:3).

Jerusalem is called to pick herself up off the ground, where she has been lying in a drunken stupor, an image that symbolizes both her devastation and incapacitation. She was reduced to this current state by drinking (שהה) [2x] and even “drain[ing]” (מצה) “the cup of [YHWH’s] wrath” (כוס חמתו), which produces “staggering” (התרעלה), v. 17; cf. v. 22). The parallel rhetorical questions asking who can offer her solace and “comfort” (v. 19) imply a negative answer, despite the statement that “YHWH comforts Zion” in the prior passage (51:3).⁴¹ Jerusalem’s sons have all been killed—or at least incapacitated—by famine or sword and are thus no longer able to help her (v. 18). Moreover, the passage gives no hint of a husband. The city has been left completely alone in a state of destruction without any protection or support (cf. Lam 1:16–17).

However, YHWH has not forgotten her. He has removed the cup of wrath from her hand, planning to “put it in the hand of [her] tormentors” and promising that she will never again be forced to drink from it (vv. 22–23). The passage’s rhetorical aim is to persuade Zion to act in conformity with YHWH’s salvation, but the mother image does not contribute to this message of inspiration. Instead, it focuses on how Zion has been bereaved of the sons who could have provided both physical and emotional assistance in her time of greatest need. Thus, the metaphor is employed to portray the wretchedness of her current condition, demonstrating that YHWH under-

41. Cf. 51:12, where YHWH promises to a masc. pl. audience, “I, I am he who comforts you.” See Katie Heffelfinger, *I Am Large, I Contain Multitudes: Lyric Cohesion and Conflict in Second Isaiah* (BIS 105; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 110.

stands the depths of her despondency and consequently that his promises of deliverance do not ring hollow.⁴² This assurance then may provide her with the hope and strength she needs to respond to the call to “awake.”

Isaiah 54:1, 13

From the grief of motherhood lost, Isaiah turns again to paint a picture of motherhood restored in the rhetorical unit encompassing 54:1–17.⁴³ The passage addresses an anonymous feminine singular figure, portrayed as a childless woman (vv. 1–3), abandoned wife (vv. 4–10), and “storm-tossed” city (vv. 11–17), who should thus be identified as Zion.⁴⁴ Her current wretched state provides the rhetorical situation for the passage, which YHWH counters with astonishing promises of renewal⁴⁵:

1	רני עקרה לא ילדה פצחי רנה וצהלי לא-חלה כִּירְבִים בְּנִי-שׁוּמְמָה מבני בעולה אמר יהוה הרחיבי מקום אוהלך 2 ויריעות משכנותיך יורו אל-תחשכי האריכי מיתריך ויתדתיך חזקי 3 כִּי־יָמִין וּשְׂמָאוֹל תִּפְרָצִי וזרעך גוים יירש וערים נשמות ישיבו ...	“Shout for joy, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth in a cry of joy and shout, you who have not been in labor. For more are the children of the desolate one than the children of the married one,” says YHWH. “Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your dwellings stretch out. Do not hold back; lengthen your tent-cords, and strengthen your tent-pegs. For to the right and to the left you will spread out. And your offspring will dispossess nations, and they will settle in the desolate cities. ...
13	וכל-בניך למודי יהוה ורב שלום בניך	And all your children will be taught by YHWH, and great will be the peace of your children.”

As in 49:21, Zion is again described as “barren,” though here using a more common Hebrew root (עקר). Moreover, v. 1 clearly specifies that she has not borne children, in contrast to 51:18, which refers to “all the sons [she] has borne.”⁴⁶ However, the metaphorical portrayal of Zion as having

42. O'Connor suggests that “by becoming a witness to her strife and confirming her testimony about its unbearable excesses, YHWH removes her isolation” (“Speak Tenderly,” 291).

43. On the unity of the passage, see W. A. M. Beuken, “Isaiah LIV: The Multiple Identity of the Person Addressed,” in *Language and Meaning: Studies in Hebrew Language and Biblical Exegesis* (OtSt 19; Leiden: Brill, 1974) 31–32.

44. Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 177; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 171–72. Beuken contends that the passage's three images of mother, wife, and city represent three stages in Israel's history (“Isaiah LIV,” 63–70). As Richtsje Abma observes, however, the text focuses not on a rehearsal of Israel's history but on “a complete reversal between the past and the present plight of Zion” (*Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery, Isaiah 50:1–3 and 54:1–10, Hosea 1–3, Jeremiah 2–3* [Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1999] 92).

45. See also pp. 43, 118, and 170.

46. On this tension, see Stienstra, *YHWH Is the Husband*, 172.

lost her sons in 51:18–20 (cf. her “bereavement” in 49:21) may limit the scope of the metaphor here. Perhaps Zion’s prior experience of fruitful and fulfilling motherhood stands so far removed from her present situation that it seems like a different life. In any case, she is currently childless and infertile just like a woman who has never given birth.⁴⁷ The image of barrenness evokes memories of Israel’s foremothers, whom YHWH miraculously granted children, perhaps providing evidence of his power to do the same for Zion.⁴⁸ Thus, the personified city is exhorted to cry out for joy (cf. 51:11, 52:9), for though she is “desolate” (שׁוֹמֵמָה), having been forsaken by her husband (v. 6),⁴⁹ she will soon have more children than a woman with a husband (v. 1b).

Reading this verse in light of 47:8–9 may suggest that the married woman should be identified as Babylon, who arrogantly declares that she “will not sit as a widow or know bereavement,” unaware that both will soon come upon her.⁵⁰ This understanding would highlight the reversal between the situations of Zion and her archenemy.⁵¹ Another possibility is that the married woman represents Zion in her prior marriage to YHWH, thus conveying the idea that she will have more children than she did before.⁵² A final interpretive option views the married woman as generic,⁵³

47. See also Jeppesen, “Mother Zion,” 113; Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 96; Robert Martin-Achard, “Esaïe liv et la nouvelle Jérusalem,” in *Congress Volume: Vienna 1980* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 32; Leiden: Brill, 1981) 249. Contra Reinoud Oosting, who distinguishes between the barren Zion in 49:14–26 and 54:1–10 and Mother Jerusalem, who was sent away in chap. 50 but is given the promise that she will be rebuilt in 54:11–17 (*The Role of Zion/Jerusalem in Isaiah 40–55: A Corpus-Linguistic Approach* [SSN 59; Leiden: Brill, 2013] 247).

48. E.g., Sarah (Gen 11:30), Rebekah (Gen 25:21), Rachel (Gen 29:31). See further Mary Callaway, *Sing, O Barren One: A Study in Comparative Midrash* (SBLDS 91; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986) 62–72; Martin-Achard, “Esaïe liv,” 249; similarly Beuken, “Isaiah LIV,” 63–64.

49. שׁוֹמֵמָה frequently characterizes a devastated and deserted land (e.g., Isa 49:8, 19; 61:4; Lam 5:18), but it also describes Tamar, who, as a rape victim, lives out her days alone (2 Sam 13:20). Based in part on the latter passage, Callaway understands the term to imply “sexual disgrace” when applied to Lady Jerusalem (*Sing, O Barren One*, 68). In this context, however, only the vague “shame of your youth” in v. 4 could point toward sexual disgrace, and the contrast with the “married woman” suggests rather that the word refers to Zion’s marital abandonment (see S. L. Stassen, “Marriage [and Related] Metaphors in Isaiah 54:1–17,” *JSem* 6 [1994] 62; Heffelfinger, *I Am Large*, 255 n. 235). As a term that may be applied to the ruin and despondency of both land and women, it provides an apt description of Zion (see Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 178; Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 86).

50. Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66* (WestBC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998) 151; see also the contemporizing identification with Rome in the Tg.

51. See further Mark E. Biddle, “Lady Zion’s Alter Egos: Isaiah 47:1–15 and 57:6–13 as Structural Counterparts,” in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996) 132–33; Odil Hannes Steck, “Beobachtungen zur Anlage von Jesaja 54,1–8,” in *Gottesknecht und Zion: Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Deuterjesaja* (FAT 4; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992) 95.

52. James Muilenburg, “Isaiah 40–66,” in *IB* (ed. G. A. Buttrick et al.; 12 vols.; New York: Abingdon, 1956) 5:633; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:341.

53. Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah Chapters 49–55* (vol. 2 of *Isaiah III*; trans. Anthony P. Runia; 3 vols.; HKAT; Leuven: Peeters, 1998) 352–53.

emphasizing Zion's astonishing multiplication of children, which far outpaces the natural birth of children in an ordinary marriage. The text's ambiguity creates space for multiple readings, but the immediate context focuses primarily on the reversal of Zion's situation and the need for her to enlarge her living space to make room for the incredible abundance of her offspring (vv. 2–3). This concern for additional space echoes 49:19–20, but now Zion has shifted from passive listener to actor as she is called to rejoice in response to YHWH's promised restoration and prepare for the coming influx of children.

The final two references to Zion's children appear in the context of YHWH's promise to (re)build the city into a dazzling metropolis. To convey the character of the restored city, YHWH offers corresponding descriptions of Zion and her children in vv. 13–14. As her children will be "taught by YHWH," so Zion will be "established in righteousness." Inhabitants, and particularly leaders, who are well-versed in YHWH's instruction will provide the city with a firm foundation as a just and faithful city (cf. 1:26–27). Moreover, as her children will enjoy great peace, so she "will not fear" and will be free from terror.⁵⁴ Thus, the city and its inhabitants will presumably be free from both internal and external threats of violence.

The rhetorical aim of the passage is to persuade Zion that her desolate situation is being reversed, prompting her to rejoice and prepare for her glorious future. The mother metaphor provides the first in a series of portraits depicting this new reality, describing her transformation from an infertile woman into a mother of many. In vv. 1–3, the focus of the metaphor lies on the honor and blessedness associated with having children in contrast to the shame and despair of barrenness, while vv. 13–14 evoke associations of the close connection between mother and children as the former shares in the well-being of the latter.

Isaiah 57:3

In the rhetorical unit in 57:3–13 the city is barren no longer, but the righteousness and divine instruction mentioned in 54:13–14 are notably absent.⁵⁵ Instead both Mother Jerusalem and her children are engaged in idolatrous pursuits, which provide the passage's rhetorical situation, prompting a severe rebuke. Apparently, the old problems have not been completely resolved despite YHWH's decisive act of redemption.⁵⁶ Beginning

54. Note also YHWH's "covenant of peace" with Zion in v. 10.

55. On the limits and unity of the passage, see Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 186; Susan Ackerman, "Sacred Sex, Sacrifice and Death: Understanding a Prophetic Poem," *BRev* 6 (1990) 38, also 42. Again, the unnamed female figure should be identified as Jerusalem, given the frequent female personification of the city throughout Isaiah 40–66.

56. Similarly Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 464. Some scholars argue that there is little evidence for postexilic engagement in idolatry (see Ephraim Stern, "Religion in Palestine in the Assyrian and Persian Periods," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-exilic Times* [ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C. A. Korpel; OtSt 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999] 254–54), leading to the conclusion that this oracle reflects preexilic realities (see, e.g., Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66,

with a masculine plural address to the city's children, the passage seamlessly switches in v. 6 to a feminine singular address to the mother herself:⁵⁷

3	ואתם קרבר־הנה בני עננה זרע מנאף ותזנה	But you, come here, children of a sorceress,* offspring of an adulterer and [a woman who] is promiscuous.
...
6	בחלקי־נחל חלקך הם הם גורלך גם־להם שפכת נסך העלית מנחה העל אלה אנחם	Among the smooth [stones] [†] of the valley is your portion; they, they are your lot. Indeed, to them you poured out a drink-offering, you presented a grain offering. Concerning these should I relent?
...
13	בזעקך יצילך קברצ־יך ואת־כלם ישא־רוח יקח־הבל יחוסה בי ינחל־ארץ ויירש הר־קדש	When you call for help, let your collections [of idols] [‡] deliver you. But all of them the wind will carry away; a breath will take [them] away. But whoever seeks refuge in me will possess the land and inherit my holy mountain.

* The LXX has "lawless sons," apparently reading עון ("iniquity"; cf. the Tg.), but 1QIsa^a and the Vg. support the MT, which forms a better parallel with the subsequent line (see also Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., *Whoredom: God's Unfaithful Wife in Biblical Theology* [NSBT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996] 80).

† חלק generally means "smooth" or "share," and most translators have taken the word here to indicate the stones in the wadi smoothed by water (cf. the Tg.; see, e.g., Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 473 n. 9; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 183; John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66* [WBC 25; Waco, TX: Word, 1987] 252). Another possibility is that it refers to "the dead," following cognates in Akkadian and Ugaritic (W. H. Irwin, "The Smooth Stones of the Wady"? *Isaiah 57,6*," CBQ 29 [1967] 31–40; Theodore J. Lewis, "Death Cult Imagery in *Isaiah 57*," *HAR* 11 [1987] 272; C. Nihan, "Trois cultes en Ésaïe 57,3–13 et leur signification dans le contexte religieux de la Judée à l'époque perse," *Transeu* 22 [2001] 156–57). Neither reading is without problems, and it matters little for our purposes which is followed.

‡ Although otherwise unattested, קברצ־יך seems to be a nominal form of קבץ ("to gather, collect"). Lewis contends that the "gathered ones" are "dead ancestors," citing an Ugaritic text that parallels *qbs* with *rp* (i.e., the Rephaim; "Death Cult," 276; also Ackerman, "Sacred Sex," 41; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 19B; New York: Doubleday, 2003] 155). The above translation understands קברצ־יך as a reference to Jerusalem's foreign gods in light of the wider context (see also Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah Chapters 56–66* [vol. 3 of *Isaiah III*; trans. Anthony P. Runia; 3 vols.; HKAT; Leuven: Peeters, 2001] 85; Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 559; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 482).

Along with labeling the children's mother as "promiscuous," v. 3 also calls her a "sorceress" (ענן), using a verb elsewhere linked to divination

325). However, the prophetic polemic against idolatry in Zech 5:5–11, 10:2, 13:2 suggests that the temptation to worship idols remained a problem in the Postexilic Period (Herbert Niehr, "Religio-Historical Aspects of the 'Early Post-Exilic' Period," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion*, 239–40; Ackerman, "Sacred Sex," 44).

57. See also pp. 43 and 119.

(Lev 19:26, Deut 18:10).⁵⁸ This accusation against Jerusalem, which appears nowhere else in the HB, is not developed further, but Isaiah 47 describes sorcery as characteristic of Lady Babylon (vv. 9, 12, though using כִּשְׁף).⁵⁹ Noting several further parallels, Biddle proposes an intentional pairing of chaps. 47 and 57 with the aim of portraying the figure in the latter as “Lady Zion’s alter ego,” who, like Lady Babylon, must be overcome in order for Zion to experience the glorious future promised her.⁶⁰ Through her adulterous affairs with idols (vv. 6–10), this Mother Zion bears offspring who are similarly depraved (vv. 3–5). Her lovers, however, will be of no avail when she is in desperate need of help (v. 13a). The passage concludes by offering a trace of the promises found in previous passages, directed toward “whoever seeks refuge in [YHWH],” who “will inherit [his] holy mountain” (v. 13b).

Rhetorically, the passage aims to shock both people and city into recognizing that their idolatrous defiance of YHWH is both detestable and of no real benefit. Here, the mother-child metaphor explains the source of the people’s corruption—they come from depraved stock. The mother has passed on her idolatrous tendencies to her children, resulting in a striking resemblance of character (cf. Ezek 16:44), and now both mother and children are under indictment. However, the passage hints at a better future for Mother Zion. As YHWH’s “holy mountain” (see 66:20), she will ultimately be the reward given to those of her children who accept YHWH’s invitation to turn back to him (v. 13b).

Isaiah 60:4, 9

The negative portrait of mother and children in 57:3–13 proves unique to chaps. 40–66, and chap. 60 returns to the familiar theme of Zion’s maternal delight at the return of her children. Set off from its context by its consistent use of second-person feminine singular forms referring to Zion, the chapter forms a single unit,⁶¹ which addresses a rhetorical situation involving the nonfulfillment of earlier promises. Even if the city has already welcomed the first wave of returnees,⁶² these probably seem like a mere handful in comparison with the promises of abundant offspring in 49:19–20 and 54:1–3. Moreover, the city itself is still in ruins (v. 10; cf. 54:11–12).

58. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 163.

59. See also Nah 3:4, concerning Nineveh.

60. Biddle, “Lady Zion’s Alter Egos,” 133–39; on the connections between these chapters, see also W. A. M. Beuken, “Isa 56:9–57:13: An Example of the Isaianic Legacy of Trito-Isaiah,” in *Tradition and Re-interpretation in Jewish and Early Christian Literature* (ed. J. W. van Henten et al.; StPB 36; Leiden: Brill, 1986) 55–56.

61. Gregory J. Polan, “Zion, the Glory of the Holy One of Israel: A Literary Analysis of Isaiah 60,” in *Imagery and Imagination in Biblical Literature* (ed. Lawrence Boadt and Mark S. Smith; CBQMS 32; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2001) 54–58; Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 611.

62. See, Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 231–32.

As in 51:17 (cf. 52:2), 60:1 also calls to Zion to “arise” (קומי), though now she is no longer summoned to free herself from humility and bondage but to “shine,” reflecting the light of YHWH’s glory to the rest of the world and enticing the nations to come to her (vv. 1–3):⁶³

4	שאי־סביב עיניך וראי	Lift up your eyes all around and see.
	כלם נקבצו באי־לך	All of them gather together; they come to you.
	בניך מרחוק יבאו	Your sons will come from afar,
	ובנותיך על־צד תאמנה	and your daughters will be supported on the hip.
5	אז תראי ונהרת	Then you will see and be radiant,
	ופחד ורחב לבבך	and your heart will tremble and swell.
	כי־יהפך עליך המון ים	For the riches of the sea will be turned to you;
	חיל גוים יבאו לך	the wealth of nations will come to you.
...
9	כי־לילי איים יקוו	For the islands wait for* me,
	ואניות תרשיש בראשנה	and the ships of Tarshish first,
	להביא בניך מרחוק	to bring your children from afar,
	כספם וזהבם אתם	their silver and their gold with them,
	לשם יהוה אלהיך	for the name of YHWH your God
	ולקדוש ישראל	and for the Holy One of Israel
	כי פארוך	because he has endowed you with splendor.
...
16a	וינקה חלב גוים	And you will nurse from the milk of the nations,
	ושד מלכים תניק	and at the breast of kings you will nurse.

* Koole reads the Piel יקוו as a form of the root קיה (II), “to gather,” which is otherwise attested only in the Niphal (*Isaiah* 56–66, 236; also Polan, “Zion,” 52). The versions, however, understand it as a form of קיה (I), “to wait for” (see also the English translations; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 204; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 192).

Drawn by the splendor (פארוך) YHWH has bestowed on Zion, the nations will bring both their own wealth and Zion’s children as an offering to YHWH (vv. 4, 9),⁶⁴ while the children themselves also respond to their mother’s beckoning light. Observing their progression, Mother Zion will be overcome by wonder and maternal rapture, physically manifested by a swelling heart and radiant face (v. 5).

This passage, however, presents a unique interaction between the metaphor of Zion as mother and the strange image of Zion as an infant nursing at the breasts of foreign kings (v. 16).⁶⁵ As Blenkinsopp puts it, she “‘milk[s]’ the resources of the Gentiles and their rulers,” becoming satiated by their bountiful provision.⁶⁶ Although this image conveys primarily the

63. See also pp. 45 and 81.

64. Note the contrast with 3:18–20, where תפארת describes the self-adornments of the ציון, who seek to glorify themselves (Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 192).

65. Cf. the simile in 49:15, in which YHWH plays the role of mother.

66. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 216; see further Gary Stansell, “The Nations’ Journey to Zion: Pilgrimage and Tribute as Metaphor in the Book of Isaiah,” in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* (ed. A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim; SBLAIL 4; Atlanta: SBL, 2009) 249. In 49:23, Zion’s children are nursed by the nations.

abundance and richness of the goods pouring into Zion, it also evokes connotations of her helplessness and dependence, thereby limiting the scope of the mother metaphor. Zion does not engage in the typical motherly duties of nourishing and caring for her children in this passage because she also needs to be nurtured. The action of the passage is carried along by YHWH, his light/glory, Zion's children, the nations, their kings, and even their animals and wealth, all of whom are engaged in "coming" to Zion and "bringing" items that will increase the city's splendor and contribute to temple worship.⁶⁷

Whereas previously Zion was "forsaken" (עזובה; cf. 54:6–7, 62:4) and even "hated" (שנאה), now YHWH promises to make her forevermore a pride and "joy" (מְשׁוּשׁ, v. 15; cf. 62:5). In light of the parallels with chaps. 54 and 62, this description of reversal could be understood against the background of the marriage metaphor.⁶⁸ However, since the immediate context depicts Zion as a deserted city and since the image of Zion as wife is not explicitly developed elsewhere in the passage, this verse offers no more than a suggestive echo of the marital image.

By recalling 54:1–17, as well as 49:14–26,⁶⁹ the passage reaffirms the still-unfulfilled promises, now transmuting them onto an eschatological plane.⁷⁰ Since chap. 60 addresses a different rhetorical situation, however, it has a correspondingly different aim. Those earlier texts speak to a situation of utter desolation, conveyed by the image of Zion as a barren woman (49:21, 54:1). In that context, the promise of children signifies a radical transformation from a state of disgrace to one of blessing and honor. By contrast, in chap. 60 Zion's "light has [already] come" (v. 1), and the rhetorical aim thus seems to be to persuade her that this is the case and call her to act in response by reflecting YHWH's glory to the nations.⁷¹ That difference in purpose may, in part, explain why her children are not as prominent as in those earlier passages but are instead incorporated into the larger theme of the nations' tribute, which highlights Zion's ever-increasing splendor.⁷² Nevertheless, while the associated commonplace of a mother's tender joy

67. בָּרָא appears 11 times in chap. 60 in both Qal and Hiphil forms.

68. See Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 235–36; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 552. Note also that שָׂנֵא ("to hate") appears in marriage contexts elsewhere (e.g., Gen 29:31, Deut 24:3; Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 193–95).

69. On the latter, see Roy D. Wells, "'They All Gather, They Come to You': History, Utopia, and the Reading of Isaiah 49:18–26 and 60:4–16," in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* (ed. A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim; SBLAIL 4; Atlanta: SBL, 2009) 197–216; Stansell, "Nations' Journey," 248–49.

70. Childs, *Isaiah*, 496.

71. Although בָּרָא in v. 1 could be taken as a prophetic perfect, conveying the certainty of a divine promise that has not yet come about (so Carol J. Dempsey, "From Desolation to Delight: The Transformative Vision of Isaiah 60–62," in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* [ed. A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim; SBLAIL 4; Atlanta: SBL, 2009] 219), the command to "shine" suggests that Zion has already received YHWH's light.

72. See Wells, "They All Gather," 205, 208; Stansell, "Nations' Journey," 249.

in her children is implicit in chaps. 49 and 54, this passage heightens that aspect of the metaphor by providing a rare glimpse into Zion's emotional state (v. 5). She receives her dignity and majesty from YHWH's splendor, but her elation finds its primary source in her reunion with her long-lost children.⁷³

Isaiah 62:5

The stunning visions of restoration in chaps. 60–62 end with one final reference to Zion's בנים in 62:5, part of a rhetorical unit comprising all of ch. 62:⁷⁴

5	כִּי־יִבֶּעַל כְּחֹר בְּתוּלָה	For [as] a young man marries a maiden,
	יִבְעֻלֶיךָ בָנֶיךָ	your sons will marry you.
	וּמִשׁוֹשׁ חַתָּן	And [with] the rejoicing of a bridegroom
	עַל־כֻּלָּהּ	over a bride,
	יֵשִׁישׁ עֲלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ	your God will rejoice over you.

This verse takes up the familiar image of Zion as the mother of her inhabitants from earlier texts but does not develop the metaphor further. Thus, the passage suggests the common associations of Zion's joy and delight in her children and the intimacy of her relationship with them.⁷⁵

Isaiah 66:8

Mother Zion takes the stage one final time in 66:7–14, part of the book's closing scene, which includes chaps. 65 and 66.⁷⁶ Despite the complexity of this passage, the whole may be read as YHWH's response to the lamenter who pleads with him to act on the people's behalf in 63:7–64:11[12].⁷⁷ While the lament provides the general rhetorical situation, chaps. 65–66 offer further specifics. Many Israelites are still in exile (66:20), and the com-

73. Dempsey, "From Desolation to Delight," 220–21.

74. See further pp. 126 and 129; also pp. 46 and 74.

75. On the combination of the mother-child and wife-husband metaphors in this passage, see p. 129.

76. Several shared terms and ideas justify taking these chapters as a single rhetorical unit. Both speak of a "new heavens and new earth" (65:17, 66:22) and share similar references to cultic taboos (65:3–4; 66:3, 17), and 66:4b reiterates 65:12b almost verbatim (see further Emmanuel Uchenna Dim, *The Eschatological Implications of Isa 65 and 66 as the Conclusion of the Book of Isaiah* [BH 3; Bern: Peter Lang, 2005] 45–46; Odil Hannes Steck, "Beobachtungen zur Anlage von Jes 65–66," *BN* 38–39 [1987] 103–7; Pierre E. Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe, son disciple et leurs éditeurs: Isaïe 40–66* [EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1972] 462–63).

77. See Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4 and the Post-Exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition* (BZAW 171; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988) 91; Richard Nysse, "Rebels from Beginning to End," *WW* 19 (1999) 165–67; W. A. M. Beuken, "Isaiah Chapters LXV–LXVI: Triton-Isaiah and the Closure of the Book of Isaiah," in *Congress Volume: Leuven 1989* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 43; Leiden: Brill, 1991) 207; David McLain Carr, "Reading Isaiah from Beginning (Isaiah 1) to End (Isaiah 65–66): Multiple Modern Possibilities," in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996) 204–5; Steck, "Beobachtungen zur Anlage von Jes 65–66," 107–13.

munity living in the land is sharply divided. A faithful remnant “trembles” at YHWH’s word (66:2, 5), but they are rejected and hated by some among their own people, who honor YHWH with their lips (66:5) but choose to follow their own desires (65:2–4). Clearly, as in 57:3–13, the fires of exile have not completely purged the people of their preexilic predilection toward sin. Nevertheless, in 66:7–14 YHWH sketches the astounding future he is bringing about for Zion:⁷⁸

7	בטרם תחיל ילדה	“Before she was in labor, she bore a child.
	בטרם יבוא חבל לה	Before labor pains came upon her,
	והמליטה זכר	she delivered a boy.
8	מי־שמע כזאת	Who has ever heard such a thing?
	מי ראה כאלה	Who has ever seen such things?
	היוחל ארץ ביום אחד	Can a land be birthed in one day?
	אם־ילד גוי פעם אחת	Can a nation be born all at once?
	כי־חלה	But as soon as she was in labor,
	גם־ילדה ציון את־בניה	Zion bore her children.
9	האני אשכיר	Will I break open [the womb]
	ולא אוליד	and not cause [you] to bear,”
	יאמר יהוה	says YHWH?
	אם־אני המוליד ועצרת־י	“Will I, who cause to bear, shut [the womb],”
	אמר אלהיך	says your God?
10	שמחו את־ירושלם	“Rejoice with Jerusalem,
	וגילו בה כל־אהביה	and be glad over her, all you who love her.
	שישו אתה משוב	Rejoice with her in joy,
	כל־המתאבלים עליה	all you who mourn over her,
11	למען תינקו	that you may nurse
	ושבעתם משד נחמיה	and be satisfied from her comforting breast,
	למען תמצו	that you may drink deeply
	והתענגתם מזיו כבודה	and take delight from her glorious bosom.”*
12	כי־כה אמר יהוה	For thus says YHWH,
	הנני נטה־אליה כנהר שלום	“See, I am extending to her peace like a river,
	וכנחל שוטף	and like an overflowing stream
	כבוד גוים	the glory of nations,
	וינקתם	and you will nurse.
	על־צד תנשאו	On the hip! you will be carried,
	ועל־ברכים תשעשעו	and on the knees you will be dandled.”

* [†] appears elsewhere only in Pss 50:11; 80:14 [13], where it designates some kind of animal, but Arabic and Akkadian cognates suggest the meaning “nipple,” which is supported by the parallel with שד (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 303; Koole, *Isaiah* 56–66, 498; cf. the NRSV, JPSV, NASB). The NIV and ESV read it as “abundance,” following the Syr.

[†] As in 60:4 (see p. 82 n. [†]), the LXX instead reads “shoulders” (followed by the JPSV; cf. “arm” in the NRSV and NIV), but 1QIsa^a and the Tg. support the MT (see also the NASB and ESV).

Consonant with the eschatological dimensions of the larger passage, the birth described in vv. 7–9 is far from ordinary, appearing without la-

78. See also pp. 33, 47, and 174.

bor pains in a miraculous reversal of the curse on Eve.⁷⁹ The first pair of rhetorical questions in v. 8a conveys astonishment at this lack of pain and struggle, while the second pair alerts the reader to another point of amazement—a whole nation is birthed at once. Now the barren woman (49:21, 54:1) who “did not bear” (לֹא יָלְדָה) and had “not been in labor” (לֹא-חָלָה), 54:1) bears children (יָלְדָה) at the first onset of labor pains (חָלָה, 66:8b).

Anticipating Zion’s doubts concerning these incredible promises, YHWH addresses her directly in v. 9 with one more set of rhetorical questions. Whereas in 37:3, Zion’s children had “come to the breaking open (מִשְׁכַּר) [of the womb], but there [was] no strength to bear (לִלְדָה) [them],” now YHWH not only “break[s] open” (אֲשַׁכֵּיר) the womb but also “cause[s] Zion] to bear” (אֲוִלִיד), assuring a successful delivery.⁸⁰ Particularly appropriate to the situation of a city and people who have so long been expecting YHWH’s redemption, the image of pregnancy suggests that their extensive period of waiting will lead to a climactic and fruitful conclusion.⁸¹

Feminist interpreters point out that Zion never speaks in Isaiah after chap. 49, and thus the book never describes her response to its promises of restoration.⁸² In 66:10, however, a masculine plural audience is exhorted to rejoice *with* the city, which implies that Zion is already celebrating, fulfilling the call to sing for joy because of her coming children in 54:1.⁸³ Granted, this verse offers an external (male-dominated) perspective on Zion’s situation, and Zion’s pain and suffering should not be minimized. New children can never take the place of those who have been lost, not even when birthed in such miraculous abundance.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, YHWH’s promises offer hope in the midst of Zion’s despair, and the birth of children is cause for inexpressible joy, even if still accompanied by grieving.

By joining in Zion’s joy, the audience will also share in her rewards, suckling at her breast as newborn infants (vv. 10–11). Whereas in 49:23 foreign queens functioned as nursemaids to Zion’s children, now she is able to nurse them herself, providing both life-sustaining nourishment and the comfort of the maternal bond.⁸⁵ Moreover, while earlier passages portray

79. Sawyer, “Daughter of Zion,” 98; Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 222; Irmtraud Fischer, “Das Buch Jesaja. Das Buch der weiblichen Metaphern,” in *Kompendium Feministische Bibelauslegung* (ed. Luise Schottroff and Marie-Theres Wacker; Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1998) 249.

80. See Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision*, 222, who views the parallel as reminding the audience of YHWH’s miraculous intervention in a seemingly impossible situation in the past as grounds for faith in his salvation now.

81. See the similar comment on 42:14 by Richard D. Patterson, “Parental Love as a Metaphor for Divine-Human Love,” *JETS* 46 (2003) 211.

82. See, e.g., Carleen R. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (SemeiaSt 58; Atlanta: SBL, 2007) 110, 113–14; Patricia Tull Willey, “The Servant of YHWH and Daughter Zion: Alternating Visions of YHWH’s Community,” in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1995* (SBLSP 34; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 303.

83. Koole, *Isaiah 56–66*, 497.

84. See Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, 105.

85. See also Callaway, *Sing, O Barren One*, 78.

Zion's children being carried by foreigners on their journey home (49:22, 60:4), now they will be held by their mother and dandled on her knees (v. 12b).⁸⁶ Ultimately, however, Zion's ability to provide for her children derives from YHWH. He is the source of her plentiful stores of milk, which symbolize "peace" and the "glory (that is, wealth and splendor) of nations."⁸⁷ These flow "like a river" (נָהָר) to Zion and, through her, to her suckling infants,⁸⁸ painting a vivid portrait of Zion's superabundant lactation.

The larger unit aims both to affirm the lamenter's entreaty that YHWH would intervene on the people's behalf and to counter their expectations about what his help will entail.⁸⁹ Isaiah 66:7–14 serves the former aim. While the lamenter mourns that "Zion is a wilderness" (64:9[10]), now, though picturing the city as a woman rather than a place, YHWH promises fertility through the miraculous birth of children (66:7–9). The mother metaphor highlights the abundance of honor, blessing, vitality, and joy that YHWH has in store for Zion. Moreover, now her motherhood bursts into full bloom as, for the first time in the book, she actively cares for her children instead of passively receiving them. Lavishly nourishing and nurturing her babies through YHWH's provision, the renewed Zion finally emerges as a source of maternal protection, sustenance, and consolation for her dependent inhabitants, bringing them satisfaction and contentment.⁹⁰ The city-woman once in desperate need of "comfort" (נֶחָם) herself (51:3, 19; 54:11) becomes a fountain of "comfort" (תְּנוּחָה) for her people (66:11).⁹¹ Similarly, the once-devastated mother, whose sons could no longer provide her with help (51:18–20), now supports and rears her helpless babes. Dandling her children on her knees, Zion displays both tender affection and the joyful intimacy of the maternal bond.

86. Blenkinsopp understands Zion's children as carried "on the hip" (עַל-צֶדֶק) of the nations in this verse in light of the use of that phrase in 60:4 (*Isaiah* 56–66, 306–7), whereas Maria Häußl argues that the one who carries and dandles the children is either Zion or YHWH ("Gott als Vater und Mutter und die Sohnschaft des Volkes in der Prophetie: Rezeption mythischer Vorstellungen," in *Mythisches in biblischer Bildsprache: Gestalt und Verwandlung in Prophetie und Psalmen* [ed. Hubert Irsigler; QD 209; Freiburg: Herder, 2004] 279). Since the nations do not take an active role in these verses and YHWH does not appear as a mother until the following verse, Zion is the most likely candidate (see also Koole, *Isaiah* 56–66, 501; Lapsley, "Look!," 101).

87. In 60:16 Zion "nurse[s] at the breast of kings." Now she passes their milk on to her children (Christl M. Maier, "Zion's Body as a Site of God's Motherhood in Isaiah 66:7–14," in *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response* [ed. Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Flesher; SBLAIL 13; Atlanta: SBL, 2012] 233). Yet whereas the former passage emphasizes Zion's glorification due to her acquisition of wealth, here comfort is the more dominant theme (Stansell, "Nations' Journey," 245–46).

88. Note the repetition of "you will nurse" in v. 12b (Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 678).

89. See further on pp. 34 and 174.

90. See also Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 204.

91. See W. A. M. Beuken, "The Main Theme of Trito-Isaiah: 'The Servants of YHWH,'" *JSOT* 47 (1990) 83; A. van der Woude, "The Comfort of Zion: Personification in Isaiah 40–66," in "Enlarge the Site of Your Tent": *The City as Unifying Theme in Isaiah* (ed. Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen and Annemarieke van der Woude; OtSt 58; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 163.

Summary

Although Zion's role as mother emerges early in Isaiah (3:16, 17; 4:4; cf. 37:3), it becomes fully developed only in response to the situation of exile presupposed by chaps. 40–66. In these chapters, the metaphor is employed primarily to express the contrast between Zion's current desolate situation and the promise of her coming renewal.⁹² Her past and present are characterized by childlessness, described in terms of both bereavement (49:21) and barrenness (49:21, 54:1), but her motherhood will soon be restored through the return (49:17–25; 60:4–9) or birth (54:1–3; 66:7–9) of a multitude of children (also 54:1–3). Set against the background of helplessness, shame, grief, and utter despondency conveyed by the former set of images, the hope, honor and overwhelming joy portrayed by the latter stand out in sharp relief.

However, a few passages employ the metaphor in more negative contexts. Isaiah 37:3 emphasizes the mother's powerlessness to protect her children, while 3:16–4:6, 50:1–3, and 57:3–13 address the children to highlight their close connection to their mother in contexts of sin and judgment. After indicting the city's daughters for their pride, 3:16–4:1 indicates that both they and their mother face judgment, though both will also share in YHWH's purification from their mutual defilement (4:4). Similarly, 50:1–3 castigates Zion's children for their rebellions against YHWH, which have brought punishment on them and their mother. Only 57:3–13 directs accusations toward both mother and children, emphasizing the resemblance in their characters.

These disparate images of Mother Zion and her children do not fit smoothly into a narrative progression. The children appear in 49:17–25 as nursing infants and in 62:5 as mature bridegrooms before emerging from Zion's womb as newborn children in 66:7–9. Isaiah 57:3–13 demonstrates the least coherence with the other Mother Zion passages in chaps. 40–66, standing in stark contrast to their promises of renewal. In its current placement, however, that passage suggests that YHWH's renewed commitment to Zion and her children in the wake of exile will not prevent them from again turning away to follow after idols. Those who desire YHWH's protection must take refuge in him (v. 13b). Nevertheless, chap. 60 conveys YHWH's continued dedication to Zion's renewal, despite the city's sin, folding the theme of her children's return from 49:14–26 into a heightened portrayal of her glorification.

Moreover, the book exhibits dramatic movement from the first announcement that bereaved and barren Zion will become the mother of many in 49:17–25 to the eschatological fulfillment in 66:7–14 as a nation emerges from Zion's womb.⁹³ That final chapter also develops the maternal

92. See further Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 190.

93. As Fischer observes, Bar 4:5–5:9 reflects an understanding of Isaiah's varied female images for Zion as a coherent "Lebensgeschichte" ("Das Buch Jesaja," 254). Baumann sees

image beyond the associations of joy prominent in earlier passages by portraying Zion as embracing, for the first time, her responsibilities to nourish and nurture her children. Those who rejoice with Zion reveal themselves to be her children and may now rest, like newborn babes, in the protection, provision, and care attending life in the renewed city (vv. 10–11).

Zion as YHWH's Wife

In conjunction with this movement from bereavement and barrenness to the birth of children, the latter chapters of Isaiah also exhibit a progression from Zion's spousal rejection and abandonment to marital reunion.

Associated Commonplaces of the Vehicle: Wife

As noted previously, women in ancient Israel were under the authority and protection of their father until given in marriage, and those without a male advocate were vulnerable in both the economic and legal spheres. Once married, a woman's husband bore the responsibility of providing "her food, her clothing, and her oil" (עֲנָה, Exod 21:10).⁹⁴ For her part, the wife was expected to take care of the household, help occasionally in the fields, and, most importantly, bear children.⁹⁵

Reflecting the gender inequality in ancient Israelite culture, biblical law does not grant the same concessions to wives as to husbands.⁹⁶ According to Deut 24:1, a husband was permitted to divorce his wife if "he ha[d] found in her some indecency" (עֲרוּת דָּבָר),⁹⁷ but nowhere does the biblical text indicate that wives could initiate divorce proceedings against their husbands.⁹⁸ Moreover, given the cultural acceptance of polygyny, sexual

chaps. 56–66 as presenting its own rehearsal of the "history of Jerusalem," picking up on themes and images found earlier in the book to present her story once again "from sinfulness through marriage with YHWH to wealth of children" (*Love and Violence*, 189).

94. For this interpretation of עֲנָה, see Shalom M. Paul, "Exod. 21:10 a Threefold Maintenance Clause," *JNES* 28 (1969) 48–53; Block, "Marriage and Family," 48. For the more traditional understanding that the word refers to conjugal rights, see Etan Levine, "On Exodus 21,10 'Onah and Biblical Marriage,'" *ZABR* 5 (1999) 143–50.

95. *Help in the fields*: Blenkinsopp, "Family," 78. *Bear children*: See further Block, "Marriage and Family," 72.

96. Although Carol L. Meyers rightly points out that women in ancient Israel exercised a significant degree of agency within the household and even in a wide array of professional roles ("Was Ancient Israel a Patriarchal Society?" *JBL* 133 [2014] 8–27; also *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013] 180–202), they were limited in their ability to advocate for themselves in the legal sphere.

97. On the meaning of the much-debated phrase עֲרוּת דָּבָר, see the survey of interpretive options in Anthony J. M. Garrett, "A New Understanding of the Divorce and Remarriage Legislation in Deuteronomy 24:1–4," *JBQ* 39 (2011) 245–50.

98. Blenkinsopp, "Family," 65. Caution is called for, however, given the paucity of relevant evidence. Elsewhere in the ANE, such a possibility is suggested by parallel penalty clauses in marriage contracts should either party reject their spouse (Victor H. Matthews, "Marriage and Family in the Ancient Near East," in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* [ed. Ken M. Campbell; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003] 26–27).

exclusivity was required only of wives.⁹⁹ Adultery was a serious crime, meriting the death penalty for both parties, but the offense was legally defined as sexual relations between a man and another man's wife (Deut 22:22).¹⁰⁰ If a married man seduced an unmarried woman, he was merely required to take her as a wife, forfeiting his right to divorce her (vv. 28–29). Therefore, the concern for virginity at marriage was directed primarily toward the bride, who could receive a death sentence if accusations of premarital sexual activity were proven true (vv. 13–21).

However, these laws are, in fact, designed to offer protection for women against the whims or dislike of their husbands.¹⁰¹ For example, Deut 24:1–4 regulates divorce by (1) stipulating that the husband write his wife a certificate of divorce so that she could not be accused of adultery upon remarriage and (2) preventing him from again asserting his claim on her.¹⁰² Moreover, a bride accused of fornication could be vindicated if her parents provided evidence of her virginity (22:15–17).¹⁰³ In such a case, the husband would be punished for slander and would be unable to divorce his wife. Although the social structure dictated that women were subordinate to their husbands,¹⁰⁴ this does not mean that wives passively submitted to their husbands' every desire or that their marriages were loveless.¹⁰⁵ The biblical narratives portray several strong women who influenced or opposed their husbands,¹⁰⁶ and a number of passages testify to affection and

99. While polygyny was routine for kings and perhaps common among the wealthy elite, monogamy was the norm for ordinary people, if only for economic reasons (C. J. H. Wright, "Family," *ABD* 2:768).

100. Given this understanding, adultery may reflect, in part, a concern with threats to the rightful inheritance of the family land in the form of illegitimate children (see Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 119), though its desecration of the sanctity of marriage was probably the more prominent issue (see Elaine June Adler, "The Background for the Metaphor of Covenant as Marriage in the Hebrew Bible" [Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1990] 56; Block, "Marriage and Family," 63).

101. See Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "The Family in the Hebrew Bible," in *Religion, Feminism, and the Family* (ed. Anne Carr and Mary Stewart van Leeuwen; FRC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996) 57; Daniel I. Block, "'You Shall Not Covet Your Neighbor's Wife': A Study in Deuteronomistic Domestic Ideology," *JETS* 53 (2010) 460–70.

102. Block, "You Shall Not Covet," 469; idem, *Deuteronomy* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012) 561.

103. See also Num 5:11–31.

104. See, e.g., Num 30:7–16[6–15], which stipulates that a husband could annul his wife's vows.

105. See also Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 147.

106. E.g., Sarai (Gen 16:2), Rebekah (Gen 27:5–13), Abigail (1 Samuel 25), and Esther (Esther 7–8; also Block, "Marriage and Family," 67). See further Meyers, "Family in Early Israel," 34, who suggests that "women were powerful actors in daily affairs and family decisions," though she argues elsewhere that they exercised less authority in urban households during the monarchical period (idem, "Everyday Life: Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible," in *Women's Bible Commentary* [ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998] 258).

passion in the marital relationship.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, Proverbs repeatedly extols the inestimable value of an excellent, God-fearing wife (12:4, 18:22, 19:4, 31:10–31).

Ancient Near Eastern Background

In seeking the origin of the prophetic marriage metaphor, a few scholars look to ANE religion. Hans Walter Wolff argues that Hosea's use of the metaphor is rooted in Canaanite religion, which envisioned a marriage between Baal and the divinized earth and promoted sexual fertility rites. He contends that, in opposition to Israel's engagement in sexual religious practices adopted from the Canaanites, Hosea transfers this marital image to YHWH and the people of Israel in "a remarkable process of adaptation of and polemic against this mythology."¹⁰⁸ However, scholars have challenged Wolff's views that (1) Baal was understood as married to the earth and (2) sexual fertility rites were prevalent in Canaanite religion, as well as in Israelite practice.¹⁰⁹

As already noted, Dobbs-Allsopp sees Zion as taking on the role played by the weeping goddess in Mesopotamian laments.¹¹⁰ Although these laments typically depict the goddess grieving the destruction of her city, he observes that some *balags* and *eršemmas* portray a goddess mourning the loss of her husband.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, the differences between divine marriage in the ANE and the biblical marriage metaphor are significant. The former emphasizes the aspect of sexuality and often involves multiple partners, while the latter highlights exclusivity and longevity.¹¹² Therefore, the ANE concept of divine marriage was probably not a significant factor in the development of the biblical metaphor. Baruch Margalit examines evidence closer to home, pointing to the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscription, which he understands as designating YHWH "and his Asherah." Thus, he proposes

107. See Gen 24:67, 29:18–20; 1 Sam 1:5; Prov 5:18–19; and especially Song of Songs.

108. Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* (trans. Gary Stansell; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), xxvi, 15–16; see also Helmer Ringgren, "The Marriage Motif in Israelite Religion," in *Ancient Israelite Religion* (ed. Patrick D. Miller Jr., Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 424–25; and, to a lesser extent, Gary Hall, "Origin of the Marriage Metaphor," *HS* 23 (1982) 170. Stienstra acknowledges the influence of Canaanite mythology but qualifies that "the myth of the Baal marriage may have served as a catalyst for Hosea to extend the marriage metaphor, which was already in existence in his days anyway, but he certainly did not take over any of its characteristics" (*YHWH Is the Husband*, 99–100).

109. See Adler, "Background for the Metaphor," 130–44, 198–295; Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 15; S. Tamar Kamionkowski, *Gender Reversal and Cosmic Chaos: A Study on the Book of Ezekiel* (JSOTSup 368; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003) 21–22.

110. See pp. 56 and 87.

111. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 82; see also Samuel Noah Kramer, "The Weeping Goddess: Sumerian Prototypes of the *Mater Dolorosa*," *BA* 46 (1983) 75.

112. Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 19; also Korpel, *Rift in the Clouds*, 231, who nevertheless sees the origin of the prophetic metaphor in Canaanite divine marriages.

that Hosea addresses the syncretistic belief that YHWH had a divine female consort by portraying Israel, rather than Asherah, as YHWH's wife.¹¹³ The meaning and significance of this inscription, however, are hotly debated.¹¹⁴

No ANE texts clearly describe a marriage between a city or nation and its god,¹¹⁵ though a few refer to marital relationships between people and gods. For example, in an Aramaic inscription, a queen introduces herself as "the sister and wife of Bēl,"¹¹⁶ while an Old Akkadian text describes the King of Akkad as the "husband of Ištar" (*mūt* ^dINNIN).¹¹⁷ These references are, however, extremely rare and, in any case, fail to provide a clear background for the biblical image of a marriage between YHWH and the corporate entities of Israel and Zion.

A Possible Origin of the Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible

Some scholars find an explanation for the prophetic marriage metaphor instead in the biblical concept of the covenant between YHWH and Israel enacted at Sinai.¹¹⁸ Both represent a relationship demanding Israel's exclusive loyalty, with particular regard to the threat of idolatry (e.g., Exod 20:3–5, Ezek 16:17–21), and both suggest that these expectations of exclusivity are mutual.¹¹⁹ Moreover, the Sinai covenant and marriage metaphor employ similar terms. For example, both speak of YHWH's "love" (אהב) for his people (Deut 7:13, Hos 3:1) and the expectation that Israel will "love" (אהב) YHWH (Deut 6:5, 7:9; Jer 2:2).¹²⁰ "Love," however, is sometimes used in ANE treaty texts to describe the loyalty and obedience a vassal owes

113. Baruch Margalit, "The Meaning and Significance of Asherah," VT 40 (1990) 279, 283–85.

114. For further discussion, see Adler, "Background for the Metaphor," 148–59; Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 16–18; Richard S. Hess, "Yahweh and His Asherah? Religious Pluralism in the Old Testament World," in *One God, One Lord: Christianity in a World of Religious Pluralism* (ed. Andrew D. Clarke and Bruce W. Winter; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993) 19–31; John A. Emerton, "'Yahweh and His Asherah': The Goddess or Her Symbol?" VT 49 (1999) 315–37.

115. As discussed in chap. 3, Fitzgerald's argument that cities in the West Semitic world were viewed as goddesses married to their patron god is questionable at several points (see p. 55).

116. KAI 264; noted by Korpel, *Rift in the Clouds*, 228.

117. F. Thureau-Dangin, "Rois de Kiš et rois d'Agadé," RA 9 (1912) 34–35; cited in CAD M/2 314.

118. Adler, "Background for the Metaphor," 2–3, 42–92; Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 23–25; F. C. Fensham, "The Marriage Metaphor in Hosea for the Covenant Relationship between the Lord and His People," JNSL 12 (1984) 71–78; Joy Philip Kakkanattu, *God's Enduring Love in the Book of Hosea: A Synchronic and Diachronic Analysis of Hosea 11,1–11* (FAT 2/14; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 35.

119. See Exod 19:5; Deut 10:15, 32:21, and note the absence of other wives in the prophetic marriage texts. Although Ezekiel 23 portrays YHWH as marrying both Samaria and Jerusalem, it describes the same reality as the exclusive covenant with Israel in the Pentateuch, merely adapted to the situation of the divided monarchy (cf. Jer 3:6–10; see also Adler, "Background for the Metaphor," 60–61).

120. The prophetic marriage texts also decry Judah/Jerusalem's adulterous "love" (אהב) of others (Jer 2:25; cf. Ezek 16:33, 36).

his sovereign, and it has similar overtones in the covenantal context of Deuteronomy.¹²¹ This does not mean that Israel's love for YHWH is entirely devoid of emotive aspects in the Deuteronomistic perspective,¹²² nor does it explain YHWH's love for Israel.¹²³ Nevertheless, the love commanded in Deuteronomy does not have the same connotations of intimacy and affection as the marital love desired by YHWH in the prophetic texts.

Other shared terms include זנה and קנא. Used to describe Israel's idolatry, זנה is often understood as implying prostitution, but it probably refers more generally to any illicit sexual behavior.¹²⁴ YHWH's response to this behavior is characterized by the Hebrew root קנא, which means "to be jealous" and is used elsewhere within the framework of human marital relationships.¹²⁵ Both terms seem more organically related to the marriage metaphor than to political treaties.¹²⁶ Both, however, are commonly found in pentateuchal covenant texts,¹²⁷ and קנא appears only three times in contexts that clearly invoke the marriage metaphor.¹²⁸

By contrast, זנה is more often found in passages employing the marriage metaphor,¹²⁹ but its use to describe the behavior of other nations cautions against the assumption that the term functions as an indicator of the metaphor. As Abma observes, Tyre (Isa 23:15–17) and Nineveh (Nah 3:4) are portrayed as "having promiscuous contacts" in the political and

121. See the classic and still widely cited article by William L. Moran, "Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25 (1963) 77–87; also Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 60, who notes that loving YHWH is closely associated with keeping his commandments (Deut 5:10, 7:9, 30:16).

122. See Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Feeling Our Way: Love for God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 65 (2003) 350–69.

123. Adler, "Background for the Metaphor," 81.

124. See Phyllis A. Bird, "'To Play the Harlot': An Inquiry into an Old Testament Metaphor," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (ed. Peggy L. Day; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 76–78. She notes, however, that the nominal form זונה does mean "prostitute."

125. Note the root's frequent appearance in the law concerning the jealous husband in Num 5:11–31 (also Prov 6:34, Song 8:6). Both in human marriages and YHWH's relationship with Israel, this jealousy should be understood as arising out of legitimate expectations of faithfulness based on a previously agreed-upon relationship (see my discussion in "Yhwh as Jealous Husband: Abusive Authoritarian or Passionate Protector? A Reexamination of a Prophetic Image," in *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response* [ed. Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Flesher; SBLAIL 13; Atlanta: SBL, 2012] 137–39; also Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997] 13–14; idem, *Deuteronomy*, 131–32, who prefers to translate the root as "passion/impassioned" due to the negative connotations often evoked by "jealousy").

126. On קנא, see Daniel I. Block, *By the River Chebar: Historical, Literary and Theological Studies in the Book of Ezekiel* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013) 64.

127. For קנא, see, e.g., Exod 20:5, 34:14; Deut 4:24, 5:9, 29:19[20]; also Josh 24:19, Ps 78:58, some using adjectival forms. For זנה, see, e.g., Exod 34:16; Lev 17:7, 20:5–6; Num 15:39; Deut 31:16; also Judg 2:17; Ps 106:39.

128. Ezek 16:38, 42; 23:25, all using the nominal form קנאה.

129. E.g., Jer 3:1; Hos 1:2, 2:7[5]; and frequently in Ezekiel 16 and 23.

economic realms.¹³⁰ Similarly, Exod 34:15–16 speaks of “the inhabitants of the land” promiscuously following after their gods and enticing the sons of the Israelites to do the same through intermarriage, thus labeling both Israelite and Canaanite involvement in idolatry with זנה. Furthermore, when זנה is used in covenantal contexts outside the Prophets, it is never combined with the female personification of the offending party.¹³¹ Thus, the evidence suggests that these terms are not inextricably linked with the marriage metaphor but emerged first as descriptors of YHWH’s relationship with Israel within the covenantal tradition. Then, given their associations with marriage and sexuality, they may have contributed significantly to the emergence of the marriage metaphor.¹³²

Along with the latent marital imagery in the covenantal texts,¹³³ the prophetic authors may also have been influenced by the idea that human marriages are covenantal relationships, as is suggested by the use of ברית in Prov 2:17 and Mal 2:14 (cf. Ezek 16:8, 59–62; Isa 54:10).¹³⁴ Finally, Hosea’s personal experience of marriage to an unfaithful wife may have served as the immediate stimulus for that prophet to draw these ideas together for the first time into a well-developed portrait of the land of Israel as YHWH’s adulterous wife, which was then employed by other prophets.¹³⁵

The Use of the Metaphor Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible

Outside Isaiah, the marriage metaphor is found in Hosea 1–3, Jeremiah 2–3, and Ezekiel 16 and 23, each focusing on Jerusalem’s (or Israel’s) unfaithfulness to her divine husband.¹³⁶ In Hos 1:2, YHWH instructs the prophet to

130. Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 4.

131. See Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh’s Wife* (SBLDS 130; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 35–36.

132. For further discussion of the parallels between the Sinai covenant and the marriage metaphor, see Adler, “Background for the Metaphor,” 42–92; Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 59–64. Moreover, note Abma’s observation that the marriage metaphor is often connected with the recollection of events related to the covenant (see Jer 2:2, Hos 2:16–17[14–15]; *Bonds of Love*, 258).

133. See Weinfeld, “ברית,” TDOT 2:278.

134. See Gordon Paul Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law and Ethics Governing Marriage, Developed from the Perspective of Malachi* (VTSup 52; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 27–47, 280–338; also Adler, “Background for the Metaphor,” 412–13; Block, “Marriage and Family,” 44; Korpel, *Rift in the Clouds*, 226.

135. Similarly Hall, “Origin of the Marriage Metaphor,” 170, though he, like Wolff, finds the primary impetus in Hosea’s struggle against Israel’s syncretistic adoption of Canaanite religious practices.

136. Some scholars also interpret Lamentations against the background of the marriage metaphor (e.g., Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, 1–2; Kathleen M. O’Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002] 20; Baumann, “Prophetic Objections,” 97–98). The closest that book comes to invoking the metaphor, however, is to describe the city as “like a widow” (1:1), which appears to be an illustrative simile presenting her loss of honor as the single point of comparison: “She has become like a widow, [though once] great among the nations” (see Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 157, concerning the

take “a wife of promiscuity (זנונים) and children of promiscuity” as a sign-act to illustrate that “the land (הארץ) is utterly promiscuous (זנה תזנה) [turning] from [following] after YHWH.”¹³⁷ The parallel with Hosea’s marriage indicates that “the land” (of Israel) should be understood as YHWH’s wife. Addressing the children of Mother Land, YHWH calls them to “contend with [their] mother . . . that she remove . . . her marks of adultery from between her breasts” (2:4[2]). She “has acted shamefully” (ברש) by committing adultery with many lovers in her idolatrous worship of the Baals (vv. 7, 15[5, 13]). Therefore, YHWH has disowned his wife (v. 4[2]), declaring that he will take back his marital provisions and uncover her nakedness before her lovers (vv. 11–14[9–12]). Ultimately, however, he plans to seek marital reunion, promising, “I will betroth you to me forever” (v. 21[19]).

Jeremiah recalls “the steadfast love of [Israel’s] youth” (2:2) but describes how she abandoned YHWH (vv. 17, 19), instead pursuing relationships with Egypt and Assyria (v. 18) and prostituting herself to the Baals (vv. 20, 23). She sought the latter with bestial desire (vv. 23–25), thereby providing a model for “wicked women” (v. 33). Therefore, despite her declarations of innocence, she will be “put to shame” (ברש) by her political lovers (vv. 35–36). Echoing Deut 24:1–4, YHWH contends that if a husband divorced his wife and she married another, her first husband would not remarry her since that would defile the land (3:1a). Highlighting the greater incomprehensibility of reconciliation in his own figurative marriage, he observes that his wife has spread her favors all around without experiencing any “disgrace” (כלם, vv. 1b–3).¹³⁸

Though YHWH longed for his wayward wife to return to him, she did not (v. 7). Therefore, he “sent her away and gave her a certificate of divorce” (v. 8) but still sought relational reunion, crying out, “Return, faithless Israel” (v. 12b).¹³⁹ These verses emphasize YHWH’s unfailing commitment to Israel—he was prepared to overcome even the requirements of the law in order to restore his marital relationship with her.¹⁴⁰ Although Judah ob-

similar portrayal of Babylon in Isa 47:9). Lamentations focuses instead on the images of Zion as mother and daughter, and the latter is not usually combined with the marriage metaphor (see also J. Andrew Dearman, “Daughter Zion and Her Place in God’s Household,” *HBT* 31 [2009] 156; Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 2).

137. On the translation of this difficult verse, see Bird, “To Play the Harlot,” 80–82.

138. See also Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 248; Peggy L. Day, “Yahweh’s Broken Marriages as Metaphoric Vehicle in the Hebrew Bible Prophets,” in *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity* (ed. Martti Nissinen and Risto Uro; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 230.

139. Although this impv. is masc. sg., the thought continues into the next verse, which resumes the fem. sg. address and takes up the image of promiscuity.

140. See Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 248; M. Daniel Carroll R., “Family in the Prophetic Literature,” in *Family in the Bible: Exploring Customs, Culture, and Context* (ed. Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll R.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003) 121; Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 43.

served Israel's fate, she nevertheless followed Israel's promiscuous ways (vv. 8–9) and returned to YHWH only “in pretense” (v. 10). Like Hosea, Jeremiah 2–3 also describes a future restoration (vv. 15–18), though without framing it in terms of the marriage metaphor.

Ezekiel 16 describes Jerusalem as a foundling child whom YHWH adopted and for whom he cared until she reached “the time for love” (vv. 3–8a). He then married her, “enter[ing] into a covenant with” her (v. 8b), and lavishly provided for her needs (vv. 9–13). Jerusalem, however, used the gifts YHWH had given her to fashion idols, with whom she carried out illicit affairs (vv. 15–19). Moreover, she extended her promiscuous behavior by making unauthorized political alliances with other nations (vv. 26–29). Sinking even lower than a common prostitute, Jerusalem solicited lovers by giving them gifts rather than receiving payment for her sexual favors (vv. 31–34).

In response, YHWH declares that he will give her over to her lovers, who will strip her and cut her to pieces (vv. 37–40). Her exploits have made Sodom and Samaria appear righteous by comparison (vv. 46–52), and she has become “an object of reproach” (חרפה) to the daughters of other nations (v. 57; cf. כלם in v. 27). Nevertheless, YHWH will remember his earlier covenant with Jerusalem and make “an everlasting covenant” with her (vv. 60–63), probably involving a renewal of their marriage vows, though she will continue to “be ashamed” (בוש; cf. v. 52) and will remain silent due to her “disgrace” (כלמה, v. 63a; cf. vv. 52, 54, 61).¹⁴¹ Ezekiel 23 follows a similar pattern, though expanding its focus to include Samaria along with Jerusalem as YHWH's wives and tracing their promiscuous behavior back to their early days in Egypt (vv. 3, 8, 19–21, 27). Moreover, unlike the other passages employing the marriage metaphor, Ezekiel 23 offers no hope of future restoration. These passages portray idolatry and unauthorized political alliances as marital unfaithfulness in order to intensify the emotional impact of these offenses, painting them as personal betrayal in the most intimate of relationships.

141. Exum sees YHWH's silencing and shaming of Jerusalem as “keep[ing] her in the role of victim within the marriage relationship” (“Prophetic Pornography,” 112; cf. Linda Day, “Rhetoric and Domestic Violence in Ezekiel 16,” *BibInt* 8 [2000] 207, 217). However, some allowance should be made for the prophet's rhetorical aim. Addressing an impenitent audience teetering on the brink of exile, he compensates for their lack of shame, seeking to shock them into recognizing the heinous nature of their rebellion and spur them toward repentance. Moreover, D. Y. Wu may be correct in understanding בוש in v. 63 as referring not to a perpetual psychological experience of shame but to a self-perception divested of undue pride. He also sees the reference to Jerusalem's silence as specifically addressing “the proud and presumptuous speech of the wicked” (“Honour, Shame and Guilt in the Book of Ezekiel” [Ph.D. diss., Sydney University, 2013] 253–56). Alternatively, as Margaret S. Odell argues, v. 63 may intentionally overturn a complaint ritual, “in which the people call God to account for their experience of humiliation and failure” (“The Inversion of Shame and Forgiveness in Ezekiel 16.59–63,” *JSOT* 56 [1992] 107, 111–12; also Block, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 519–20).

Textual Analyses

Isaiah 50:1

Within the book of Isaiah, Zion is first introduced as YHWH's wife in 50:1–3,¹⁴² which zeroes in on the rupture in their marital relationship, much like Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. As the conclusion to a larger rhetorical unit beginning in 49:14, 50:1–3 indirectly addresses Zion's opening complaint that YHWH has abandoned her, though speaking to her children:¹⁴³

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה	1 Thus says YHWH,
אֵי זֶה סֵפֶר כְּרִיתוֹת אִמְכֶם	"Where is the certificate of divorce of your mother,
אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּי	whom* I sent away?
אוּ מִי מִנּוּשֵׁי	Or which of my creditors
אֲשֶׁר־מָכַרְתִּי אֶתְכֶם לּוֹ	is the one to whom I have sold you?
הֵן בְּעוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם נִמְכַּרְתֶּם	See, because of your iniquities, you have been sold,
וּבִפְשָׁעֵיכֶם	and because of your rebellions,
שְׁלַחַה אִמְכֶם	your mother has been sent away."

* Most English translations take אֲשֶׁר as pointing back to the certificate of divorce (NIV, ESV, NRSV; also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 313; Watts, *Isaiah* 34–66, 191). Syntactically, however, it makes more sense to see it as a reference to the immediately preceding אִמְכֶם (JPSV, NKJV; Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 318 n. 14; Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 64).

Most interpreters have taken YHWH's first question as a challenge to Zion's children to find a certificate of divorce, thereby implying that such a document does not exist because YHWH has not abandoned his wife, or at least has not made their separation legal and binding.¹⁴⁴ This understanding, however, does not do justice to the last line in v. 1, which states that their "mother has been sent away." Both there and in his opening question, YHWH uses שְׁלַח, the verb typically found in divorce contexts (e.g., Deut 22:19, 29; 24:1, 3; Jer 3:1, 8).¹⁴⁵ Thus, the question this passage seeks to

142. The first hint of marital imagery appears in an illustrative simile in 49:18, which states that Zion will put on her children like a bride ornamenting herself. While Watts takes the metaphor of Zion's marriage to YHWH as necessary background to this passage (*Isaiah* 34–66, 189; more cautiously Baumann, "Prophetic Objections," 103), the relationship between bride and bridegroom lies outside the scope of this illustrative simile. Instead, it focuses on a single point of comparison between Zion and a bride—their ornamentation—in order to convey how precious Zion's children are to her and the honor they accord her.

143. See Koole, *Isaiah* 49–55, 88. On this passage, see further p. 91; also pp. 37, 69, and 81.

144. E.g., Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 141; S. Borocin-Knol, "Zion as an 'Agunah'? An Interpretation of Isaiah 49:14; 50:1 and 54:6–8," in "Enlarge the Site of Your Tent": *The City as Unifying Theme in Isaiah* (ed. Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen and Annemarieke van der Woude; OtSt 58; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 203; Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 66; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 191; Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 162–63; Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 84, also 72–74; Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, 109; Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 184; Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter* (HSM 62; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004) 131.

145. Dille suggests that the passage could have used גָּרַשׁ to convey that YHWH had divorced his wife, noting that שְׁלַח, as a general verb for "sending away," is "not equated with

answer is not whether YHWH has divorced Zion but why he has done so. Presumably, YHWH calls the people to find the certificate of divorce so that they can read the reason given for it—their own rebellions (פֶּשַׁע).¹⁴⁶

The primary rhetorical aim of these verses is to convince the people that their current situation, and that of their capital city, is a result of their own sin. Moreover, they validate Zion's claim that YHWH has abandoned her while also vindicating his justice by demonstrating that he has not divorced her arbitrarily.¹⁴⁷ By depicting Zion as a cast-off wife, whose children have been sold into slavery, the passage emphasizes her isolation, vulnerability, and shame. Further, by invoking the image of divorce, the passage emphasizes the severity of the rift between YHWH and Zion and suggests its permanence. Nevertheless, although the portrait of restoration in 49:14–26 does not invoke the marriage metaphor, it provides hope that Zion's story will not end in utter desolation.

Isaiah 54:5, 6

This hope for Zion's future comes to full flower in chap. 54, which astonishingly envisions a complete marital reconciliation.¹⁴⁸

אל־תירא כִּי־לֹא תבוֹשִׁי	4	"Do not be afraid, for you will not be ashamed,
וּלֹא־תִכְלַמִּי		and do not feel disgraced,
כִּי לֹא תִחַפְּרִי		for you will not be humiliated.
כִּי בִשְׁת עֲלֹמִיךְ תִּשְׁכַּח		For you will forget the shame of your youth,
וְחִרְפַּת אֲלֻמְנוֹתֶיךָ		and the reproach of your widowhood
לֹא תִזְכְּרִי־עוֹד		you will not remember anymore.
כִּי בַעֲלֶיךָ עָשִׂיךְ	5	For your maker is your husband;*
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ		YHWH of Hosts is his name.
וְגֹאֲלְךָ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל		And the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer;
אֱלֹהֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ יִקְרָא		the God of all the earth he is called.
כִּי־כְאִשָּׁה עָזַבְתָּ	6	For like a wife abandoned
וְעִצְבֹּת רוּחַ		and grieved in spirit,
קָרָאךְ יְהוָה		YHWH has called you,
וְאִשָּׁת נְעוּרִים כִּי תִמָּאֵס		and [like] a wife of youth when† she is rejected,"
אָמַר אֱלֹהֶיךָ		says your God.
בְּרִגְעַ קָטָן עָזַבְתִּיךָ	7	"For a short while I abandoned you,
וּבְרַחֲמִים גְּדוֹלִים אֶקְבָּצֶךָ		but with great compassion I will gather you.
בִּשְׂצָף קֶצֶף	8	In a flooding of anger,
הִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנַי רִגְעַ מִמֶּךָ		I hid my face from you for awhile,

divorce" in the HB (*Mixing Metaphors*, 162, also n. 23). In divorce contexts, however, גֵּרֶשׁ appears only in a participial form to describe a woman as "divorced" (Lev 21:7, 14; 22:13; Num 30:10[9]), while שָׁלַח designates the act of divorcing (see Blenkinsopp, "Family," 65).

146. John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 2005) 396; Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 120; Childs, *Isaiah*, 393; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 317–18. Note also the LXX, which reads, "of what kind was your mother's certificate of divorce."

147. On the question of whether Zion is unfairly punished for the sins of her children, see p. 94.

148. See further p. 97; also pp. 43 and 170.

ובחסד עולם But in everlasting, steadfast love,
 רחמתיך I have compassion on you,"
 אמר גאלך יהוה says your Redeemer, YHWH.

* The LXX and Vg. take בעל as meaning "to rule over," considerably blunting the passage's reference to the marriage metaphor, though both recognize the use of בעל to indicate marriage in v. 1. Some scholars take "husband" as the subject of this verbless clause (see Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 412; Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 184; Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 126). The reference to her widowhood in v. 4, however, suggests that she no longer has a husband, so further mention of a husband requires explanation (see also Beuken, "Isaiah LIV," 44; contra Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:345). Therefore, the most natural reading is that her "maker" has (again) taken on the role of "husband" (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 357; Martin-Achard, "Esaïe liv," 241).

† For this translation, see the ESV, NASB, NRSV; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 412; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:347–48. Abma understands כִּי to introduce a rhetorical question implying a negative answer and thereby conveying YHWH's continued commitment to Zion: "A wife of youth, would she be rejected?" (*Bonds of Love*, 87–88; similarly the JPSV; Korpel, "Female Servant," 157; Baumann, "Prophetic Objections," 107). This interpretation is preferable if "rejection" is understood as a permanent state of affairs, an idea that may be behind the negation of the statement in the LXX (see Philippe le Moigne, "Ouch hos dans Ésaïe-LXX," in *L'apport de la Septante aux études sur l'antiquité* [ed. Jan Joosten and Philippe Le Moigne; LD 203; Paris: du Cerf, 2005] 95). However, the parallel with "a wife abandoned" suggests a real, though temporary, "rejection."

As in the uses of the marriage metaphor outside Isaiah, this passage employs the rich Hebrew vocabulary of shame, though here Zion is called to "feel disgraced" (כלם) no longer.¹⁴⁹ The "shame (בשת) of [her] youth" and "reproach (חרפה) of [her] widowhood" are juxtaposed with a future in which she will neither "be ashamed" (בוש) nor "be humiliated" (חפר). Indeed, she will not even remember her former disgrace (v. 4).¹⁵⁰

To what precisely "the shame of [her] youth" refers is not specified. Although it could parallel "the reproach of [her] widowhood," referring to the unfortunate social degradation attending a young woman who has lost her husband,¹⁵¹ it seems more likely that "youth" and "widowhood" form a contrast, designating two separate periods of her life. Moreover, the connection between shame terminology and the city's promiscuity outside Isaiah offers some justification for seeing her youthful shame as an allusion to Zion's sinful past,¹⁵² which would thus provide the cause of her disgrace-

149. Note the contrast with Jerusalem's continued shame in Ezek 16:63 (Stienstra, *YHWH Is the Husband*, 173).

150. On the differences between these terms, see Wu, "Honour, Shame and Guilt," 267–71.

151. This interpretation was suggested by Mark Boda in private communication. Abma contends that the images of an unmarried woman of marriageable age and a widow overlap in denoting the shame of Zion's present lack of a husband (*Bonds of Love*, 98).

152. See also Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 185; Stienstra, *YHWH Is the Husband*, 173; Sawyer, "Daughter of Zion," 94, and note the similar phrase חרפת נעורי ("the reproach of my youth") in Jer 31:19 (cited by Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 363). Others contend that "the shame of [her] youth" refers to the disgrace of Israel's slavery in Egypt (Koole,

ful widowhood.¹⁵³ In the context of Isaiah, it could evoke memories of Daughter Zion's promiscuous miscarriage of justice in 1:21.¹⁵⁴ Or it could be a veiled reference to the city's wanton engagement in idolatry, which is described in shocking detail later in 57:3–13, though there portrayed as a current reality, not a flashback to Jerusalem's sordid adolescence.

The image of Zion's "widowhood" (אלמנות, v. 4) stands in tension with the portrait of the city as an abandoned wife in v. 6 (cf. 50:1).¹⁵⁵ Moughtin-Mumby explains these "incompatible metaphors" by arguing that YHWH portrays Zion as a forsaken but reclaimed wife (vv. 5–6) in order to overturn her own perception that she has been widowed (v. 4).¹⁵⁶ The reference to her "widowhood," however, is found on YHWH's lips, not Zion's, and he seems to validate this understanding of her condition, promising merely that in the future it will be forgotten. A better solution to the conflict is to see the metaphor of Zion as an abandoned wife and the allusions to marital reconciliation as limiting the scope of the widow metaphor, hiding the associated commonplace of her husband's death.¹⁵⁷ The passage highlights the aspects that the widow and forsaken wife images have in common—both emphasize her lack of a male protector and consequent vulnerability, as well as her grief and loneliness.¹⁵⁸

Describing his efforts to bring about reconciliation, YHWH draws attention to the anguish resulting from his desertion: "For like a wife abandoned and grieved in spirit, YHWH has called you, and [like] a wife of youth (ראשת נעורים) when she is rejected" (v. 6). The expression "wife of youth" (אשת נעורים) is used elsewhere in the HB, always with a second-person pronominal suffix ("wife of *your* youth"), to encourage fidelity toward the woman who first received a man's pledge of commitment in marriage (Prov 5:18; Mal 2:14, 15).¹⁵⁹ Here there is no reference to YHWH's youth, which would

Isaiah 49–55, 360; Chapman, *Gendered Language*, 138) or defenselessness in the face of the Assyrian aggression (Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 185).

153. See Stassen, "Marriage (and Related) Metaphors," 65.

154. See p. 60.

155. Chayim Cohen argues that an אלמנה can sometimes be understood as "a once married woman who has no means of financial support and who is thus in need of special legal protection" ("The 'Widowed' City," *JANESCU* 5 [1973] 77). When the term is applied to cities, he contends that it designates "a once independent city which has become a vassal of another state," citing the Merneptah Stele's statement that "Greater Palestine has become a *ḥrt* ["widow"] to Egypt" (ibid., 79, 81, emphasis his). However, he offers no clear evidence that אלמנה can be used of a needy woman whose husband has not died (see also Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 128 n. 69). Moreover, in the context of the marriage metaphor in Isaiah 54, the term emphasizes Zion's earlier marriage to YHWH—not her prior political independence.

156. Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 128–31.

157. Cf. the use of אלמנות in 2 Sam 20:3 to describe how David's ten concubines who had been defiled by Absalom "lived in widowhood" because David no longer "went into them" (Stassen, "Marriage [and Related] Metaphors," 65).

158. On the latter, see Tiemeyer, *For the Comfort of Zion*, 302.

159. See also Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 88.

be theologically problematic,¹⁶⁰ but the phrase retains a sense of fond recollection of the halcyon days of yore,¹⁶¹ as well as an emphasis on enduring commitment.¹⁶²

In v. 7, simile gives way to metaphor as YHWH for the first time clearly and unequivocally tells Zion, “I abandoned you” (עזבתך), echoing the first part of her complaint in 49:14.¹⁶³ However, he now promises, “with great compassion I will gather you” (אֶקְבֹּץ; fem. sg. suff., v. 7), using a verb that applies more properly to her exiled children (cf. 49:18) and thus blurs the distinction between city and people.¹⁶⁴ Although acknowledging the reality of YHWH’s wrath, the passage takes great pains to contrast its brevity with the permanence of his love (vv. 7–8, 10). Recalling his pledge to Noah that waters would never again flood the earth, YHWH promises Zion an eternal “covenant of peace” (ברית שלום), which entails a similar assurance that he will never again be angry with her (vv. 9–10).¹⁶⁵ Unlike a typical marriage vow, YHWH’s renewed covenant cannot be broken by divorce. Not even another breach of faithfulness on Zion’s part can prompt YHWH to abandon her again.

Assessments of YHWH’s character as a husband and the nature of his relationship with Zion vary widely. Although conceding that Zion shares some responsibility for the breakdown of her marriage relationship, Sawyer contends that the passage places the primary blame on YHWH:

The last four verses of the poem are apologetic in tone: “it was just for a moment—I lost my temper (בשצר קצר) . . . I won’t do it again . . . I promise . . . I love you.” . . . He has the power to give her happiness and dignity and freedom; she knows he also has the power to punish, humiliate and abuse her. . . . [Thus, he] comes to her, on bended knee as it were, to plead with her to let bygones be bygones and start again.¹⁶⁶

160. Blenkinsopp thus translates “a wife still young” (*Isaiah* 40–55, 357, 363; similarly Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah* 40–55, 2:347–48), while the LXX has “a woman hated from youth” (NETS; cf. the Vg.). The uses of the phrase elsewhere, however, probably provide the best guide to interpreting the phrase here (see also Stienstra, *YHWH Is the Husband*, 174).

161. See Smith, *Isaiah* 40–66, 482.

162. Richtsje Abma, “Terms of Endearment: YHWH and Zion in *Isaiah* 54,” in *YHWH, Kyrios, Antitheism or the Power of the Word* (ed. Karel Adriaan Deurloo, Bernd Jørg Diebner, and Rochus Zuurmond; DBAT 14; Heidelberg: DBAT, 1996) 101.

163. See also Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 233–34; Heffelfinger, *I Am Large*, 264.

164. Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 101.

165. The phrase implies also that YHWH will provide blessing and well-being (cf. Num 25:12, Mal 2:5; Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 423 n. 42). Bernard F. Batto posits a mythological ANE background for the prophetic “covenant of peace” motif (see Ezek 34:25, 37:26; “The Covenant of Peace: A Neglected Ancient Near Eastern Motif,” *CBQ* 49 [1987] 187–211), but his reconstruction remains speculative.

166. Sawyer, “Daughter of Zion,” 95–96; see also Baumann, “Prophetic Objections,” 109; Irmtraud Fischer, “*Isaiah*: The Book of Female Metaphors,” in *Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature*

For Sawyer, this portrait seems to be a consoling image; however, Carleen Mandolfo disagrees. She points out that YHWH offers no explanation for why Zion endured so much suffering and fails to show true signs of penitence. Therefore, she questions whether he ultimately has Zion's best interests at heart.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, since Zion does not respond to YHWH's promises of reconciliation, her reaction can only be a matter of conjecture.¹⁶⁸ In this sort of situation it might be natural to fear that the past will repeat itself, that is, that the husband's anger will again be provoked, leading to another marital rift.¹⁶⁹

However, while the passage cites YHWH's anger as the impetus for the marital separation, the idea that it was undeserved or excessive—that he “lost [his] temper,” as Sawyer puts it—is not found in the text.¹⁷⁰ The reason for his anger is never discussed,¹⁷¹ and the strongest hint of culpability in the text pertains to Zion, not YHWH, in the ambiguous reference to “the shame of [her] youth” (v. 4). In any case, the question of blame is ancillary. The text merely presupposes the situation of exile and aims to persuade Zion that her circumstances are presently undergoing a complete reversal. The marriage metaphor provides a framework for articulating both the heart-wrenching pain and helplessness arising from YHWH's abandonment and the joy and relief of restored relationship, which offers her protection and provision, as well as the possibility of overcoming the shame of childlessness by bearing more children.¹⁷² Moreover, YHWH's assurance that he will never again be angry with Zion is sealed with a covenant as reliable as his yet-unbroken covenant with Noah (vv. 9–10).¹⁷³

Isaiah 57:3

After the vision of enduring marital reconciliation in chap. 54, the reader is caught off guard by the shocking portrait of promiscuous engagement in idolatrous liaisons presented in 57:3–13.¹⁷⁴

(ed. Luise Schottroff, Marie-Theres Wacker, and Martin Rumscheidt; trans. Tina Steiner; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012) 313; more cautiously, Ackerman, “Isaiah,” 175; O'Connor, “Speak Tenderly,” 292, 294; Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 530–31.

167. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion*, 117; on YHWH's lack of remorse, see also Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 133.

168. Based on this lack of response, Mandolfo suggests that “the reconciliation that seems to have been achieved between the servant and God is lacking for Zion and God. Is there some suffering that is simply impassible?” (*Daughter Zion*, 113).

169. See, e.g., Gracia Fay Ellwood, *Batter My Heart* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill, 1988) 9–10, who compares YHWH to a domestic abuser.

170. Maier contends that “from the perspective of YHWH, Zion's suffering was neither excessive nor enduring” (*Daughter Zion*, 176).

171. Brueggemann's suggestion that YHWH may have “‘bailed out’ of the marriage . . . because [he] could not tolerate the humiliation of a barren wife” (*Isaiah 40–66*, 153) is speculative.

172. See also Heffelfinger, *I Am Large*, 253.

173. Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 532–33.

174. See further p. 99; also p. 43.

- 3 ואתם קרבו־הנה
בני עגנה
זרע מנאף
ותזנה
...
6 בחלקי־נחל
חלקך
הם הם גורלך
גם־להם שפכת נסך
העלית מנחה
העל אלה אנחם
7 על ה־רגבה ונשא
שמת משכבך
גם־שם עלית לזבח זבח
8 ואחר הדלת והמזוזה
שמת זכרוןך
כי מאתי
גלית
ותעלי הרחבת משכבך
ותכרת־לך מהם
אהבת משכבם
יד חזיתי
9 ותשרי למלך בשמן
ותרבי רקחך
ותשלחי צריך עד־מרחק
ותשפילי עד־שאול
10 ברב דרכך יגעתי
לא אמרת נוֹאש
חית ירך מצאת
על־כן לא חליתי
11 ואת־מי דאגת ותיראי
כי תכזבי
ואותי לא זכרת
לא־שמת על־לביך
הלא אני מחשבה ומעלם
ואותי לא תיראי
12 אני אגיד צדקתך
ואת־מעשיך
ולא יועילוך
13 בזעקך
יצילך קברציך
ואת־כלם ישא־רוח
יקח־הבל
והחוסה בי
ינחל־ארץ
ויירש ה־רקדשי
- But you, come here,
children of a sorceress,
offspring of an adulterer
and [a woman who] is promiscuous.
...
Among the smooth [stones] of the valley
is your (fem. sg.) portion;
they, they are your lot.
Indeed, to them you poured out a drink-offering,
you presented a grain offering.
Concerning these should I relent?
Upon the high and lofty mountain,
you made your bed.
Indeed, you went up there to offer a sacrifice.
And behind the door and the doorpost,
you put your memorial.
For [away] from me
you uncovered [your nakedness],*
and you went up; you opened wide your bed.
And you cut [a covenant]† for yourself with them.
You loved their bed;
you saw their hand.‡
And you journeyed to the king** with oil,
and you multiplied your perfumes.
And you sent your messengers far away,
And you sent [them] down to Sheol.
With the length of your way, you grew weary,
[but] you did not say, "It is hopeless."
You found the revival of your strength;⁵¹
therefore, you did not grow weak.
And of whom were you anxious and afraid
that you lied?
But me you did not remember;
you did not lay [me?] upon your heart.
Was I not silent, even for a long time,^{††}
but me you did not fear.
I will declare your "righteousness"
and your deeds,
but they will not profit you.
When you call for help,
let your collections [of idols] deliver you.
But all of them the wind will carry away;
a breath will take [them] away.
But whoever seeks refuge in me
will possess the land
and inherit my holy mountain.

* Cf. 47:3; Ezek 16:36, 23:18 (similarly the NASB, NKJV; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 153; Koole, *Isaiah* 56–66, 66, 69); alternatively, "[your bed]," based on the parallel with the subsequent line (see the ESV, NIV, NRSV).

† This translation follows the 2nd per. fem. sg. form ותכרתתי in 1QIsa^a, which fits the context better than the 2nd masc. sg. or 3rd fem. sg. form in the MT. (Although the final letter in 1QIsa^a is transcribed as a 1 by Eugene Ulrich and Peter W. Flint, *Qumran Cave 1*.

II: *The Isaiah Scrolls. Part 1: Plates and Transcriptions* [DJD 32; Oxford: Clarendon, 2010] 94, it resembles other instances of י in the facsimiles.) It is probably best to take this verb as a reference to the common idiom כרת ברית ("to make a covenant"; cf. the Vg. and Tg.), despite the absence of ברית in the MT (see further Koole, *Isaiah* 56–66, 69–70). There is little support for the emendation to כרה ("to buy") followed by Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 323; also Smith, *Isaiah* 40–66, 554.

‡ יד is probably a euphemism for the male sexual organ (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 154).

This reading follows the vocalization of the MT (מֶלֶךְ; see the JPSV, ESV, NASB), but the NRSV and NIV read the consonantal text as מֹלֵךְ ("Molech"; also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 157–61). A reference to Molech would fit the context, especially because v. 9b describes Zion as sending envoys to Sheol and v. 5 portrays her as sacrificing children, which is associated with Molech elsewhere in the HB (see Lev 18:21, 2 Kgs 23:10, Jer 32:35). However, this hypothesis is probably not certain enough to warrant emending the text. As the MT stands, Zion's journeys to the מֶלֶךְ to solicit favors could signify either worship of a divine "king" (perhaps suggesting Molech through wordplay) or unauthorized political alliances (cf. Ezek 16:28–29; 23:5–6, 12–17; and see J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993] 474; Smith, *Isaiah* 40–66, 556).

** Similarly the NIV, ESV, NASB. Literally the Hebrew reads, "the life of your hand," which the NRSV translates "You found your desire rekindled" (cf. the JPSV).

†† This translation reflects the MT וַיַּעֲלֵם (cf. 1QIsa^a; see also the NIV, ESV, NASB). The LXX reads "I disregard" (cf. the Vg.), probably from וַיַּעֲלֵם (a Hiphil ptc. meaning "hiding" [the eyes]; see the NRSV; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 183; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 153). Both options fit the context, but the MT is to be slightly preferred due to the uncertain character of the LXX text here (Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 484 n. 21).

Although YHWH never identifies the woman in the poem as his wife, he calls her children the illegitimate offspring of "an adulterer and [a woman who] is promiscuous" (v. 3). Because in ancient Israelite society a man was labeled an adulterer only if he had sexual relations with another man's wife, regardless of his own marital status, this statement implies that the woman is married.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, YHWH declares in v. 8, "[Away] from me you uncovered [your nakedness]. And you went up; you opened wide your bed," implying that Zion should engage in this behavior only in YHWH's presence. Therefore, the passage should be interpreted against the background of Zion's marriage to YHWH, as described in 50:1–3 and 54:4–10.¹⁷⁶ As Phyllis Bird observes regarding Hos 1:2, however, employing זנה, a general term for sexual promiscuity, instead of נאף, which more narrowly designates adultery, highlights "'wantonness' rather than violation of marriage contract," with "connotations of repeated, habitual, or characteristic behavior."¹⁷⁷

Scholars disagree over what type(s) of aberrant religious practice the passage condemns, suggesting variously a cult of the dead, sexual fertility rites,

175. The Tg. emphasizes the aspect of adultery by adding in v. 8b: "You resembled a woman who was beloved by her husband and strayed after strangers" (Chilton, ArBib).

176. Contra Fischer, "Isaiah," 309, who collapses the metaphors of mother and children, contending that "the image of marriage cannot suggest the relationship of God and his people, because those addressed are called 'offspring of an adulterer and a whore.'"

177. Bird, "To Play the Harlot," 80, also 76.

a cult of Molech, or some combination of the three.¹⁷⁸ For our purposes, it is important merely to note the passage's focus on the city's unfaithfulness to YHWH, which clearly involves offering sacrifices to others (v. 6). Given the frequent use of זָנָה to describe idolatry in the HB, the sexual language should probably be taken metaphorically, particularly since it is not clear whether sexual rites were practiced in ancient Israel.¹⁷⁹ The passage depicts Zion's religious (and perhaps political) deviance as the behavior of a wanton woman who promiscuously entices lovers, even paying them for their services (v. 9; cf. Ezek 16:31–34).¹⁸⁰ Though exhausted by her efforts, she renews her strength and continues in her lewd pursuits (v. 10).

Whereas earlier Zion complained that YHWH had "forgotten" her (49:14), now she has "not remembered" him (v. 11a). He has withheld judgment "for a long time," perhaps hoping that she will repent, but she persists in dishonoring him (v. 11b).¹⁸¹ Although the passage does not sentence Zion to a particular punishment for her crimes, it declares that neither her "righteousness" nor her lovers will be able to deliver her when trouble comes (vv. 12–13a). By painting the actions of Jerusalem and her children in such sordid terms, the passage aims to persuade them that their current behavior is vile. Moreover, it points out that their idolatry will ultimately be of no profit (v. 13a), presumably with the goal of driving them back to YHWH (see v. 13b).

Thus, the passage indicates that the promises of chaps. 49 and 54 do not undercut the responsibility of both city and people to be faithful to YHWH. The marriage metaphor provides the background for the passage's depiction of Zion's licentious behavior, thus paralleling the prophetic use of the metaphor outside Isaiah. Interpreting Zion's actions within the framework of a marriage heightens the emotional impact of the indictment. She has promiscuously "made [her] bed" with multiple partners in flagrant violation of her marital commitment to YHWH, demonstrating a complete disregard for her divine husband (vv. 7, 11).

Unlike Isaiah 54, this passage offers no vision of marital restoration. The final verse hints that reconciliation with YHWH is possible; however, this prospect is not painted in the hues of the marriage metaphor but addressed to a masculine referent. Nevertheless, it gives some indication of Zion's fate in YHWH's promise, "Whoever seeks refuge in me will . . . inherit

178. For further discussion, see Lewis, "Death Cult," 282; Ackerman, "Sacred Sex," 44; Nihan, "Trois cultes," 153–67; Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 144–49; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 157–61, 164; George C. Heider, *The Cult of Molek: A Reassessment* (JSOTSup 43; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985) 379–82.

179. See p. 111 n. 109 above.

180. Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 187; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 160.

181. The NIV and JPSV seem to interpret YHWH's silence in this verse as his abandonment of Jerusalem. However, given the context of accusation, it makes more sense to see it as his restraint in withholding judgment for her idolatry, which thus heightens the critique against Jerusalem, who has repaid his mercy with continued rebellion (see the ESV; Koole, *Isaiah 56–66*, 80; cf. the use of חָשָׁה in 65:6–7).

my holy mountain" (הֹר־קֹדֶשׁ), a clear reference to Zion (see 66:20; also 56:7; Ps 2:6). Thus, as a city, Zion will ultimately be a holy place belonging to YHWH, where his faithful people reside. As a symbol representing her citizens, however, she is capable of multiple constructions. As Darr puts it, "There are two Zions, then, in Isaiah 56–66: the harlot who—in a single, graphic appearance—embodies Israel's evil leadership [as well as those who follow them in rebellion]; and the beloved wife and mother who represents Yahweh's faithful servants (recall 54:17b)."¹⁸² It remains for later chapters to address the issue of how the astonishing visions of chaps. 49 and 54 may be fulfilled in light of the city's lingering propensity for promiscuity.¹⁸³

Isaiah 62:5

Zion appears as a wife once more in chap. 62, which again sounds the tones of joyous marital reunion. While this passage completes the portrait of eschatological renewal begun in chap. 60, it constitutes a separate rhetorical unit.¹⁸⁴ The rhetorical situation seems to be the nonfulfillment of earlier promises, such as those described in chap. 54, which prompts a rearticulation of Zion's bright future:¹⁸⁵

והיית עטרת תפארת	3 And you will be a crown of splendor
בִּיד־יְהוָה	in the hand of YHWH
וצניף מלוכה בכף־אלהיך	and a royal diadem in the palm of your God.
לא־יאמר לך עוד עזובה	4 You will no longer be called "Forsaken,"
ולארצך לא־יאמר עוד	and your land will no longer be called
שְׁמָמָה	"A Desolation."*
כי לך יקרא חפצי־בה	But you will be called "My Delight Is in Her,"
ולארצך בעולה	and your land "Married."
כי־חפץ יהוה בך	For YHWH delights in you,
וארצך תבעל	and your land will be married.
כי־יבעל בחור בתולה	5 For [as] a young man marries a maiden,
יבעלך בניך	your sons will marry you.
ומשׁושׁ חתן	And [with] the rejoicing of a bridegroom
על־כלה	over a bride,
ישׁשׁ עליך אלהיך	your God will rejoice over you.

* The MT pointing of שְׁמָמָה reflects a nominal form ("desolation"; cf. the LXX), while 1QIsa^a has the fem. sg. ptc. שׁוֹמָמָה ("desolate one"; cf. the Tg. and Vg.; also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 232–33; Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 264 n. 91). Although the latter reading forms a better parallel with עזובה in the first line of the verse, it may be a harmonization to 54:1, which similarly contrasts שׁוֹמָמָה with בעולה. The nominal form, which should be accepted as the more difficult reading, may intentionally overturn 1:7 (see also Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 576 n. 8) or 6:11–12 (which also uses עזובה; H. G. M. Williamson, "Isaiah 62:4 and the Problem of Inner-Biblical Allusions," *JBL* 119 [2000] 736–37).

182. Darr, *Isaiah's Vision*, 188.

183. Biddle finds Isaiah's ultimate solution to this problem in the replacement of Zion with "a new heaven, a new earth, a new Jerusalem" in chaps. 65–66 ("Lady Zion's Alter Egos," 139).

184. See also Childs, *Isaiah*, 509–11; Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 373; Koole, *Isaiah* 56–66, 300–301.

185. See also pp. 46, 74, 104, and 129.

Table 1. Renaming and Marriage in Isaiah 62:4–5

	Zion	Zion's Land
Former Name (v. 4a)	Forsaken	A Desolation
New Name (v. 4b)	My Delight Is in Her	Married
Elaboration (v. 4c)	YHWH delights in her	It will be married
Corresponding Marital Image (v. 5)	Her God rejoices over her as a bridegroom over a bride	Zion's sons will marry her as a young man marries a maiden [*]

* Here there is no longer a reference to the “land,” perhaps due to an intentional effort to identify the land with Zion herself. Blenkinsopp suggests that they “are somehow conflated in the writer’s mind” (*Isaiah* 56–66, 237).

Whereas earlier passages described Zion putting on her children as bridal ornaments (49:18) and instructed her to don “garments of splendor” (תפארת, 52:1), here Zion herself has become an adornment, a “crown of splendor” (תפארת, v. 3a).¹⁸⁶ In light of ANE iconography, this headpiece should probably be viewed as a mural crown, shaped in the image of the city’s walls.¹⁸⁷ Surprisingly, it does not appear on anyone’s head but rather in YHWH’s hand, which could connote his protection of the rebuilt city.¹⁸⁸ Alternatively, if T. David Andersen is correct that the passage portrays a royal wedding, the image could suggest that YHWH is about to crown the royal bridegroom (cf. Song 3:11).¹⁸⁹ Zion’s marriage will confer on her new names to replace the negative portrayals that have become so central to her identity that they function as titles (v. 4). No longer “Forsaken” (cf. 49:14), Zion will be newly dubbed “My Delight Is in Her,” and her land will be known as “Married” instead of “A Desolation” (v. 4; cf. 1:7).

Verse 4 does not specify to whom Zion’s land will be married, leading readers to assume that YHWH is the intended spouse. However, a different picture emerges in v. 5. Interweaving the ideas of renaming and marriage,

186. Corinna Körting connects this verse with Isa 28:5, which declares that YHWH “will be a crown of beauty (עטרת צבי) and a diadem of splendor (צפירת תפארה) to the remnant of his people,” contending that now Zion takes on this role (“Isaiah 62:1–7 and Psalm 45—or—Two Ways to Become Queen,” in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Chronological and Thematic Development in Isaiah 40–66* [ed. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer and Hans M. Barstad; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014] 108).

187. Christl M. Maier, “Daughter Zion as Queen and the Iconography of the Female City,” in *Images and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean* (ed. Martti Nissinen and Charles E. Carter; FRLANT 233; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009) 147–62; Mark E. Biddle, “The Figure of Lady Jerusalem: Identification, Deification and Personification of Cities in the ANE,” in *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspectives* (ed. K. Lawson Younger, William W. Hallo, and Bernard F. Batto; ScrCon 4; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991) 178–79, 182–84.

188. Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 182; Smith, *Isaiah* 40–66, 647.

189. T. David Andersen, “Renaming and Wedding Imagery in Isaiah 62,” *Bib* 67 (1986) 77–80.

these two verses present parallel pictures of Zion and her land, the latter functioning as a poetic complement (table 1).¹⁹⁰

Verse 5 therefore clarifies that Zion, and by extension her land, will marry her own sons, but it also indicates that YHWH relates to Zion as a bridegroom. Although these images appear to conflict, only the former is a modeling metaphor, inviting the reader to further metaphorical reflection on the relationship between tenor and vehicle. The latter is merely illustrative, explicitly specifying and so delimiting the field of resemblance between YHWH and a bridegroom by providing a single point of comparison—their rejoicing.¹⁹¹ As part of the passage's rhetorical aim to persuade Zion that she will soon experience a glorious restoration (see also vv. 11–12), the marital simile conveys YHWH's changed attitude toward her. His demeanor will be characterized by the deep, heart-swelling joy a bridegroom feels as he looks on his pure and radiant bride, dreaming of a bright future together.¹⁹²

Summary

In the context of Zion's exilic misery, Isaiah 54 employs the marriage metaphor to portray her postexilic restoration as a marital reunion with YHWH, an application given more limited treatment outside Isaiah. However, Isaiah's use of the metaphor is not entirely positive. Even chap. 54 alludes to a (prior) breach in the relationship, though unlike the other prophets, it does not employ images of sexual violence or humiliation but rather of a husband forsaking his wife in anger (54:6–8; cf. 50:1).¹⁹³ Moreover, chap. 57 explores the promiscuity of YHWH's errant wife in graphic detail.

Given this variation in the image's portrayal, Moughtin-Mumby warns against speaking of “the marriage metaphor” at all, arguing that the phrase implies a unity and narrative concinnity that is not borne out by the evidence: “If *Jeremiah* 2:1–4:4 and *Hosea* 4–14 break the mould of ‘the marriage metaphor,’ we could say that *Isaiah* 40–55 shatters it.”¹⁹⁴ Her caution is apropos. Each text must be allowed to speak for itself without being forced into the procrustean bed of a particular conception of “the marriage metaphor.” Nevertheless, just because the metaphor is developed in quite

190. Westermann attributes similar observations to Elliger, though without providing a full citation (*Isaiah* 40–66, 376).

191. Contra Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 150. Maier speaks of a reluctance to name YHWH as Zion's husband here (“Daughter Zion as Queen,” 158).

192. See also Victor Armenteros, “‘YHWH, el amante’: Modelos de relación derivados de la simbología matrimonial veterotestamentaria,” *DL* 3 (2004) 161.

193. See Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 186, who observes further that sexual violence in Isaiah 40–55 is directed instead toward Jerusalem's enemy, Babylon (see also idem, “Prophetic Objections,” 99–101, 109).

194. Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 141, also pp. 6–8, 275–76; cf. Stienstra, *YHWH Is the Husband*, 171.

different ways within the prophetic corpus and even within Isaiah 40–66 itself does not necessarily mean that these various uses lack coherence and cannot be connected into a larger narrative.

The reference to YHWH's divorce of his city-wife in 50:1 fits well with the assertion in 54:6–8 that he abandoned her in anger. While 50:1–3 is more concerned to address the reason for the present breach, however, 54:4–10 looks toward the future with promises of renewal. In its current placement in the book, 57:3–13 suggests that YHWH's assurances of marital restoration do not guarantee the purity and fidelity of the city. When the city turns away from YHWH in unfaithfulness, she deserves his rebuke. But even this behavior will not cause Zion to forfeit her promising future because YHWH has made an eternal covenant with her (54:10). Thus, he will again delight in her with the untainted joy a bridegroom takes in his pure, young bride (62:4). All these instances share a concern for the intimacy of Zion's relationship with YHWH, broken by sin and exile but ultimately restored.

Zion as Wife of Her Sons: Isaiah 62:4, 5

We must take one more look at 62:4–5 in order to analyze the marital imagery used of the relationship between Zion and her sons. Because the image is without parallel in ANE literature or the HB, it must be analyzed solely with reference to the context of the passage:¹⁹⁵

4	לֹא־יֵאמָר לְךָ עֲזוּבָה וְלֹא־רֹצֵץ לֹא־יֵאמָר עוֹד שְׁמָמָה	You will no longer be called "Forsaken," and your land will no longer be called "A Desolation."
	כִּי לְךָ יִקְרָא חֲפְצִיבָה וְלֹא־רֹצֵץ בְּעוֹלָה כִּי־חָפֵץ יִהְיֶה בְּךָ וְאֶרֶץ תִּבְעַל	But you will be called "My Delight Is in Her," and your land "Married." For YHWH delights in you, and your land will be married.
5	כִּי־יִבְעַל בָּחֹר בְּתוּלָה יִבְעֻלוּן בְּנֶיךָ וּמִשׁוּשׁ חֲתָן עַל־כֻּלָּהּ יִשְׂשֹׁשׁ עֲלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ	For [as] a young man marries a maiden, your sons will marry you. And [with] the rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride, your God will rejoice over you.

The passage aims to convince Zion that her desolate situation will soon be overturned (see also vv. 11–12), and the metaphors of Zion as wife and mother reveal how her coming renewal will be manifested in her relationship with her inhabitants. However, what is less clear is how these metaphors work together. As already noted, some scholars emend בְּנֶיךָ ("your sons") to בִּנְךָ ("your builder") to avoid the incestuous picture of Zion marrying her own children.¹⁹⁶ Others attempt to solve the problem by pointing out that, while בְּעַל often means "to marry," it can also carry connotations

195. See further p. 126; also pp. 46, 74, and 104.

196. See p. 46.

of possession or lordship. Thus, Jan Koole translates v. 5a, “(as) a young man takes possession of a bride, (so) your sons will take possession (of it [the land; see v. 4]) for you,”¹⁹⁷ while Blenkinsopp suggests an intentional wordplay with the two halves of the comparison drawing on different senses of בעל.¹⁹⁸ However, the explicit wedding imagery in these verses focuses attention on the marital aspects of בעל.¹⁹⁹

To analyze this complicated mixed metaphor, it may be helpful to draw on the resources of conceptual blending theory. This metaphorical portrait contains three input spaces: (1) the relationship between a mother and her sons, (2) the relationship between a wife and her husband, and (3) Zion’s relationship to her inhabitants. These are combined to form what conceptual blending theory calls a *megablend*.²⁰⁰ First, (1) the relationship between a mother and her sons is blended with (2) Zion’s relationship to her inhabitants. This metaphorical comparison receives no further elaboration in this passage, but in light of the larger context of Isaiah 40–66 it suggests the close and intimate relationship between Zion and her exiled citizens and her maternal longing and concern for them.

But a second blended space emerges from the interaction of (2) the relationship between a wife and her husband and (3) Zion’s relationship to her inhabitants. Given the fourfold repetition of בעל, this metaphorical blend is more prominent. The passage contrasts the land’s current designation as “Married” (בעולה) with her former description as “A Desolation” (שוממה). Thus, בעולה here signifies not merely marital status but also the companionship, security, and joy that marriage would confer on a lonely and helpless woman (v. 4). Moreover, by comparing Zion’s marriage to her inhabitants with that between a בחור (“young man”) and a בתולה (“maiden”), v. 5 evokes an image of the bliss and ardor of young love. Against the background of Zion’s past devastation, this picture suggests a period of new beginnings with an innocent joy undiminished by the horrors of war and exile. People and city will be united, dwelling together in the happy bond of marital intimacy.

The megablend draws together both blended spaces, and despite the conflict between them, the metaphors of the people as sons and bridegrooms highlight the shared association of an intimate and enduring relationship of mutual joy between them and their capital city. However, the incongruity between these metaphors also draws attention to the new revelation about the relationship between Zion and her inhabitants. Isaiah

197. Koole, *Isaiah 56–66*, 310; similarly Ulrich Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja: Komposition und Endgestalt* (HBS 16; Freiburg: Herder, 1998) 459.

198. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 233; also Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 181; Schmitt, “Motherhood of God,” 563; Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors*, 151.

199. See Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 581; Childs, *Isaiah*, 508; Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 188–89; Stienstra, *YHWH Is the Husband*, 176–77.

200. Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind’s Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 151–54.

49:17–25, 54:1–3, and 60:4–9 portray Zion’s inhabitants as babies or young children and focus on Zion’s astonishment and maternal joy in birthing children or receiving them back from exile. Here, however, Zion’s inhabitants are depicted as adult males, who offer the city care and protection through the bond of marriage.

Conclusion

Isaiah 40–66 emphasizes Zion’s roles as mother and wife, developing these images primarily against the background of exile. That experience shattered the interrelationships among YHWH, the people of Israel, and their land (represented by its capital city), which formed the core of Israelite theology.²⁰¹ Thus, these images give vivid expression to both the agony of relational separation and the hope of future relational renewal. Exile entails not merely the brutal and forceful wrenching of the people from their city-mother but also a heartbreaking marital rupture between the city and its God. Zion is currently bereaved and barren (49:21, 54:1), lacking the support of sons to help her in her state of vulnerability (51:18–20). Moreover, she is utterly desolate as a wife who has been forsaken (54:6) and whose separation from her husband has been sealed with a certificate of divorce (50:1).

However, the end of the exile is marked both by her children’s homecoming and by the renewal of YHWH’s affectionate devotion to his city-wife. Zion will receive her children back from foreign kings (49:17–25) with a heart overflowing with radiant joy (60:4–5), turning her mourning into rejoicing (54:1). Indeed, her land will be overrun by the abundance of her offspring (49:20, 54:2–3), who are portrayed in 66:7–9 as emerging from her womb all at once in a miraculous rebirth. Zion will lovingly nourish and nurture her children (66:10–12), and they will be united to her in a mutual bond of intimacy that can only be expressed by the image of a marriage (62:4–5). Moreover, YHWH will renew his marriage vows to Zion, grounding her future security in an eternal covenant of peace and promising a relationship marked by steadfast love and compassion (54:4–10). Although the threat that Zion will turn away from YHWH in promiscuous liaisons with idols still looms large (57:6–13), YHWH will no longer abandon Zion but will delight in her with all the affection of a bridegroom for his bride (62:5).

201. On these interrelationships, see further Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004) 19.

Chapter 5

Israel, an Unnamed Representative, Zion, and the Faithful People as YHWH's Servant(s)

The final metaphor we will examine is the servant (עֶבֶד) metaphor. At first glance, this image may not seem to belong together with the familial metaphors discussed previously. However, servants were integral members of the household (בֵּית אָב) in ancient Israelite society,¹ and the servant metaphor is interconnected with the familial metaphors in Isaiah 40–66. Several scholars have noted parallels between Lady Zion—in her various roles as daughter, wife, and mother—and the individual servant figure in chaps. 49–54 (49:3, 5–6; 50:10; 52:13; 53:12),² and YHWH's servants are implicitly identified with Zion's children in 54:17 and 66:14. Because the servant metaphor becomes a dominant image for depicting YHWH's relationship with his people in chaps. 40–66,³ it is a fitting metaphor with which to conclude our study.

The typical term used for the converse of עֶבֶד is אֲדוֹן (“master” or “lord”),⁴ but אֲדוֹן and the suffixed form אֲדֹנִי are standard designations for YHWH throughout the biblical literature. While that title probably retains some connotations of the underlying metaphor—for example, by showing respect and honor for YHWH—it is not an active metaphor that is further developed by the passages in which it appears.⁵ Within Isaiah, אֲדוֹן is used for YHWH in a nonstandard way only when he refers to himself as Zion's “Lord” (אֲדֹנִי) in 51:22. Aside from that verse, this chapter will analyze only passages that contain עֶבֶד.

Associated Commonplaces of the Vehicle: Servants

As already noted, in ancient Israel servants were important members of the most basic unit of society, the בֵּית אָב. As such, they participated in

1. See, e.g., Exod 20:10; Daniel I. Block, “Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel,” in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (ed. Ken M. Campbell; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003) 38.

2. See further on p. 3.

3. See 41:8–9; 42:1, 19; 43:23; 44:1–2, 21, 26; 45:4; 48:20; 54:17; 56:6; 63:17; 65:8–9, 13–15; 66:14.

4. E.g., Gen 24:9–10, Exod 21:5–6, Deut 23:16[15], Isa 24:2.

5. Thus it is not clear, as Dexter E. Callender Jr. contends, that this “language reflects a *conscious* servant-lord relationship that extends beyond the expression of simple politeness or respect” (“Servants of God[s] and Servants of Kings in Israel and the Ancient Near East,” *Semeia* 83–84 [1998] 73, emphasis mine).

the religious life of the family they served,⁶ and they enjoyed a measure of security from economic and legal disaster. A man's servants were, of course, expected to do his bidding and were often counted among his property (Gen 24:35, Exod 21:21, Eccl 2:7). Some, however, achieved positions of great authority and honor within their master's house (e.g., Gen 24:2; cf. Prov 17:2). Moreover, Israelite law upheld the value of עבדים as humans, created in the image of God, and provided provisions to safeguard them against potential abuses of authority. For example, a slave who was struck by his master and immediately died was to be avenged (Exod 21:20), and escaped slaves were not to be returned to their owners (Deut 23:16–17[15–16]).⁷ As Job observes, God created the slave as well as his master and thus demands that slaves be treated humanely (Job 31:13–15).

The greatest protections were reserved for Israelites who were forced into debt slavery. Unlike foreign slaves, Israelites could not be held in a state of permanent servitude but were to be freed after six years and sent away with gifts of food and animals unless they desired to remain in their master's household (Deut 15:12–18).⁸ Even if Israelites sold themselves to a sojourner, they retained the right of redemption should one of their relatives be in a position to free them or should they be able to free themselves (Lev 25:47–49).⁹ Although this institution offered practical relief from economic ruin and starvation, it was not an ideal situation. Moreover, slaves were not always looked upon favorably (e.g., Prov 19:10, 29:19, 30:21–22).¹⁰

Within the sphere of domestic politics, all the nation's population could be called the king's servants, but more narrowly that term specified officials and emissaries in the royal court (2 Sam 15:14–15, 1 Kgs 1:9, 2 Kgs 19:5–6),¹¹ positions that could entail high social standing and a considerable degree of wealth.¹² Internationally the terms “master” (אדון) and “servant” (עבד) were used to designate a suzerain-vassal relationship, in which the vassal would swear loyalty and pay tribute to his suzerain, receiving in exchange the promise of protection from political enemies (2 Kgs 16:7–8, 17:3–4). Finally,

6. See, e.g., Gen 17:12–13; Deut 12:10–12, 16:9–15 (Ringgren, “עבד,” *TDOT* 10:388–89; Joseph Blenkinsopp, “The Family in First Temple Israel,” in *Families in Ancient Israel* [ed. Leo G. Perdue et al.; FRC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997] 52).

7. See further Harry A. Hoffner Jr., “Slavery and Slave Laws in Ancient Hatti and Israel,” in *Israel: Ancient Kingdom or Late Invention?* (ed. Daniel I. Block; Nashville: B&H, 2008) 147–55.

8. Cf. Exod 21:2–6 and the alternate form in Lev 25:39–41.

9. Lev 25:40 declares that Israelite debt-slaves should not be made to do the work of slaves but should be treated as hired laborers or sojourners, which suggests that they would receive some remuneration for their service (see Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Leviticus: A Commentary* [trans. Douglas W. Stott; OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996] 388–89).

10. Richard Schultz, “Servant, Slave,” *NIDOTTE* 4:1186.

11. Callender, “Servants of God(s),” 73.

12. Ziba, a servant of King Saul, had 20 servants of his own (2 Sam 19:18[17]; Muhammad A. Dandamayev, “Slavery: Old Testament,” *ABD* 6:65).

the language of servanthood is frequently used to show deference or convey dependence in direct address (Gen 44:7, Num 32:25, 1 Sam 20:7–8), even in circumstances where the two parties are on roughly equal footing (e.g., Gen 32:5[4]).¹³ In general, however, it implies an unequal relationship in which servants are responsible to carry out the will of their master but also enjoy some measure of protection by association with him.

Ancient Near Eastern Background

Israel was not unique in using servant terminology to describe human relationships with the divine. Individuals in the ANE commonly referred to themselves as “servants” of a particular god. For example, in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Utnapishtim describes Ea as his “master” (*bēlu*) and himself as Ea’s “servant” (*ardu*) when narrating Ea’s instructions to him concerning the upcoming flood and his prompt obedience in carrying them out.¹⁴ Esarhaddon identifies himself as “a servant who fears” (*ardu paliḫ*) Nabû and Marduk in his annals,¹⁵ using a common pairing of terms that highlights the aspect of reverence in the servant-master relationship and draws it into the sphere of religious observance.¹⁶ In Ugaritic literature, the Epic of Kirta describes the king as the “servant of El” (*‘bd il*) in a context highlighting the god’s concern and provision for Kirta, as well as the king’s sacrifice at El’s behest.¹⁷ Finally, Azatiwada calls himself a “servant of Ba’al” (*‘bd b’l*) in the Phoenician Inscription of Karatepe (1.1–2), demonstrating his devotion to his god by building a city at his command.¹⁸ Moreover, the Mesopotamian *Atraḥasis Epic* and *Enuma Elish* reflect the understanding that humanity was created to serve the gods by doing their work for them and thereby providing for their needs.¹⁹

The Use of the Metaphor Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible

Outside Isaiah, a number of individuals are called servants of YHWH, usually indicating that they have a leadership role over Israel or a significant place in YHWH’s redemptive plan—for example, Abraham (Gen 26:24), Moses (Exod 14:31), Joshua (Josh 24:29), David (2 Sam 7:5), Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:16), and even Nebuchadnezzar, YHWH’s instrument of judgment against his recalcitrant people (Jer 25:9). The prophets are also frequently

13. See Schultz, *NIDOTTE* 4:1188.

14. *Epic of Gilgamesh* 11.32, 33, 37, 42 (A. R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts* [2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003] 1:704–5).

15. Riekle Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (AfOB 9; Graz, 1956) 19.

16. For further references, see CAD A/2 250.

17. CTU 1.14:III.49, 51; VI.34–35 (UNP 12–23).

18. Douglas J. Green, “I Undertook Great Works”: *The Ideology of Domestic Achievements in West Semitic Royal Inscriptions* (FAT 2/41; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 237, 246–47.

19. See further Callender, “Servants of God(s),” 71–72.

given this title, both as individuals (1 Kgs 14:18; 2 Kgs 9:36, 14:25) and as a group (Jer 7:25), signifying their role as YHWH's messengers. In 2 Kgs 10:23, the term is broadened to refer to anyone who worships YHWH (cf. Ps 113:1, 135:1), in contrast to "those who serve (עבדי; Qal ptc.) Baal."

More significant for our study, however, are the references to Israel as YHWH's servant(s). Underlying the legal restrictions concerning the enslavement of fellow Israelites was the theological principle that YHWH had redeemed the people from their position as a "slave" (עבד) in Egypt (Deut 15:15; cf. Lev 26:13) to be his "servants" (עבדים, Lev 25:42, 55; cf. Jer 30:8–9). Therefore, they were no longer to be held indefinitely as a "slave" (עבד) by any human (Lev 25:39, 42–43; Deut 15:12–14).²⁰ Whereas Pharaoh was a harsh taskmaster, subjecting the Israelites to bitter toil (Exod 1:13–14, 5:15–16), YHWH calls them to privileged life-giving service (Deut 10:12–13; cf. 30:19–20), marked by regular periods of rest (5:12–15) and sustained by his bountiful provision (11:13–15; cf. 28:8–12).²¹

Further instances of the metaphor are found in several prayers of petition for YHWH to act for the sake of his "servants" (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:32, 36; Neh 1:6, 10–11; Ps 79:2, 10). In line with the common use of עבד in direct address, these references could simply reflect the stance of humility the petitioner takes before YHWH on behalf of the people. In many cases, however, it probably draws on YHWH's own identification of the people as his servants, reminding him that he has a responsibility as their overlord to protect them.²² Moreover, the term may also suggest the people's devotion to YHWH (see Neh 1:11).²³

Only a few passages outside Isaiah represent the nation collectively as a singular servant, a use of the metaphor unparalleled in the ancient world. Psalm 136:22 extols YHWH's provision in giving "an inheritance to his servant Israel." Moreover, in Jeremiah 30, YHWH enjoins his "servant (עבדי) Jacob" not to be afraid, promising, "I am with you . . . to save you" (vv. 10–11; cf. 46:27–28). In Ezek 28:25, the nation is called YHWH's servant to herald the coming reconciliation between them and their God,²⁴

20. See also John Byron, *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A Traditio-Historical and Exegetical Examination* (WUNT 2/162; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 49–51; Callender, "Servants of God(s)," 78–79.

21. For this reason, I have retained the standard English translation of "servant" for YHWH's עבד rather than "slave," which has decidedly more negative connotations, despite Athalya Brenner's well-founded concern that "servant" could suggest "an ideological downplaying of the most common denotation of the Hebrew word," which is "legally binding servitude" ("Identifying the Speaker-in-the-Text and the Reader's Location in Prophetic Texts: The Case of Isaiah 50," in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies* [ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine; Chicago: Dearborn, 2001] 146).

22. Ringgren, *TDOT* 10:393; Schultz, *NIDOTTE* 4:1189–90.

23. See also Edward J. Bridge, "The Metaphoric Use of Slave Terms in the Hebrew Bible," *BBR* 23 (2013) 26.

24. See further Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 127.

and Ezek 37:24–25 provides a similar assurance, though its context also stresses the people's obedience to YHWH. Finally, David's song of thanksgiving in 1 Chronicles 16 addresses "the offspring of Jacob" as YHWH's servant (v. 13), calling them to "seek YHWH" (v. 11a).

Jacob/Israel as YHWH's Servant

Within the book of Isaiah, chaps. 1–39 apply the title of YHWH's servant to a few individuals (Isaiah: 20:3; Eliakim: 22:20; David: 37:35), but the theme of Israel as YHWH's servant emerges only in chaps. 40–66.

Textual Analyses

Isaiah 41:8, 9

As in Jeremiah 30 and Ezekiel 28 and 37, Isaiah's introduction of servant Jacob/Israel stresses his dependence upon his divine master for protection and help.²⁵ The servant first appears in 41:8–9, in a rhetorical unit comprising vv. 1–20, which is paralleled by 41:21–42:17.²⁶ The passage addresses the rhetorical situation of Israel's fear of his enemies (vv. 10–12) and his concern that YHWH has rejected him (vv. 8–10) and perhaps has even lost control of world events (vv. 1–5).²⁷ Turning from the nations to address Israel in vv. 8–16, YHWH offers a word of reassurance:

וְאַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדִּי	8 But you, Israel, my servant,
יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר בָּחַרְתִּיךָ	Jacob, you whom I have chosen,
זֶרַע אַבְרָהָם אֱהָבִי	offspring of Abraham, my friend,
אֲשֶׁר הִחֲזַקְתִּיךָ מִקְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ	9 you whom I took hold of from the ends of the earth
וּמֵאֲצִלֵּיהָ קִרְאתִיךָ	and called from its most distant parts
וְאָמַר לְךָ עַבְדִּי־אֵתָּה	and said to you, "You are my servant"*—
בְּחֻרְתִּיךָ וְלֹא מֵאֲסַתִּיךָ	I have chosen you and have not rejected you.

* Some translators extend the quotation to include the subsequent line (see the ESV, NRSV; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 198; Walsh, "Summons to Judgement," 353). It makes more sense, however, to understand "You are my servant" as a prior declaration YHWH made when he first called Israel and "I have chosen you and have not rejected you" as a current reaffirmation of his election (see the NIV, NLT; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah* 40–55, 1:162; Smith, *Isaiah* 40–66, 134).

25. Although many scholars use fem. sg. pronouns to refer to Israel in the latter half of Isaiah (e.g., James Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40–66," in *IB* [ed. G. A. Buttrick et al.; 12 vols.; New York: Abingdon, 1956] 5:455; Yehoshua Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion: A Study of Isaiah 40–48* [FTL 14; Bonn: Linguistica Biblica, 1981] 138; Rikki E. Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation? Isaiah 40–55 and the Delay of the New Exodus," *TynBul* 41 [1990] 31; Robin L. Routledge, "Is There a Narrative Substructure Underlying the Book of Isaiah?" *TynBul* 55 [2004] 199), Jacob/Israel is collectively represented here as a masc. sg. servant figure, in contrast to the fem. sg. Lady Zion/Jerusalem.

26. John Goldingay, "The Arrangement of Isaiah xli–xlv," *VT* 29 (1979) 289–90; also Jerome T. Walsh, "Summons to Judgement: A Close Reading of Isaiah xli 1–20," *VT* 43 (1993) 352.

27. See Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah* 40–66 (NAC 15b; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009) 125, 135.

YHWH grounds the nation's role as his servant (עַבֵּד) in his purposeful choice (בַּחֵר, vv. 8–9),²⁸ which he traces back to his promises to Abraham, from whom the nation has inherited its servant status (see Gen 26:24). Despite Israel's current hopeless state, YHWH's commitment to his servant remains firm (v. 9b). Reminding Israel that he called him "from the ends of the earth" (מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ, v. 9a), perhaps evoking images of both Abraham's journey from Ur and the exodus from Egypt,²⁹ YHWH signals his ability to rescue Israel from the distant regions to which he has been exiled (see vv. 17–20).³⁰

The recurring exhortation אַל-תִּירָא ("do not fear," vv. 10, 13, 14), which along with its parallel ("do not be dismayed," v. 10) constitutes the only command addressed to Israel in the passage, provides the text's primary rhetorical aim. YHWH challenges Israel to trust that he, who sovereignly directs the rise and fall of nations (vv. 2–4), will bring about Israel's deliverance. The basis for this trust is conveyed by means of the servant metaphor, which is used here to emphasize YHWH's responsibility as Israel's master to "strengthen," "uphold," and "help" (vv. 10, 13, 14) him.

Although the servant metaphor dominates, YHWH also makes recourse to the rare metaphor of friendship to communicate his fond concern for Israel. אַהֲבִי ("my friend") in v. 8b, derived from a root meaning "to love," conveys an intimate and affectionate relationship. In apposition to זֶרַע אַבְרָהָם ("offspring of Abraham"), אַהֲבִי could characterize the patriarch (cf. 2 Chr 20:7), but the parallels with the previous lines suggest that it describes his offspring.³¹ These overlapping metaphors underscore YHWH's unchanging commitment to Israel,³² downplaying the associated commonplace of a servant's duty toward his master.

Isaiah 42:1

YHWH's servant is, however, called to action in 42:1–9, which, as already noted, is part of a larger rhetorical unit encompassing 41:21–42:17.³³ The

28. This link appears frequently in subsequent servant texts: 42:1, 43:10, 44:1–2, 45:4, 49:6–7.

29. Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 63–64.

30. See also Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2002) 201; Walsh, "Summons to Judgement," 362; John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 2005) 103; cf. מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ in Isa 43:6.

31. *Patriarch*: Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah Chapters 40–48* (vol. 1 of *Isaiah III*; trans. Anthony P. Runia; 3 vols.; HKAT; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1997) 155; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 201; cf. the LXX. *Offspring*: Lawrence Boadt, "Isaiah 41:8–13: Notes on Poetic Structure and Style," *CBQ* 35 (1973) 23 n. 12; John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40–55: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (2 vols.; ICC; New York: T&T Clark, 2006) 1:161. Walsh proposes a double reading ("Summons to Judgement," 362).

32. See also Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 107.

33. See also Jerome T. Walsh, "The Case for the Prosecution: Isa 41:21–42:17," in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (ed. Elaine R. Follis; JSOTSup 40; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987) 101.

rhetoical situation is less explicit than in 41:1–20 but the emphases on YHWH's sovereign power and the impotence of other gods in 41:21–29 suggest that this passage is honing in on one of the concerns that may have prompted the prior address: Israel's doubts concerning YHWH's ability to control world events given the reality of exile. YHWH responds, in part, by describing the role his servant will play in his plans for the nations:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----|---|
| הן עבדי אתמך־ב | 1 | See, my servant whom I uphold, |
| בחירי רצתה נפשי | | my chosen one [in whom] my soul delights. |
| נתתי רוחי עליו | | I have put my Spirit on him; |
| משפט לגוים יוציא | | he will bring forth justice to the nations. |
| לא יצעק ולא ישא | 2 | He will not cry out or lift up [his voice] |
| ולא־ישמיע בחוץ קולו | | or make his voice heard in the street. |
| קנה רצוץ לא ישבור | 3 | A bruised reed he will not break, |
| ופשתה כהה לא יכבנה | | and a dim wick he will not extinguish; |
| לאמת יוציא משפט | | he will faithfully bring forth justice. |
| לא יכה ולא ירוץ | 4 | He will not be disheartened or crushed |
| עד־ישים בארץ משפט | | until he establishes justice on the earth. |
| ולתורתו איים ייחילו | | And the islands wait for his instruction. |
| ... | ... | ... |
| אני יהוה קראתיך בצדק | 6 | I, YHWH, have called you in righteousness, |
| ואחזק בידך | | and I will take hold of your hand. |
| ואצרך | | And I will keep you,* |
| ואתנך לברית עם | | and I will give you as a covenant for the people, |
| לאור גוים | | as a light for the nations, |
| לפקח עינים עוררת | 7 | to open blind eyes, |
| להוציא ממסגר אסיר | | to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, |
| מבית כלא ישיבי חשך | | from prison those who sit in darkness. |

* Although אצרך could be read as a form of יצר ("to form," so the JPSV; also R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah* 40–66 [NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975] 74; Koole, *Isaiah* 40–48, 228–30), most translations take the root as נצר ("to keep, guard"; see the NIV, NASB, NRSV, ESV). As Gary Smith points out, if "form" was intended, it would more naturally come first in the list (*Isaiah* 40–66, 167 n. 286).

Because the servant is never named, the most natural reading is to assume in light of 41:8–9 that he is Jacob/Israel.³⁴ This identification is made

34. See also Ralph Marcus, "The 'Plain Meaning' of Isaiah 42.1–4," *HTR* 30 (1937) 250; Norbert Lohfink, "'Israel' in Jes 49,3," in *Wort, Lied und Gottesspruch* (ed. Josef Schreiner; FB 2; Würzburg: Echter, 1972) 222; Peter Wilcox and David Paton-Williams, "The Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah," *JSOT* 42 (1988) 87–88; Knud Jeppesen, "From 'You, My Servant' to 'the Hand of the Lord Is with My Servant,'" *SJOT* 1 (1990) 120; Roy F. Melugin, "The Servant, God's Call, and the Structure of Isaiah 40–48," in *SBL Seminar Papers*, 1991 (SBLSP 30; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991) 29; Antti Laato, *The Servant of YHWH and Cyrus: A Reinterpretation of the Exilic Messianic Programme in Isaiah 40–55* (ConBOT 35; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992) 81; Ulrika Lindblad, "A Note on the Nameless Servant in Isaiah xlii 1–4," *VT* 43 (1993) 116–17; Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah* 40–66 (WestBC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998) 422; H. G. M. Williamson, *Variations on a Theme: King, Messiah and Servant in the Book of Isaiah* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998) 139–40; Rodel M. Cajot, "Second Isaiah's Servant of Yahweh Revisited," *PSac* 34 (1999) 206; Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 325, 384; Christopher R. Seitz, "You Are My Servant, You Are the Israel in Whom I Will Be Glorified": The Servant Songs and the Effect

explicit in the LXX (see 42:1) and is supported by several verbal parallels with 41:8–13. Both texts describe how YHWH has “chosen” (בחר, 41:8, 9; 42:1) and “called” (קרא, 41:9, 42:6) his servant and promise that he will “uphold” (תמך) him (41:10, 42:1) and “take hold of (חזק) his hand” (41:13; cf. v. 9; 42:6). As Goldingay puts it, “One would need some explicit contrary indication if one were not to make this inference from the structural parallel.”³⁵ Moreover, the switch from second-person singular forms in 42:6 to the plural in v. 9 also points to a collective interpretation.³⁶

The primary task given to the servant is to “bring forth justice (משפט) to the nations” (v. 1b; cf. vv. 3–4). Reading this passage in light of chap. 40, it may address Israel’s complaint that his “cause (משפט) is overlooked by [his] God” (v. 27).³⁷ If so, then YHWH offers a surprising response—Israel’s משפט will be upheld when משפט is established throughout the world under the governance of YHWH’s תורה (v. 4).³⁸ Moreover, as YHWH’s servant, Israel himself is called to embrace this calling of promulgating משפט.

But how can Israel fulfill this mission when he is at the mercy of the political superpowers and cannot even bring about משפט for himself? Moreover, v. 4 declares that YHWH’s servant “will not be disheartened or crushed” while carrying out his task, but Israel is certainly disheartened.³⁹ The passage answers these concerns by describing how YHWH will empower his servant for this task. He has already endowed him with his Spirit (v. 1b), and he now promises to guide and protect him (v. 6a). Moreover, he takes an

of Literary Context in Isaiah,” *CTJ* 39 (2004) 126; Jürgen Werlitz, “Vom Gottesknecht der Lieder zum Gottesknecht des Buches,” *BK* 61 (2006) 208–9; Antony Tharekadavil, *Servant of Yahweh in Second Isaiah: Isaianic Servant Passages in Their Literary and Historical Context* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007) 88–91; R. Reed Lessing, “Isaiah’s Servants in Chapters 40–55: Clearing Up the Confusion,” *Concordia Journal* 37 (2011): 131.

35. Goldingay, “Arrangement,” 292. Although these verses also exhibit several parallels with later Cyrus texts (e.g., 45:1–4) and the portrait of the more individualized servant figure in 49:1–13 (see further p. 153), the sequential reader has no reason to search elsewhere in the book to resolve the problem of the servant’s identity given these links to the prior description of servant Jacob.

36. Johannes Lindblom, *The Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah: A New Attempt to Solve an Old Problem* (LUÅ: Lund: Gleerup, 1951) 22; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs: A Critical Examination of an Exegetical Axiom* (Lund: Gleerup, 1983) 31–32; Ulrich Berges, “The Literary Construction of the Servant in Isaiah 40–55: A Discussion about Individual and Collective Identities,” *SJOT* 24 (2010) 33.

37. W. A. M. Beuken, “Mišpāt: The First Servant Song and Its Context,” *VT* 22 (1972) 8, 11; Childs, *Isaiah*, 324; Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 149; Michael F. Bird, “‘A Light to the Nations’ (Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6): Inter-textuality and Mission Theology in the Early Church,” *RTR* 65 (2006) 124; Joëlle Ferry, *Isaïe: “Comme les mots d’un livre scellé . . .”* (Isa 29,11) (LD 221; Paris: du Cerf, 2008) 186; Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 157. Between 40:27 and 42:1–4, משפט appears only once in 41:1 in a call for all the peoples to “draw near for judgment.” Later in chaps. 40–55, the word always appears in connection with the servant theme (49:4, 50:8, 51:4, 53:8, 54:17).

38. Similarly, Gene R. Smillie, “Isaiah 42:1–4 in Its Rhetorical Context,” *BSac* 162 (2005) 50–65.

39. Goldingay, “Arrangement,” 292.

active role in the servant's mission, declaring: "I will give (נתן) you as a covenant for the people (לברית עם), as a light for the nations (לאור גוים)" (v. 6b).⁴⁰

The unusual phrase *עם ברית עם* has generated much discussion. *עם* often designates Israel, and Richard Schultz argues that it does here as well, contending that the parallel between *עם* and *גוים* reflects Isaiah's frequent pairing of singular and plural forms "to distinguish *one* nation or people among the many."⁴¹ However, the universal use of *עם* to signify humankind in v. 5 and the passage's focus on the servant's calling to the nations (vv. 1b and 4b), without any reference to a mission to Israel, support the idea that it should be understood more expansively here.⁴² Thus, as Childs puts it, the servant "embodies a covenantal relationship with the nations,"⁴³ fulfilling the promise to Abraham that all people of the earth would be blessed through him (Gen 12:3).⁴⁴

How this mission will be carried out may also come as a surprise to Israel. Although executing justice was a kingly responsibility,⁴⁵ the servant will not conduct himself as a typical self-exalting ruler, forcibly pressing the nations into subservience to Y^{HWH}. Instead, he will act as a deliverer who gently upholds the weak (v. 3) and frees the oppressed (v. 7).

While the larger passage aims to demonstrate Y^{HWH}'s sovereignty over the events of the world as part of his contest with the idols (see 41:21–29; cf. 42:10–17), 42:1–9 functions to commission Y^{HWH}'s servant to enact his plans for the nations. As in 41:8–9, the passage portrays the servant's election and the support he receives from his master, even expressing Y^{HWH}'s "delight" in him as a valued member of his household (v. 1a). However, the metaphor primarily conveys the servant's responsibility to carry out the will of his divine master by acting as his agent.

Isaiah 42:19, 43:10

The noble task given to the servant in 42:1–9 is almost immediately called into question by the negative depiction of the servant in vv. 18–25.

40. See also Hyun Chul Paul Kim, *Ambiguity, Tension, and Multiplicity in Deutero-Isaiah* (StBL 52; New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 100; S. D. (Fanie) Snyman, "A Structural-Historical Exegesis of Isaiah 42:1–9," in *Interpreting Isaiah: Issues and Approaches* (ed. David G. Firth and H. G. M. Williamson; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009) 259.

41. Richard L. Schultz, "Nationalism and Universalism in Isaiah," in *Interpreting Isaiah: Issues and Approaches* (ed. David G. Firth and H. G. M. Williamson; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009) 136, emphasis in the original.

42. See Mark S. Smith, "Bērīt 'am/Bērīt 'ōlām: A New Proposal for the Crux of Isa 42:6," *JBL* 100 (1981) 243; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 212; Elmer A. Martens, "Impulses to Mission in Isaiah: An Intertextual Exploration," *BBR* 17 (2007) 225–26; Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 167; Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 100; Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40–66," 5:468–69; more cautiously, Frederik Poulsen, *God, His Servant, and the Nations in Isaiah 42:1–9: Biblical Theological Reflections after Brevard S. Childs and Hans Hübner* (FAT 2/73; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014) 109–11.

43. Childs, *Isaiah*, 326.

44. Bird, "A Light to the Nations," 124.

45. See further Robert B. Chisholm, "The Christological Fulfillment of Isaiah's Servant Songs," *BSac* 163 (2006) 394–95.

These verses form part of a larger rhetorical unit in 42:18–43:21, which is paralleled by 43:22–45:8.⁴⁶ Both passages address the rhetorical situation of Israel's religious failings, which threaten to disqualify him from his role in YHWH's sovereign plan. Here, the focus lies more specifically on Israel's failure to recognize and proclaim YHWH's purposes (42:18–21). Moreover, as Goldingay argues, the passage may also counter a specific charge that the people have made against YHWH—that he “is blind and deaf to their plight as the defenceless and helpless victims of attack and despoiling.”⁴⁷ YHWH responds by castigating unperceptive Israel:⁴⁸

החרשים שמעו	18	Hear, you deaf,
והעורים הביטו לראות		and look, you blind, that you may see.
מי עור כי אבי-עבדי	19	Who is blind but my servant
חרש כמלאכי אשלה		or deaf as my messenger [whom] I send?*
מי עור כמשלם		Who is blind as the one who[se task] is fulfilled†
ועור כעבד יהוה		and blind as the servant‡ of YHWH?
ראות רבות ולא תשמר	20	Seeing‡ many things, you do not observe.
פקוח אזנים ולא ישמע		Opening [his] ears, he does not hear.**
יהוה חפץ	21	YHWH desired
למען צדקו		for the sake of his righteousness††
יגדיל תורה ריאדיר		to make [his] instruction great and glorious.

* The Vg. has “he to whom I have sent my messengers” (Douay-Rheims; cf. the Tg.), but 1QIsa^a supports the MT.

† The MT reading (מְשַׁלֵּם) is a Pual ptc. from שָׁלַם, a form unattested elsewhere. The verb typically has connotations of completion or peace, but its meaning here is unclear, leading translators to render it variously as “my dedicated one” (ESV, NRSV), “he that is at peace with Me” (NASB), or “the one in covenant with me” (NIV; cf. Goldingay, “Isaiah 42.18–25,” 53), or simply to transliterate it (John D. W. Watts, “Two Studies in Isaiah,” in *God’s Word for Our World* [ed. J. Harold Ellens et al.; 2 vols.; JSOTSup 388; London: T&T Clark, 2004] 1:141–44; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 216–19). However, in 44:26, YHWH declares that he “establishes the word of his servant (עבדו) and fulfills (Hiphil שָׁלַם) the counsel of his messengers (מלאכיו).” The similar grouping of these three words suggests that מְשַׁלֵּם may refer here to the “one who[se task] is fulfilled” (see Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40–66: Translation and Commentary* [ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012] 199–200).

‡ Both references to YHWH’s servant are pl. in the LXX, while the Tg. has a pl. form only here. These readings are undoubtedly harmonizations to the pl. addressees in v. 18.

This translation follows the *Qere* reading; the *Kethiv* (ראית) is a 2nd per. masc. sg., corresponding to תשמר at the end of the line.

** Most Eng. translations smooth out this verse by consistently using 2nd (NIV, NASB) or 3rd per. (NRSV, ESV, JPSV) readings, but the transition from 2nd to 3rd per. in v. 20 parallels that in vv. 18–19. The LXX has 2nd per. pl. verbs throughout (cf. the Targum).

†† Cf. most English translations (e.g., NRSV, ESV, NASB, NIV). Alternatively, the pronominal suffix on צדקו could refer to the servant, thus designating “his vindication” (see the JPSV).

46. Goldingay, “Arrangement,” 294.

47. John Goldingay, “Isaiah 42.18–25,” *JSOT* 67 (1995) 45–46, who connects YHWH’s acknowledgement that he had “kept silent” (Hiphil חרש) in the prior passage (42:14) with the reference to the people’s “deafness” (adj. חרש) here (vv. 18–19). See also Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 48–49; Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 109; Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 79.

48. See also pp. 26 and 83.

As in 42:1–9, the servant is not explicitly named, but the context suggests an identification with the people of Israel.⁴⁹ Although the servant's mission in 42:6 involves "open[ing] blind (עוֹרֵה) eyes," vv. 18–19 declare that the servant himself is blind. This point is made emphatic both by the fourfold repetition of עֹר and by the rhetorical questions in v. 19 indicating that no one is as unperceptive as YHWH's servant, who has had numerous chances to observe YHWH's power at work.⁵⁰ Similarly, 42:7 declares that the servant will "bring out . . . from prison (בֵּית כְּלָא) those who sit in darkness," but according to v. 22, YHWH's servant-people are "hidden in prisons (בְּתֵי כְלָאִים)."

Moreover, YHWH's aim "to make [his] instruction (תּוֹרָה) great and glorious" (v. 21) should presumably be accomplished through the work of his servant-messenger (v. 19), whose "instruction" (תּוֹרָה) is eagerly awaited by the islands in 42:4. The people of Israel, however, "did not listen to [YHWH's] instruction" (תּוֹרָה, v. 24) and so have failed to model it to others (see Deut 4:5–8). Furthermore, since Israel has been "plundered and despoiled" (v. 22), he is not experiencing the blessings of Torah-observance that might attract the attention and awe of the surrounding nations.⁵¹

Clearly, Israel is in no position to carry out the mission assigned to the servant in 42:1–9 because he is suffering from the same ailments as those he is called to help.⁵² Since YHWH brings his mission to fulfillment (v. 19b), all the servant has to do is listen and declare what he has heard. Therefore, YHWH challenges the people to "give ear" and "pay attention" (v. 23; cf. v. 18) to overcome their selective hearing (v. 20). Then in 43:1–7 he promises to surmount the other major obstacle to the fulfillment of their servant calling by freeing the people, now portrayed as his sons and daughters, from their imprisonment in exile (see 42:22).⁵³ This assurance leads to a reaffirmation of their servant role:

<p>8 הוציא עִמְּעוֹר וְעִינִים יֵשׁ וְחֹרְשִׁים וְאָזְנִים לְמוֹ 9 כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם נִקְבְּצוּ יַחְדָּר וְיִאֲסְפוּ לְאַמִּים מִי בֵּהֶם יִגִּיד זֹאת וְרֹאשֹׁנוֹת יִשְׁמִיעֵנוּ יִתְּנוּ עֲדִידֵהֶם וְיִצְדָּקוּ</p>	<p>"Bring out a people [who are] blind but have eyes and deaf but have ears. All the nations gather together, and the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this and proclaim to us the former things? Let them provide their witnesses that they may be vindicated,</p>
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49. Note the masc. pl. addressees in v. 18, who are "blind" (עֹר) like the sg. servant figure in v. 19, and the description of the people in exile in vv. 22–24.

50. Goldingay, "Isaiah 42.18–25," 52; Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40–66," 5:477.

51. Goldingay, "Isaiah 42.18–25," 56–58.

52. See Robert P. Carroll, "Blindsight and the Vision Thing: Blindness and Insight in the Book of Isaiah," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; 2 vols.; VTSup 70; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 1:88; Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40–66," 5:476; Goldingay, "Arrangement," 295.

53. Similarly, *ibid.*, 298.

וישמעו ויאמרו אמת	and let [people] hear and say, 'It is true.'
אתם עדי נאמיהוה	10 You are my witnesses," declares YHWH,
ועבדי אשר בחרתי	"and my servant whom I have chosen
למען תדעו ותאמינו לי	so that you may know and believe me
ותבינו כי־אני הוה	and understand that I am He.
לפני לא־נוצר אל	Before me no god was formed,
ואחרי לא יהיה	and there will be no one after me."

In light of 42:18–20, the people YHWH summons, who are "blind but have eyes and deaf but have ears" (v. 8), must be understood as the people of Israel. Calling for a contest with the gathering nations (cf. 41:1–7, 21–29), YHWH challenges them to produce witnesses (עֲדִיָּהֶם) who can vindicate their deities by testifying to their power at work in the events of the past (v. 9). The text clearly implies that this challenge will go unanswered because there is no god besides YHWH (see vv. 10b–11).

In contrast to the powerless idols, YHWH has repeatedly proclaimed his intention to deliver his people and then carried it out (v. 12a). Although the people's failure to recognize the significance of these events has rendered them functionally blind and deaf, they have eyes and ears and so are at least capable of observing them (v. 8; cf. 42:20). Therefore, YHWH declares, "You are my witnesses (עֲדִי; cf. v. 12) . . . and my servant (עַבְדִּי) whom I have chosen" (v. 10a). Given the plural designation "witnesses," "servants" might be expected.⁵⁴ The singular form, however, links this text to the other uses of the servant theme in chaps. 41–53, which always refer to a singular servant.⁵⁵ The parallelism in this verse suggests that the people will fulfill their role as servant by functioning as witnesses.⁵⁶

Although the nations are present in this legal contest, the primary audience of the people's testimony is not the foreign nations but themselves. The reason YHWH gives his people for calling them as witnesses is "so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am He" (v. 10b).⁵⁷ Ironically, the people of Israel function as both witnesses and jury because they need to persuade themselves with their own testimony. Nevertheless, 42:19 has already indicated that YHWH sends his servant out as his messenger to others, and 42:6 describes the servant's role as "a light for the nations." Thus, YHWH ultimately intends for these witnesses to have a larger audience.⁵⁸

54. Cf. the Syr.

55. See also Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 1:286.

56. John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 146.

57. See also Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 139; Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 197, 201; Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 85; Jim W. Adams, *The Performative Nature and Function of Isaiah 40–55* (LHBOTS 448; London: T&T Clark, 2006) 102–3; contra Catherine Gunsalus González, "Isaiah 43:8–15," *Int* 48 (1994) 170.

58. Similarly Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 147; Melugin, "Servant," 27.

Like 41:21–42:17, 42:18–43:21 aims to demonstrate YHWH's superiority over the idols (see 43:8–13). However, this passage also responds to Israel's failure to take up the servant's role in 42:1–9 by promising to bring the people home from exile (43:1–7) and challenging them to overcome their blindness and deafness (42:18–19) and fulfill their calling to act as "witnesses" to YHWH's sovereign power (43:10). The servant metaphor provides the framework for the people's task of bearing witness—as a servant, Israel is expected to do his master's bidding. While 43:1–7 highlights the protection and help Israel receives from YHWH, that aspect of their relationship is conveyed not by the servant metaphor but by the child image (43:6). These metaphors reveal little overlap in this passage, coinciding only in portraying an asymmetrical relationship between YHWH and Israel. While the parent-child metaphor is linked to connotations of love and intimacy (see 43:4), the context of the servant image emphasizes YHWH's sovereign authority (42:24–25, 43:10–13).

Within the broader development of the servant theme, this passage assures the people that they are still YHWH's "chosen" (בחר) servant (43:10; cf. 41:8–9, 42:1), despite their blindness (42:18–19, 43:8). When YHWH delivers his people from exile (43:1–7), they will have even more evidence to persuade them of his saving power and will be perfectly poised to communicate and mediate that deliverance to those who are still imprisoned.⁵⁹

Isaiah 43:23; 44:1, 2, 21, 26; 45:4

Paralleling 42:18–43:21, 43:22–45:8 again calls into question and subsequently reaffirms Israel's suitability to function as YHWH's agent.⁶⁰ Like the previous passage, this unit also responds to the rhetorical situation of Israel's religious failings, now highlighting his failure to seek YHWH and honor him in worship (43:22–24). Moreover, the passage may answer a specific charge that YHWH has exiled Israel and destroyed his land for no reason (43:26–28).⁶¹ Employing a clever wordplay, YHWH rebukes Israel for overturning the proper order of their relationship:

לא־הביאת לי	23	You have not brought me
שה עלתִיךְ		sheep for your burnt offerings
וזבחִיךְ לא כבדתי		or honored me [with] your sacrifices.
לא העבדתיך במנחה		I have not enslaved you with offerings
ולא הוגעתִיךְ בלבונה		or wearied you with frankincense.
לא־קנית לי בכסף קנה	24	You have not bought me any sweet cane with silver
וחלב זבחִיךְ לא הריתיני		or given me my fill of the fat of your sacrifices.
אך העבדתי בחטאותיך		But you have enslaved me with your sins;
הוגעתני בעונותיך		you have wearied me with your iniquities.

59. Similarly Cajot, "Second Isaiah's Servant," 208.

60. On the parallel structure of the passages and the division of 43:22–45:8 into the subsections noted below, see Goldingay, "Arrangement," 294.

61. Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 130; John Goldingay, "Isaiah 43,22–28," ZAW 110 (1998) 174; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 230.

Given the negative tone of v. 22, which castigates Israel for being “weary” (Qal גָּעַע; cf. the Hiphil in vv. 23–24) of YHWH, the declarations that Israel has not been offering sacrifices to YHWH in these verses should be read as condemnations rather than matter-of-fact statements reflecting the situation of exile when sacrifices could no longer be made.⁶² Israel is sadly mistaken if he expects to merit YHWH's favor by his abysmal religious practice.

To drive the point home, YHWH contrasts his own behavior toward the people with their behavior toward him: *לֹא הִעֲבַדְתִּיךָ בְּמִנְחָה . . . אֶךְ הִעֲבַדְתָּנִי* (vv. 23b, 24b), which is generally translated “I have not burdened you with offerings. . . . But you have burdened me with your sins” (ESV, NRSV; cf. the NIV, JPSV). The few instances of עָבַד in the Hiphil stem elsewhere in the HB, however, almost all carry the connotation of oppressive forced servitude.⁶³ Moreover, the oddness of this use of the verb and its rarity in the Hiphil make it likely that the author deliberately chose this word to connect it with the עָבַד theme.⁶⁴ Thus, “enslaved” may better capture its intended nuance.⁶⁵

In light of the larger context, v. 23 probably does not mean, as Goldingay contends, that YHWH “has not required this people to act as servant,”⁶⁶ but rather means that he does not exercise his authority as Israel's master in a domineering fashion by expecting them to give offerings beyond their means.⁶⁷ By contrast, Israel has not only tried to usurp the role of master,⁶⁸ but he has also abused the power of that position, pressing YHWH into the harsh servitude of carrying the heavy burden of his sin. Such a daring portrayal of YHWH as an oppressed servant is found nowhere else in the HB,⁶⁹ but v. 25 indicates that this situation will soon change as YHWH declares, “I, I am he who wipes out your rebellions for my sake, and I will not remember your sins” (*הִטָּאֲתִיךָ*). Israel cannot keep YHWH enslaved by his sin because YHWH chooses to forgive.⁷⁰

62. See Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 60–61; Koole, *Isaiah 40–48*, 343–45; contra Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 1:309–11.

63. E.g., Exod 1:13, 2 Chr 2:17[18], Ezek 29:18; but see 2 Chr 34:33.

64. Goldingay, “Arrangement,” 295; Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 131; Chitra B. Chhetri, “The Servant Motif in Isaiah 41, 42, and 43: A Text-Linguistic Study” (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1997) 268. This connection is preserved in the Vg. but not in the LXX or Tg.

65. See also Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 156; Bohdan Hrobon, *Ethical Dimension of Cult in the Book of Isaiah* (BZAW 418; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 149; Koole, *Isaiah 40–48*, 561; Katie Heffelfinger, *I Am Large, I Contain Multitudes: Lyric Cohesion and Conflict in Second Isaiah* (BIS 105; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 205–6.

66. Goldingay, “Isaiah 43,22–28,” 174.

67. See also Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 214–15.

68. See Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 61; Goldingay, “Isaiah 43,22–28,” 183; Adams, *Performative Nature*, 98; Koole, *Isaiah 40–48*, 346.

69. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 1:311.

70. Similarly Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 131.

This tone of promise continues in 44:1–5 with a vision of blessing and restored relationship:

ועתה שמע יעקב עבדי וישראל בחרתי בו	1 But now hear, O Jacob, my servant and Israel, whom I have chosen.
כה־אמר יהוה עשך ויצרך מבטן יעוזך	2 Thus says YHWH, who made you and formed you from the womb [and] will help you,
אל־תירא עבדי יעקב וישרון בחרתי בו	“Do not be afraid, my servant, Jacob, and Jeshurun, whom I have chosen,
כי אצק־מים על־צמא ונזלים על־יבשה	3 for I will pour out water on thirsty [land] and streams upon dry ground.
אצק רוחי על־זרעך וברכתי על־צאצאך	I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants.
... ..	
זה יאמר ליהוה אני וזה יקרא	5 This one will say, ‘I am YHWH’s,’ another will call [himself]
בשם־יעקב	by the the name of Jacob,
וזה יכתב ידו ליהוה ובשם ישראל יכנה	and another will write [on] his hand, ‘YHWH’s,’ and will name [himself] Israel.”

As in 42:18, YHWH’s servant Israel is again exhorted to “hear” (v. 1), but now the command comes not in a context of rebuke but of reassurance. YHWH again reaffirms Israel’s status as his servant (see 43:10), echoing language from previous servant passages. He has not rejected his recalcitrant servant because their relationship is grounded not in Israel’s merit but in YHWH’s election (בחר, vv. 1–2; cf. 41:8–9, 42:1, 43:10),⁷¹ metaphorically portrayed as going back even to the womb, where he “formed” Israel (v. 2). Therefore, Israel need “not be afraid” (אל־תירא) and can trust in his divine master’s “help” (עזר, v. 2; cf. 41:10).

YHWH’s care and concern for his servant issues in blessing on Israel and his descendants, including the impartation of YHWH’s “Spirit” (רוחי) on Jacob’s “offspring” (זרע, v. 3). This bestowal may recall 42:1, hinting that these offspring will be empowered to succeed where Israel has failed in accomplishing the servant’s task.⁷² Indeed, they will brand themselves as YHWH’s servants by writing YHWH’s name on their hand, thereby living up to the name Jacob/Israel (v. 5).⁷³

71. Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 227–28; Koole, *Isaiah 40–48*, 357.

72. רוחי (“my Spirit”) appears only in these two verses in chaps. 40–55.

73. In connection with this verse, David W. Baker cites an Aramaic text from Elephantine (5th c.) that describes a slave with a brand on his right hand (“Isaiah,” in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* [ed. John H. Walton; 5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009] 4:150).

Some scholars contend that v. 5 must refer to proselytes, arguing that Israelites would already bear the names Jacob and Israel and so would not need to adopt them anew (e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 233–34; Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 136–37). In the flow of the passage, however, it is more natural to take the verse as denoting primarily the offspring of servant Jacob (vv. 2–3; see also Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 65), though foreigners may also be included (Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 167–68).

The task appointed to servant Israel emerges again in 44:6–23, which picks up the theme of YHWH's contest with the other gods from 43:8–13:

אל-תפחדו ואל-תרהו 8 Do not tremble, and do not be afraid.
הלא מאז השמעתיך Have I not long since proclaimed to you
והגדתי and declared [it]?
ואתם עדי And you are my witnesses.
היש אלוה מבלעדי Is there any god besides me?
ואין צור בל-ידעתי There is no [other] rock; I know not [one].

...
זכר-אלה יעקב 21 Remember these things, O Jacob,
וישראל כי עבד-יאתה and Israel, for you are my servant.
יצרתיך עבד-לי אתה I formed you; you are my servant.
ישראל לא תנשני O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.*

* The Niphal of נָשָׂה is a hapax legomenon, and the LXX has an active verb (“do not forget me”), leading the BHS to suggest revocalizing the form as a Qal (so also the JPSV; Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 155). The active form in the LXX, however, is likely a harmonization to the imperative זָכַר (“remember”) beginning the verse; therefore, the MT should be retained as the more difficult reading (so NRSV, ESV, NASB, NIV; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 234–35; Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 186).

On either side of a lengthy satirical critique of idolatry in vv. 9–20, Israel is addressed with one of the parallel terms from 43:10: “witnesses” (עֲדִי, v. 8) and “servant” (עַבְדִּי, v. 21). Again, YHWH issues a challenge to any other claimants to divine authority to proclaim the future (v. 7), but the idols’ “witnesses” (עֲדִיהֶם) are sightless and ignorant and unable to vindicate their gods (v. 9). Therefore, he summons the people of Israel as his “witnesses” (עֲדִי) to testify that he alone is God, a realization that should assuage their fear (v. 8). YHWH is the only being who exercises dominion in the divine realm, and he is Israel’s redeemer (v. 6).⁷⁴

In v. 21a YHWH urges Israel to “remember these things,” that is, to call to mind the futility of idolatry illustrated by the ridicule of the idol-makers and their impotent gods in vv. 9–20.⁷⁵ The stated reason for this exhortation is that Israel is YHWH’s servant. Presumably, “remember[ing] these things” will prompt Israel to fulfill his role as servant by acting as a witness to YHWH’s sovereignty over against the powerless idols.⁷⁶

A second identification of Israel as servant comes after YHWH’s declaration that he has “formed” (יָצַר) Israel (v. 21b). Although that statement echoes v. 2, it takes on new meaning after the critique of those who “form” (יָצַר) idols (vv. 9–10, 12). Creating an idol gives people a claim over it so that they may demand, “Deliver me, for you are my god” (כִּי אֱלֹהִי אַתָּה, v. 17b). Because it is merely the creation of human hands, however, the idol has no power to save. By contrast, YHWH has demonstrated his power by creating Israel, which also gives him a claim over the nation, allowing

74. See Smith, *Isaiah* 40–66, 227.

75. Koole, *Isaiah* 40–48, 403–4.

76. See also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 237; Adams, *Performative Nature*, 101.

him to command, “Remember . . . for you are my servant” (כי עבדי־אתה) v. 21a).⁷⁷ Nevertheless, his creation has some claim on him as well. YHWH has bound himself to Israel and so will not forget his servant (v. 21b). He has removed the nation’s “sins” (v. 22a; cf. 43:25) and now calls Israel to “return” to him (v. 22b), that is, to accept his status as YHWH’s servant and follow his divine master.⁷⁸

The passage rises to a climax in 44:24–45:8 with its strongest affirmation of YHWH’s sovereignty:

כה־אמר יהוה גאלך ויצרך מבטן אנכי יהוה עשה כל ... מקים דבר עבדו ועצת מלאכיו ישלים האמר לירושלם תושב ולערי יהודה תבנינה וחרבותיה אקום ... האמר לכורש רעי וכל־חפצי ישלם ולאמר לירושלם תבנה והיכל תוסד כה־אמר יהוה למשיחו לכורש אשר־החזקתי בימינו לרד־לפניו גוים ... למען עבדי יעקב וישראל בחירי ואקרא לך בשמך אכנך ולא ידעתני	44:24a 26 28 45:1a 4	Thus says YHWH, your Redeemer and the one who formed you from the womb, “I am YHWH who made everything, ... who establishes the word of his servant* and fulfills the counsel of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, ‘She will be inhabited,’ and of the cities of Judah, ‘they will be rebuilt,’ and I will raise up her ruins,’ ... who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he will fulfill all my desire,’ and saying of Jerusalem, ‘She will be rebuilt,’ and [to] the temple, ‘Your foundation will be laid.’” Thus says YHWH to his anointed, to Cyrus, whom I have taken hold by his right hand to subdue nations before him ... “For the sake of my servant Jacob and Israel, my chosen one, I call you by your name. I name you, though you do not know me.”
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* LXX^a and the Tg. have a pl. form (so also Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 152), which is probably a harmonization to מלאכיו (“messengers”). Other LXX MSS, 1QIsa^a, the Vg., and Syr. all support the MT.

Most interpreters understand the servant in 44:26 as signifying either an individual prophet⁷⁹ or, if the plural rendering is followed, Israel’s prophets as a whole.⁸⁰ This interpretation is suggested by the reference to the

77. On the contrast between the idol-makers and Israel’s maker, see further Koole, *Isaiah* 40–48, 404.

78. *Ibid.*, 406.

79. Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 184; Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 194; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 246–47.

80. Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 157; see also Harry M. Orlinsky, “The So-Called ‘Servant of the Lord’ and ‘Suffering Servant’ in Second Isaiah,” in *Studies on the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah* (ed. Harry M. Orlinsky and Norman H. Snaith; VTSup 14; Leiden: Brill, 1977) 94–95; Mettinger, *Farewell*, 30; Watts, “Consolation or Confrontation?” 50, who ac-

servant's "word," the immediate parallel with YHWH's "messengers," and the contrast with the "liars" and "diviners" (that is, false prophets), whose messages YHWH frustrates in v. 25. It is more likely, however, that עבד here signifies Israel, as it does in each of its other five instances within this rhetorical unit (44:1, 2, 21 [2×]; 45:4). The parallel between "his servant" (עבדו) and "his messengers" (מלאכיו) recalls 42:19, where the same Hebrew words are used to describe Israel as YHWH's blind servant and deaf messenger.⁸¹

Moreover, the pairing of the singular "servant" with the plural "messengers" resembles 43:10, in which YHWH calls the people "my servant" (עבדי) and "my witnesses" (עדי). Indeed, earlier in this unit YHWH designated Israel as "witnesses" (עדי) to his ability to proclaim the future (44:7–8). Now in 44:26b–45:7 YHWH validates his claim to sovereignty by declaring what is to come, announcing that he will raise up Cyrus and restore Jerusalem. The structure of the passage suggests that these pronouncements should be identified with "the words of his servant" and "counsel of his messengers" that YHWH promises to bring about in 44:26a. Therefore, when YHWH fulfills these "words," his servant-messengers who declared them beforehand will be witnesses to his supremacy, thereby fulfilling the role given to Israel in 44:7–8.⁸² Thus, 44:26a designates not an individual prophet or Israel's prophets in toto but the nation itself in its servant role, which has a prophetic dimension. Against this background, the "liars" and "diviners" in v. 25 may refer to the witnesses of the other gods (v. 9), whose testimony YHWH brings to naught.

In 45:1–7, YHWH directs his attention to Cyrus, though clearly speaking for Israel's benefit.⁸³ He declares that even though Cyrus does not know him (v. 4b), he is paving the way for the Persian king's rise to dominance (vv. 1–3) for the sake of Israel, whom he again calls his "servant" and "chosen one" (בחיר, v. 4a). Thus, his patronage of Cyrus is part of the protection and assistance Israel receives from his divine master.

One of the rhetorical aims of this passage seems to be to reestablish the proper order in YHWH's relationship with Israel in response to the people's attempt to enslave YHWH (43:22–24) and reaffirm YHWH's choice of Israel

cept either option. Ambrogio Spreafico, by contrast, sees a parallel between vv. 26 and 28 and takes the servant as Cyrus ("Jesaja xlv 26aa: 'abdô oder 'ăbādāyww? Ein Prophet oder ein Politiker?" VT 45 [1995] 561–65).

81. מלאך appears only in these two verses in chaps. 40–55.

82. For similar arguments that the servant in v. 26 is Israel, see Eugène Lapointe, "Le serviteur de Yahvé du Deutéro-Isaïe: Essai d'identification," *ScEs* 62 (2010) 71–73; Curt Lindhagen, *The Servant Motif in the Old Testament: A Preliminary Study to the Ebed-Yahweh Problem in Deutero-Isaiah* (Uppsala: Lundequistaskas Bokhandeln, 1950) 225; also Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40–66," 5:518. Ulrich Berges also connects this figure with the collective servant mentioned throughout chaps. 40–55 but identifies him more specifically with those responsible for writing these chapters ("Farewell to Deutero-Isaiah or Prophecy without a Prophet," in *Congress Volume: Ljubljana 2007* [VTSup 133; Leiden: Brill, 2010] 593–94).

83. Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 200; Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 216.

as his servant, which entails both responsibilities and privileges for the nation.⁸⁴ If the text responds particularly to the charge that YHWH has destroyed Israel for no reason, then YHWH vindicates himself by pointing to Israel's sins as the reason for the exile (43:22–28),⁸⁵ as well as highlighting his sovereign authority over the nation (44:6–45:8). Moreover, the passage also brings the theme of YHWH's contest with the idols to a new height, demonstrating his superiority through his ability to tell what is to come.

The servant metaphor runs through each of the unit's subsections, binding them together. After the initial charge that Israel has sought to enslave YHWH (43:24), YHWH's repeated references to Israel as his servant (44:1, 2, 21 [2×], 26; 45:4) put him back in his place. However, they also reassure Israel that he has not forfeited the privileges of YHWH's help (44:2; cf. 45:4) and blessing (44:3), which accompany his servant status. Moreover, the text indicates that YHWH has not given up on his plan of employing servant Israel to accomplish his purposes, particularly in calling the nation to act as his "witnesses" (43:10; cf. 44:26). Although 44:3–5 indicates that at least some of Israel's descendants will respond to YHWH's call to repent and embrace their servant status, the implied audience is given a choice: will they "return" to YHWH (44:22) and accomplish the servant's mission, or will they persist in rebellion?⁸⁶

Isaiah 48:20

The question left open by 43:22–45:8 receives an answer in chap. 48, which forms a single rhetorical unit and brings many of the themes in the previous eight chapters to a climax.⁸⁷ Already chap. 46 hinted that Israel remains unmoved by YHWH's call for repentance, describing the people as "rebels" (פושעים, v. 8), though still urging them to "hear" (שמעו, vv. 3, 12). Now chap. 48 confirms that verdict. Israel has "not heard" (לא-שמעת) YHWH, thus proving that he deserves the title "rebel" (פשע, v. 8). This persistent deafness, particularly with regard to YHWH's plan to use Cyrus as his agent (vv. 14–15), provides the passage's rhetorical situation:⁸⁸

מִדַּעַתִּי כִּי קָשָׁה אֶתָּה	4	Because I knew you were stubborn
וְגִיד בְּרֹזֶל עֶרְפֶּךָ		and your neck was an iron sinew
וּמִצַּחֲךָ נְחוּשָׁה		and your forehead bronze,
וְאָגִיד לְךָ מָאֻז	5	I declared to you long ago.
בְּטֶרֶם תִּבְּרֹא הַשְׁמָעֶתִיךָ		Before it came to pass, I proclaimed [it] to you,
פֶּן־תֹּאמַר עֲצָבִי עָשָׂם		lest you should say, "My idol did them,
וּפְסָלִי וְנֹסְכִי		and my hewn image and my molten image
צִוּם		commanded them."

84. This passage contains an unusually high concentration of references to YHWH's servant, with the nominal form of עֶבֶד appearing six times.

85. See Goldingay, "Isaiah 43,22–28," 174.

86. Cajot, "Second Isaiah's Servant," 208.

87. Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 215–18; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:115.

88. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 293.

שמעת חזה כלה	6	You have heard; perceive all this.
ואתם הלוא תגידו		And you, will you not declare [it]?
השמעתין חדשות מנחה		I proclaim new things to you from now on
ונצרות ולא ידעתם		and hidden things that you have not known.
...		...
גם לא-שמעת גם לא ידעת	8	You have neither heard, nor have you known,
גם מאז לא-פתחה אזןך		nor has your ear opened from long ago.
כי ידעתי בגוד תבגוד		For I knew you would deal faithlessly,
ופשע מבטן קרא לך		and you were called a rebel from the womb.
...		...
צאו מבבל ברחו מכשדים	20	Go out from Babylon; flee from the Babylonians.
בקול רנה הגידו השמיעו זאת		With a shout of joy declare [this]; proclaim it.
הוציאוה עד-קצה הארץ		Send it out to the end of the earth.
אמרו גאל יהוה עבדו יעקב		Say, "YHWH has redeemed his servant Jacob."

The passage begins with yet another exhortation that the people would "hear" (שמעו, v. 1; cf. 42:18, 44:1), but now the fourfold repetition of the command (see vv. 12, 14, 16) conveys a heightened insistence. Knowing Israel's recalcitrant nature, YHWH announced coming events long in advance so the nation would recognize that they were brought about by YHWH (vv. 4–5). However, even though Israel heard YHWH's proclamations, he failed to perceive or acknowledge them. Although the keyword "witness" does not appear here, v. 6 conveys the expectation that Israel would act in that capacity, questioning accusingly, "and you, will you not declare [it]?"⁸⁹ The people have still not accepted the servant's mantle and begun to testify to YHWH's sovereignty;⁹⁰ therefore, they are not living up to Israel's true identity (v. 1).⁹¹

Nevertheless, YHWH's purposes will not be so easily thwarted. He reaffirms his choice of Cyrus, though not by name (vv. 14–15),⁹² and abruptly introduces a new agent, who speaks in the first person (v. 16b). Echoing previous servant songs, this individual is "sent" (שלח) by YHWH (see 42:19) and accompanied by YHWH's "Spirit" (רוח, see 42:1; cf. 44:3).⁹³ Nothing else is said about this person, though he should probably be understood as the bearer of YHWH's words of grief at Israel's rebellion in vv. 17–19.⁹⁴ Despite the people's history of intransigence, YHWH again calls them to action, exhorting them to flee their exilic prison (v. 20a). Once they have experienced the promised deliverance, they will again be entrusted with the task of testifying to YHWH's power by declaring, "YHWH has redeemed his servant Jacob" (v. 20b). The chapter closes, however, with a harsh warn-

89. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:128; Childs, *Isaiah*, 374–75.

90. See also Cajot, "Second Isaiah's Servant," 208–10.

91. See Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation?" 35.

92. Gitay, *Prophecy and Persuasion*, 219; Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40–66," 5:559–60.

93. On this connection, see Berges, "Farewell to Deutero-Isaiah," 594; Lessing, "Isaiah's Servants," 132.

94. Childs, *Isaiah*, 378; Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 329.

ing implying that YHWH's redemption comes only to those who heed his words (v. 22).⁹⁵

The passage rebukes Israel for persisting in his deafness and consequent muteness regarding YHWH's sovereign control of the world (vv. 3–8) and aims to persuade him to listen and act by embracing his liberation from Babylon and proclaiming it to the entire world (vv. 14–16, 20). The reference to Israel as servant appears in the nation's message of deliverance and thus suggests his responsibility to carry out his master's will by testifying to YHWH's superior power. It also reveals, however, the benefit of redemption Israel receives as YHWH's servant. The introduction of the anonymous speaker endowed with YHWH's Spirit in v. 16b raises questions about the role he will play in YHWH's drama. For now, however, the servant's task is still entrusted to Israel, and the tension between Israel's responsibility and his rebelliousness remains unresolved.⁹⁶

Summary

In the midst of the people's exilic hopelessness, Isaiah 40–48 repeatedly employs the servant metaphor to bring encouragement, highlighting YHWH's enduring commitment toward his servant Israel as well as his responsibility to protect him (41:8–9; 44:1–2, 21; 45:4).⁹⁷ Were that the only aim, however, another metaphor would better suit the purpose, since the primary associated commonplace of this image is the servant's duty to do his master's bidding. Thus, the opening reassurance to YHWH's servant in 41:8–9 is quickly followed by the assignment of a mission—to “bring forth justice to the nations” (42:1). North contends that the figure in chap. 42 cannot refer to Israel because “*the Servant of the Songs has an active mission; [whereas] the Servant Israel outside the Songs is the passive recipient of salvation.*”⁹⁸ Later passages, however, give servant Israel the “active mission” of witnessing to YHWH's sovereign power over against the impotent and worthless idols (44:8; cf. v. 26; 43:10, 12), which bears striking similarity to the servant's role in 42:6 to be “a light for the nations.”⁹⁹

Sadly, Israel's persistent blindness and exilic powerlessness render him unfit to fulfill that role (42:18–22). Nevertheless, YHWH's purpose is unbending, and he calls Israel to overcome the impediment of his blindness by testifying to himself concerning YHWH's sovereignty (43:9–10). Moreover, YHWH resolves the problem of Israel's exilic imprisonment by raising up

95. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 296.

96. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:116.

97. Routledge, “Narrative Substructure,” 189.

98. Christopher R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah: An Historical and Critical Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948) 206, emphasis his; also Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 71; Robert R. Ellis, “The Remarkable Suffering Servant of Isaiah 40–55,” *SwJT* 34 (1991) 26; Watts, “Consolation or Confrontation?” 50–51; S. L. Stassen, “The Plot in Isaiah 40–55,” *AcT* 17 (1997) 134.

99. Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 152; Melugin, “Servant,” 27.

Cyrus to restore him. By announcing his plans for Cyrus in advance, YHWH provides Israel with new evidence of his might to which the nation may bear witness (44:24–45:7). Unfortunately, Israel proves himself unfailingly stubborn and rebellious (48:4, 6), but YHWH persists in calling the nation to act as his servant (48:20).¹⁰⁰

An Unnamed Representative of Israel as YHWH's Servant

The servant theme reaches a turning point in chap. 49, where an individual figure begins to emerge from the collective servant Israel. Chapters 49–53 present an ever-clearer portrait of this servant, describing his mission to restore the recalcitrant nation.

Textual Analyses

Isaiah 49:3, 5, 6

For the first time in the latter half of Isaiah, 49:1–13 presents a servant figure who cannot easily be reconciled with the book's portrait of collective Israel, whether real or ideal. These verses present a distinct rhetorical unit, which functions as a bridge between chaps. 40–48 and 49–55.¹⁰¹ All that is clear regarding its rhetorical situation is that there is still a breach between YHWH and Israel (v. 5b), and the servant is discouraged because his efforts have been unproductive (v. 4a). The passage begins with the servant's speech, directed toward distant nations:

שמעו איים אלי	1	Listen, O islands, to me,
והקשיבו לאמים מרחוק		and pay attention, O peoples from afar.
יהוה מבטן קראני		YHWH has called me from the womb;
ממעיו אמי הזכיר שמי		from the belly of my mother he mentioned my name.
ויעש פי כחרב חדה	2	And he made my mouth like a sharp sword;
בצל ידו החביאני		in the shadow of his hand he hid me.
וישימני לחץ ברור		And he made me as a polished arrow;
באשפתו הסתירני		in his quiver he concealed me.
ויאמר לי עבדי־אתה	3	And he said to me, "You are my servant,
ישראל אשר־בך אתפאר		Israel, in whom I will display my glory."
ואני אמרתי לריק יגעתי	4	But I said, "In vain have I exerted myself;
לתהו והבל כחי כליתי		for nothing and vanity have I exhausted my strength.
אכן משפט־י את־יהוה		Nevertheless, my cause is with YHWH,
ופעלתי את־אלהי		and my reward is with my God."
ועתה אמר יהוה	5	And now says YHWH,
יצרי מבטן לעבד לו		who formed me from the womb to be his servant
לשובב יעקב אליו		to bring Jacob back to him
וישראל לו יאסף		and that Israel might be gathered to him*—
ואכבד בעיני יהוה		for I am honored in the eyes of YHWH,
ואלהי היה עזי		and my God has been my strength—

100. Koole, *Isaiah 40–48*, 602; contra Smillie, "Isaiah 42," 64.

101. Cajot, "Second Isaiah's Servant," 203; Jeppesen, "From 'You, My Servant,'" 122; similarly Mettinger, *Farewell*, 23–25.

וַיֹּאמֶר נָקֹל	6	he says, "It is too light a thing
מִהֵיוֹתָךְ לִי עֶבֶד		for you to be my servant
לְהָקִים אֶת־שִׁבְטֵי יַעֲקֹב		to raise up the tribes of Jacob
וּנְצוּרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַשִּׁיב		and to return the preserved of Israel.
וְנִתְּחִיד לְאוֹר גּוֹיִם		I will give you as a light for the nations
לְהִיְוֹת יְשׁוּעָתִי עַד־קֶצֶה הָאָרֶץ		to be my salvation to the end of the earth."
כֹּה אָמַר־יְהוָה	7	Thus says YHWH,
גֹּאֲלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל קְדוֹשׁ		the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One
לְבוֹזֵה־נֶפֶשׁ		to one despised [†] of soul,
לְמִתְעַב גּוֹי		to one abhorred [‡] by a nation,
לְעֶבֶד מְשָׁלִים		to a servant of rulers,
מְלָכִים יִרְאוּ וְקָמוּ		"Kings will see and arise;
שָׂרִים וְיִשְׁתַּחֲווּ		princes, and they will bow down,
לְמַעַן יִהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר נֶאֱמַן		because of YHWH who is faithful—
קִדְשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְחָרְךָ		the Holy One of Israel—and [who] has chosen you."
כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה	8	Thus says YHWH,
בְּעֵת רִצּוֹן עֲנִיתִיךָ		"In a time of favor I have answered you,
וּבְיוֹם יְשׁוּעָה עֲזַרְתִּיךָ		and in a day of salvation I have helped you.
וְאֶצְרֶךָ		And I will keep you, [#]
וְאֶתְּנֶךָ לְבְרִית עִם		and I will give you as a covenant for the people
לְהָקִים אֶרֶץ		to establish the land,
לְהַנְחִיל נַחֲלוֹת שְׁמֹמוֹת		to apportion the desolate heritages,
לְאָמֹר לַאֲסוּרִים צֹא	9a	saying to the prisoners, 'Go out,'
לְאֶשֶׁר בַּחֹשֶׁךְ הִגְלוּ		to those in darkness, 'Appear.'"

* לוּ ("to him") is the *Qere*, which is supported by 1QIsa^a and the LXX (cf. the Tg.) and followed by the English translations. The *Kethiv* is לא ("not").

† Cf. 1QIsa^a, 4QIsa^d, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotian, Syr. (also the pl. form in the Tg.), as well as the English translations. The inf. const. in the MT ("to despise") makes little sense in context (cf. the LXX).

‡ Cf. the LXX (also the Vg.), followed by the English translations. The MT has an active ptc. ("one who abhors"), which again does not fit the context.

As in 42:6 (see p. 138 n. *), the JPSV understands אֶצְרֶךָ as a form of יָצַר ("to form"), but most English translations read the root as נָצַר ("to keep").

Although the first-person address by the servant is unprecedented, at first the passage appears to present a straightforward continuation of the drama of servant Israel.¹⁰² Some scholars argue that references to the servant's "mouth" and "the belly of [his] mother" (vv. 1–2) necessitate an individual servant figure,¹⁰³ but this sort of personification is not unique within the book (see, e.g., 1:5–6). Moreover, the servant is explicitly identified as Israel in v. 3, and he echoes previous servant passages by affirming that YHWH has "called" him (קָרָא, v. 1b; cf. 41:9, 42:6), has "formed [him] from the womb" (יָצַר מִבֶּטֶן, v. 5a; cf. 44:2, 24), and will "display [his] glory" in him (Hithpael of פָּאֵר, v. 3; cf. 44:23).¹⁰⁴

102. See also Jeppesen, "From 'You, My Servant,'" 122–23.

103. Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 209; Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 136; F. Duane Lindsey, "Isaiah's Songs of the Servant, Part 2: The Commission of the Servant in Isaiah 49:1–13," *BSac* 139 (1982) 134; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 289.

104. יָצַר מִבֶּטֶן appears only in these verses in Isaiah, and the Hithpael of פָּאֵר appears nowhere else in chaps. 40–55.

Whereas in chaps. 40–48, Israel is repeatedly enjoined to “hear” (שמע, 42:18; 44:1; 46:3; 46:12; 48:1, 12, 14, 16), now YHWH’s servant directs that exhortation to foreign peoples, specifically addressing the “islands” (איים, v. 1), who eagerly awaited the “instruction” of the servant in 42:4. Furthermore, while Israel earlier complained, “My cause (משפטי) is overlooked by my God” (40:27), the servant now expresses his trust in the midst of discouragement by declaring, “My cause (משפטי) is with YHWH and my reward is with my God” (v. 4b).¹⁰⁵ Thus, vv. 1–5a seem to demonstrate that servant Israel has finally overcome his blindness and embraced the role YHWH has given him as “a light for the nations” (42:6).

In v. 5b, however, the servant announces that the primary task YHWH has appointed him is “to bring Jacob back” (Polel שׁוּב) to YHWH, presumably because servant Jacob has failed to heed YHWH’s call to “return” (Qal שׁוּב, 44:22).¹⁰⁶ This statement raises the obvious question, how can the servant be Israel if he is given a mission to Israel?¹⁰⁷ This tension has prompted some scholars to take יִשְׂרָאֵל in v. 3 as a gloss, noting that (1) it is absent in the medieval manuscript Kennicott 96 and in 4QIsa^d and (2) the LXX reading of 42:1 contains a similar gloss.¹⁰⁸ However, the character of Kennicott 96 has been called into question,¹⁰⁹ and the versions and 1QIsa^a support the word’s inclusion, leading most scholars to accept it as original.¹¹⁰

105. Muilenburg, “Isaiah 40–66,” 5:568; Mettinger, *Farewell*, 32; Melugin, “Servant,” 25.

106. This verbal connection is noted by Laato, *Servant of YHWH*, 104, though given a different interpretation.

107. Lapointe sees the conflict as more apparent than real, offering as an analogy the Church, which he contends has, “en meme temps, une mission à l’égard du monde et d’elle-même” (“Le serviteur de Yahvé,” 82). However, the language of v. 5 resists such an explanation. A group within Israel could be responsible to return the nation as a whole back to YHWH, but it would be strange to use the Polel שׁוּב with a reflexive meaning. A few scholars resolve the difficulty by arguing that YHWH is the subject of the infinitives in vv. 5–6 (Lohfink, “‘Israel’ in Jes 49,3,” 222–26; Muilenburg, “Isaiah 40–66,” 5:410; Patricia Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997] 182 n. 6). That understanding could explain v. 5, where YHWH is the subject of the previous ptc. יָצַר, but not v. 6 (see Trygve N. D. Mettinger, “In Search of the Hidden Structure: YHWH as King in Isaiah 40–55,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* [ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; 2 vols.; VTSup 70; Leiden: Brill, 1997] 1:153, countering his earlier position in idem, *Farewell*, 35–37).

108. See Harry M. Orlinsky, “‘Israel’ in Isa. XLIX, 3: A Problem in Methodology of Textual Criticism,” in *E. L. Sukenik Memorial Volume, 1889–1953* (ed. Nahman Avigad; EIAHG 8; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1967) 42–45; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 297–98; Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 209; Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 137–38. Other arguments offered in support of the omission are less convincing (see the critique by Wilcox and Paton-Williams, “Servant Songs,” 90–91).

109. A. Gelston, “Isaiah 52:13–53:12: An Eclectic Text and a Supplementary Note on the Hebrew Manuscript Kennicott 96,” *JSS* 35 (1990) 204–10.

110. See e.g., Harold Henry Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord: And Other Essays on the Old Testament* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1965) 8–9; Lohfink, “‘Israel’ in Jes 49,3”; Lindsey, “Isaiah’s Songs of the Servant: Commission,” 133–34; Mettinger, *Farewell*, 32; Wilcox

One solution to the problem is to take **ישראל** in v. 3 not as a vocative (“You are my servant, O Israel”) but as appositional (“You are my servant, that is, Israel”) or as a parallel predicate (“You are my servant, you are [now] Israel”). Following this approach, Wilcox and Paton-Williams understand this statement to designate the prophet himself as “the true Israel.”¹¹¹ They observe that Jacob/Israel disappears from the scene after 49:6 and remains hidden through chap. 55 as the focus shifts to this anonymous individual servant and Lady Zion.¹¹²

Moreover, this servant’s commission and the attention to his “mouth” (v. 2) both fit the prophetic profile,¹¹³ and the first-person address recalls the speech of the enigmatic figure sent by YHWH in 48:16b.¹¹⁴ Therefore, Wilcox and Paton-Williams contend that, since the prophet’s preaching has not succeeded in persuading Israel to fulfill his calling as servant (see v. 4a), YHWH now gives that calling to the prophet himself, reiterating 42:6: “I will give you as a light for the nations” (**ונתתיך לאור גוים**, 49:6).¹¹⁵

Indeed, vv. 8–9 contain several additional echoes of 42:6–7:¹¹⁶

Isaiah 42:6–7	Isaiah 49:8–9
“and I will keep you” (ואצרך)	
“and I will give you as a covenant for the people” (ואתנן לברית עם)	
“to bring out prisoners (אסיר) from the dungeon”	“saying to the prisoners (לאסורים), ‘Go out’”
“[to bring out] from prison those who sit in darkness” (חשך)	“[saying] to those in darkness (בחשך), ‘Appear’”

and Paton-Williams, “Servant Songs,” 90–91; Williamson, *Variations on a Theme*, 150–51; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 285; Seitz, “You Are My Servant,” 128; Adams, *Performative Nature*, 142–43.

111. Wilcox and Paton-Williams, “Servant Songs,” 93; also Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:159–60; Williamson, *Variations on a Theme*, 150–51, 160; Poulsen, *God, His Servant, and the Nations*, 217; similarly Cajot, “Second Isaiah’s Servant,” 212. North contends that **אשר-בך אתפאר** functions to limit **ישראל**, that is, identifying this servant not with Israel as a whole but with the Israel “by whom I will get myself glory” (*Suffering Servant*, 145; similarly Henri Blocher, *Songs of the Servant* [London: InterVarsity, 1975] 39; Tharekadavil, *Servant of Yahweh*, 123), but 44:23 also affirms that YHWH “will be glorified in Israel” (**ובישראל יתפאר**) without any qualification.

112. Wilcox and Paton-Williams, “Servant Songs,” 82.

113. *Ibid.*, 91–92; Melugin, “Servant,” 30.

114. Childs, *Isaiah*, 377–78; Koole, *Isaiah 40–48*, 598; Seitz, “You Are My Servant,” 125; Berges, “Farewell to Deutero-Isaiah,” 594.

115. Wilcox and Paton-Williams, “Servant Songs,” 91–92; see also Williamson, *Variations on a Theme*, 150; similarly Cajot, “Second Isaiah’s Servant,” 213.

116. Note also that the reference to YHWH’s “help” (**עזר**, v. 8) recalls earlier servant passages (41:10, 13, 14; 44:2). Moreover, just as servant Jacob was exhorted to proclaim the news of his deliverance “to the end of the earth” (**עד־קצה הארץ**, 48:20), now this servant is called to “be [YHWH’s] salvation to the end of the earth” (**עד־קצה הארץ**, 49:6; Koole, *Isaiah 40–48*, 602), using a phrase found only in these two verses in Isaiah.

But despite the obvious intention to describe this servant's role in the terms provided by 42:6–7, 49:8–9 also reinterprets them for a new situation. I argued previously that the “covenant for the people” (עם) in 42:6 has a universal reference like its parallel, “light for the nations” (גוים).¹¹⁷ Here, the two phrases have been separated (vv. 6, 8), and the reason the servant is called to be “a covenant for the people” (עם) is to “establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages,” which suggests that עם (“people”) now refers to Israel. In both passages, freeing “the prisoners” and those trapped “in darkness” constitutes part of the servant's task to be “a covenant for the people.” Thus, while 42:7 implies that these downtrodden people include the nations, 49:9 narrows the focus to rescuing imprisoned Israelites.¹¹⁸ By recontextualizing terms from 42:6–7, the passage models the servant's mission to Israel on the role servant Israel was supposed to fulfill for the surrounding nations.¹¹⁹

If the point of the passage is to reassign the servant's calling from Israel to an individual figure, then why does it give so much attention to this individual's continuing mission to Israel? In my view, this passage reaffirms that the servant role belongs to Israel (v. 3) but raises the question, who is Israel? At the moment, the true Israel may have been reduced to a single individual,¹²⁰ but the passage leaves open the possibility that this servant's

117. See p. 140.

118. In light of these verses, Knud Jeppesen sees the servant as having “taken over the role of Cyrus” (“Mother Zion, Father Servant: A Reading of Isaiah 49–55,” in *Of Prophets' Visions and the Wisdom of Sages* [ed. Heather A. McKay and David J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 162; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993] 111). Although their tasks overlap, the servant's calling to rescue those in darkness (v. 9) also suggests spiritual renewal (cf. v. 5), particularly in light of the blindness theme (see also Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 354).

119. See also Wilcox and Paton-Williams, “Servant Songs,” 99, though not specifically addressing these verses. The differences between 42:6 and 49:8 are also observed by Kim, *Ambiguity*, 90–93, who explains them by means of universalistic and particularistic redactional layers, and Ferry, *Isaïe*, 197–200, who merely notes the continuity between the two missions.

120. See also Watts, “Consolation or Confrontation?” 55. Alternatively, this servant could personify a remnant of faithful Israelites (Cajot, “Second Isaiah's Servant,” 212; Berges, “Literary Construction,” 35–36; Marjo C. A. Korpel, “The Female Servant of the LORD in Isaiah 54,” in *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes* [ed. Bob Becking and Meindert Dijkstra; BIS 18; Leiden: Brill, 1996] 166–67; similarly Uta Schmidt, “Servant and Zion: Two Kinds of Future in Isaiah 49,” in *My Spirit at Rest in the North Country [Zechariah 6.8]* [ed. Hermann Michael Niemann and Matthias Augustin; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2011] 89). A collective interpretation is implied by the LXX, which speaks of the servant as both “gather[ing]” and “be[ing] gathered” (both forms of συναγω, v. 5; see further Arie van der Kooij, “The Servant of the Lord: A Particular Group of Jews in Egypt According to the Old Greek of Isaiah. Some Comments on LXX Isa 49,1–6 and Related Passages,” in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah* [ed. J. Van Ruiten and M. Vervenne; BETL 132; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997] 387–88). However, the servant's role is directed toward a remnant in v. 6 (“the preserved of Israel”); thus the servant cannot personify that same remnant (Blocher, *Songs of the Servant*, 39; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:166). Moreover, as we will see, the

persistence in pursuing rebellious Israelites may result in an expansion of the faithful remnant.¹²¹ Concerning the identity of this individual figure, Rikki Watts observes the striking contrast between the “enigmatic hints” offered in that direction and the explicit naming of Cyrus as the one who will restore Jerusalem.¹²² The text seems intentionally vague on the servant’s identity, exhibiting a far greater interest in his role.¹²³

Building on the servant’s task to be “a light for the nations,” YHWH commissions his servant to embody his “salvation” (יְשׁוּעָה) to the world (49:6), that is, to demonstrate his liberating power, perhaps by promulgating justice and releasing captives as in 42:1–9. Currently, however, YHWH’s agent is “a servant (עֶבֶד) of rulers” and is “abhorred by nations” (v. 7a). This sole instance of the noun עֶבֶד in chaps. 40–66 to designate a servant of someone other than YHWH emphasizes his lowly state. Created to serve YHWH alone, he has been forced into subservience to foreign rulers. Nevertheless, YHWH “has chosen” (בָּחַר) this servant and will be “faithful” to him (v. 7c). He has long prepared his servant to be a powerful weapon (vv. 2, 5) so that his words will penetrate the hearts of his audience, prompting world leaders to humble themselves before him (v. 7b).

Although the servant’s words in v. 1 are ostensibly directed toward the foreign nations, the implied audience of the passage as it stands in the book is the people of Israel.¹²⁴ The text may implicitly aim to enact YHWH’s judgment that the nation as a whole no longer constitutes the true Israel because of the people’s refusal to return to YHWH. However, it also reaffirms YHWH’s calling on servant Israel, though now reduced to a remnant of one, and seeks to reassure the people that YHWH intends to bring about their restoration through the work of this servant. The servant metaphor emphasizes this figure’s responsibility to carry out his master’s will and functions as a litmus test. Only those who obey YHWH’s charge to be “a light for the nations” can legitimately be identified as his servant Israel, and for now, only the speaker passes the test. Therefore, he serves as a model for the

servant’s portrait becomes increasingly individualistic in subsequent texts and more difficult to reconcile with any historical group of Israelites.

121. See also Childs, *Isaiah*, 385; cf. 387; Seitz, “You Are My Servant,” 129; similarly Harold Henry Rowley, “The Servant Mission: The Servant Songs and Evangelism,” *Int* 8 (1954) 265–68; Routledge, “Narrative Substructure,” 199–201, 204.

It also seems likely that ancient Israel did not draw such a sharp distinction between the individual and the collective as modern readers do (see Arvid S. Kapelrud, “Second Isaiah and the Suffering Servant,” in *Hommages à André Dupont-Sommer* [Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1971] 301; John G. F. Wilks, “The Suffering Servant and Personhood,” *EvQ* 77 [2005] 206–10; as well as the classic, though widely critiqued, presentation by H. Wheeler Robinson, *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980] 39–42).

122. Watts, “Consolation or Confrontation?” 55.

123. See also Williamson, *Variations on a Theme*, 155; Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 110.

124. See also Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 341.

people.¹²⁵ The passage also portrays the servant's confidence that his divine master will uphold his cause and give him his due reward (v. 4b), thus highlighting the master's duty to protect his servant.

Isaiah 50:10

The curtain again opens on the servant in 50:4–11 in a scene that heightens both the individualistic aspects of his portrayal and the contrast between him and the people of Israel. These verses may be taken as part of a larger rhetorical unit including also 51:1–8, which contains several terms and ideas associated with the servant theme and shares a couple unusual images with 50:4–11.¹²⁶ The rhetorical situation involves the suffering of the obedient servant (50:6–9) and the emergence of a group of people “who seek YHWH” (51:1a) but are discouraged (vv. 1b–3) and fear disgrace (v. 7), likely at the hands of their political oppressors. Like 49:1–13, the passage begins with the first-person address of the servant:

4	אדני יהוה נתן לי לשון למורים	The Lord YHWH has given me a tongue of those who are taught
	לדעת לעות את־יעף דבר	to know how to sustain* the weary with a word.
	יעיר בבקר בבקר	He awakens morning by morning—
	יעיר לי און לשמע כלמורים	he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.
5	אדני יהוה פתח־לי און ואנכי לא מריתי אחור לא נסוגתי	The Lord YHWH has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I did not turn back.
6	גוי נתתי למכים ולחיי למרטים	I gave my back to those who strike and my cheeks to those who pull out [the beard].
	פני לא הסתרת מכלמות ורק	My face I did not hide from disgrace and spitting.
7	ואדני יהוה יעזר־לי על־כן לא נכלמותי	But the Lord YHWH helps me; therefore, I have not been disgraced.
	על־כן שמת פני כחלמיש	Therefore I have set my face like flint,
	ואדע כי־לא אבוש	And I know that I will not be put to shame.
8	קרוב מצדיקי מי־יריב אתי נעמדה יחד	The one who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand together.
	מי־בעל משפטי יגש אלי	Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me.

10	מי בכם ירא יהוה	Who among you fears YHWH

125. Tod Linafelt, “Speech and Silence in the Servant Passages: Towards a Final-Form Reading of the Book of Isaiah,” *Koinonia* 5 (1993) 184; G. P. Hugenberger, “The Servant of the Lord in the ‘Servant Songs’ of Isaiah: A Second Moses Figure,” in *The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* (ed. Philip E. Satterthwaite, Richard S. Hess, and Gordon J. Wenham; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995) 131.

126. Both 50:9 and 51:8 declare, “The moth will devour them” (עש + יאכלם, terms paired elsewhere only in Job 13:28), and the former verse shares with 51:6 a reference to “wear[ing] out like a garment” (כבד + בלה, elsewhere only in Job 13:28, Ps 102:27[26]). Moreover, the unit is flanked on both sides by passages featuring Lady Zion (49:14–50:3, 51:9–52:12). Although Williamson takes 51:1–8 as the introduction to a unit continuing into chap. 52, he sees these verses as “a conscious echo” of 50:4–9 (*Variations on a Theme*, 158–59). Similarly, Oswalt takes 50:4–9 and 50:10–51:8 as separate but closely related passages (*Isaiah* 40–66, 328).

שמע בקול עבדו	[and] hears the voice of his servant?
אשר הלך חשכים	Whoever walks in darkness
ואין נגה לו	and has no glimmer of light,
יבטח בשם יהוה	let him trust in the name of YHWH
ורשען באלהיו	and rely on his God. [†]

* The meaning of this hapax legomenon is uncertain, leading to a plethora of modern emendations. This rendering follows the sense of the Vg. (*sustenare*; see also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 317; Koole, *Isaiah* 49–55, 107; cf. the NRSV, ESV, NASB, NIV). The JPSV (“to speak timely words”) roughly follows the LXX.

† The NRSV takes all of v. 10 as part of the question introduced by the initial *מי* (cf. the Vg. and Tg.), and the NASB continues the question through v. 10b (“light”; see also Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 327). But the transition from perfect verbs in v. 10a–b to imperfect in v. 10c makes it unlikely that the verse is a single continuous sequence, and the disparity between v. 10a and 10b makes it more likely that the question is confined to v. 10a (Koole, *Isaiah* 49–55, 124–25; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah* 40–55, 2:216–17; cf. the NIV, JPSV, ESV; similarly the LXX, which ends the question after “fears the Lord” but also marks a transition between v. 10a and 10b with a switch to plural verb forms).

The servant has suffered physical harm and humiliation at the hands of either his compatriots or the Babylonian oppressors,¹²⁷ and he now sports a beaten back, plucked beard, and spit-covered face (50:6). Nevertheless, he trusts in YHWH’s “help” (עזר, vv. 7, 9; cf. 49:8; also 41:10, 13–14; 44:2) and ultimate vindication (vv. 7–9; cf. 49:4) despite his public disgrace. Indeed, he is so committed to persevering through the attacks of his enemies that he can even be portrayed as inviting them: “I *gave* my back to those who strike” (v. 6).

Moreover, in contrast to Zion’s children whose “rebellions” (פשע) led them into exile (50:1), this servant has not been “rebellious” (מרה, v. 5). And whereas Israel’s “ear has not opened (לא־פתחה אזן) from long ago” (48:8; cf. 42:20), “YHWH has opened [this servant’s] ear” (פתח־לי אזן, 50:5) so that he may “hear (לשמע) as those who are taught (כלמורים)” (v. 4b).¹²⁸ This hearing results in speaking with a well-instructed tongue for the benefit of the “weary” (יעף, v. 4a), which may designate the discouraged Israelites whom the servant is called to restore (49:5–6).¹²⁹

The servant’s speech is followed by an address to the people of Israel, calling them to “hear (שמע) the voice of [YHWH’s] servant.” It also challenges those who “walk in darkness,” perhaps because they are still blind (see 42:18–19, 43:8), to “trust in the name of YHWH” (v. 10b). Because

127. On the former, see Fredrick C. Holmgren, “The Servant: Responding to Violence (Isaiah 50:4–9),” *CurTM* 31 (2004) 353; on the latter, see Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah* 40–55, 407.

128. *כלמורים* may allude back to 8:16, the only prior use of *למור*, where it refers to the prophet’s disciples, the guardians of YHWH’s sealed *תורה* (Charles David Isbell, “The *Lim-mûdîm* in the Book of Isaiah,” *JSOT* 34 [2009] 99–109; Berges, “Literary Construction,” 33–34). See also 48:17–19, which laments that Israel has ignored YHWH, “who teaches (למד) [him] to profit” (Childs, *Isaiah*, 394).

129. Cf. the use of *יעף* in 40:29–31 (Holmgren, “Servant,” 352; Lapointe, “Le serviteur de Yahvé,” 78).

YHWH gives his servant as a “light” (49:6; cf. 42:6), heeding the servant’s words produces divine illumination that leads people into a path of dependence on YHWH.

Isaiah 51:1–8 suggests that some have already begun to respond to this challenge:

שמעו אלי רדפי צדק מבקשי יהוה	1a	Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, who seek YHWH,
...
הקשיבו אלי עמי ולאומי אלי האזינו	4	Pay attention to me, my people, and my nation, give ear to me.
כי תורה מאתי תצא ומשפטי		For instruction goes out from me, and my justice
לאור עמים ארגיע קרוב צדקי	5	I will cause to rest as a light for the peoples.* My vindication draws near;
יצא ישעני וזרעי עמים ישפטו		my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge† the peoples.
אלי איים יקוו ואל-זרעי ייחלון		The islands hope for me and wait for my arm.

* Alternatively, רגע in the Hiphil can mean “to do (something) suddenly” and could function adverbially here (so the LXX, which takes it with the subsequent verse, followed by the NIV, NRSV, JPSV; J. Kenneth Kuntz, “The Contribution of Rhetorical Criticism to Understanding Isaiah 51:1–16,” in *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature* [ed. David J. A. Clines et al.; JSOTSup 19; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982] 156). However, the reading suggested here, following the Vg. forms a better parallel with the prior line (see the NASB, ESV; also Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 149–50).

† In this context, יושפט most likely has a neutral or positive connotation of “rul[ing]” (NRSV) or “bring[ing] justice to” (NIV; see also Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 152), rather than the negative sense of “executing judgment against.”

Although the passage addresses the whole nation in v. 4, it speaks in particular to those who “seek YHWH” (v. 1), inviting them to “hear” (שמע) a message of salvation. YHWH is about to act in a powerful way, and his exploits echo earlier descriptions of the servant’s work. Most notably, he declares, “I will cause my justice (משפטי) to rest as a light for the peoples (לאור עמים)” (v. 4b; cf. 42:1, 6; 49:6). Moreover, he announces, “instruction (תורה) goes out from me” (v. 4b), and “The islands (איים) . . . wait for (יחל) my arm” (v. 5b; cf. 42:4), that is, for the exercise of his power that will bring all people under his rule.¹³⁰

Given these connections, “those who have [YHWH’s] instruction (תורה) in their heart” (51:7a; cf. v. 1a) and receive YHWH’s promises of restoration and vindication (vv. 3, 5–6) are undoubtedly those who have “hear[d] the voice of his servant” (50:10a).¹³¹ Readers who seek to identify with the I-voice in chap. 49 may be brought up short by the servant’s declaration of

130. יחל appears only in these two verses in Isaiah. On these parallels, see further Williamson, *Variations on a Theme*, 161–62.

131. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 328; Laato, *Servant of YHWH*, 125; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 334. Mettinger instead identifies them with the servant in 50:4–9 (*Farewell*, 33), but it makes more sense to connect them with the pl. addressees in 50:10.

innocence in chap. 50. This passage, however, offers them a new identity. It aims to persuade its audience to become followers of the servant by heeding his instruction (50:10) and embracing his example of trusting YHWH in the midst of oppression so that they too may become as “those who are taught” (50:4) and receive YHWH’s coming salvation (51:4–8).¹³²

The sole reference to YHWH’s “servant” in 50:10 identifies the speaker in vv. 4–9 with the figure in 49:1–13 and characterizes his receptivity to YHWH’s word and firm reliance on his divine master as the true marks of a servant. He expresses confidence that his master will faithfully discharge his responsibility to vindicate his servant in the face of opposition encountered in his employ. Unlike chap. 49, the servant says little here about his task, noting only his ability “to sustain the weary with a word” (50:4). His declaration that he has “set [his] face like flint” (v. 7b), however, suggests that he remains firmly committed to his previously appointed mission despite all opposition.¹³³

Moreover, by echoing earlier servant passages, 51:4–6 reaffirms YHWH’s resolve to bring that mission to fulfillment. Given its placement shortly after 50:4–11, the omission of any reference to the servant’s work in 51:4–6 does not undermine his role as agent but rather emphasizes what has already been suggested, that ultimately YHWH is the primary actor who accomplishes these tasks (see, e.g., 49:6).¹³⁴ The hint that some of the people have begun to heed the servant’s teaching also provides a glimmer of hope that they may eventually be reinstated as part of YHWH’s servant Israel.¹³⁵

Isaiah 52:13, 53:11

The final scene featuring a singular servant takes up the theme of innocent suffering from 50:4–9 and elevates it to a new level, revealing that it is not merely an obstacle to be overcome but actually the means by which the servant fulfills his mission.¹³⁶ This unjust suffering demands an explanation and thus forms the rhetorical situation of the unit, which comprises 52:13–53:12. Having recently come to an astonishing new perspective on

132. Similarly Carolyn J. Sharp, “(Re)Inscribing Power through Torah Teaching: Rhetorical Pedagogy in the Servant Songs of Deutero-Isaiah,” in *Thus Says the Lord* (ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook; LHBOTS 502; London: T&T Clark, 2009) 175–76; Adams, *Performative Nature*, 171–72.

133. Cf. Ezek 3:7–9 (Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 383; also Routledge, “Narrative Substructure,” 200).

134. Similarly Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 394; see also Williamson, *Variations on a Theme*, 164.

135. Ibid., 164–65. Note that later in chap. 51 YHWH addresses a masc. sg. figure who has “forgotten YHWH [his] maker” (v. 13)—that is, Israel—proclaiming, “I have put (שִׁים) my words in your mouth (פִּיךָ), and in the shadow of my hand (וּבְצֵל יָדִי) I have covered you” (v. 16), which echoes the servant’s self-description in 49:2 (Jeppesen, “Mother Zion,” 117; Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 439).

136. See also Rowley, “Servant Mission,” 261; Wilcox and Paton-Williams, “Servant Songs,” 99.

the servant and his work (cf. 53:2–3 with vv. 4–11a), a we-group is impelled to share it (v. 1). The framing verses (52:13–15, 53:11b–12), however, feature YHWH's voice:

הנה ישכיל עבדי	52:13	See, my servant has insight;*
ירום ונשא וגבה מאד		he will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.
14 כאשר שממו עליך רבים		As many were appalled at you, [†]
כ־משחת מאיש		so disfigured* beyond any human
מראהו		was his appearance
ותארו מבני אדם		and his form beyond [that of] the children of man,
15 כן יזה גוים רבים		so he will sprinkle* many nations;
עליו יקפצו מלכים פיהם		because of him kings will shut their mouths.
כי אשר לא־ספר להם		For what has not been told them
ראו		they see,
ואשר לא־שמעו		and what they have not heard
התבוננו		they understand.
מי האמין לשמענו	53:1	Who has believed our report
וזרוע יהוה על־מי נגלתה		and to whom has the arm of YHWH been revealed?
2 ויעל כיונק לפניו		He grew up like a tender shoot before him
וכשרש מארץ ציה		and like a root out of dry ground.
לא־תאר לו ולא הדר		He had no form or splendor
ונראהו		that we should look at him,
ולא־מראה ונחמדהו		nor appearance that we should desire him.
3 נבזה וחדל אישים		Despised and forsaken by men,
איש מכאבות וידוע חלי		a man of suffering and experienced with infirmity.
וכמסתר פנים ממנו		And as one from whom [people] hide their faces,
נבזה ולא חשבנהו		he was despised, and we did not esteem him.
4 אכן חלינו הוא נשא		Surely he bore our infirmities
ומכאביו סבלם		and carried our suffering,
ואנחנו חשבנהו נגוע		yet we considered him stricken,
מכה אלהים ומענה		smitten by God, and afflicted.
5 והוא מחלל מפשענו		But he was pierced for our rebellions,
מדכא מעונותינו		crushed for our iniquities.
מוסר שלומנו		The chastisement that brought our peace
עליו		was upon him,
ובחברתו		and because of his wounds
נרפא־לנו		there was healing for us.
6 כלנו כצאן תעינו		All of us like sheep have gone astray,
איש לדרכו פנינו		each of us has turned aside to his own path.
ויהוה הפגיע בו		And YHWH has laid on him
את עון כלנו		the iniquity of us all.
7 נגש והוא נענה		He was oppressed and afflicted,
ולא יפתח־פיו		but he did not open his mouth.
כשה לטבח יובל		He was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
וכרחל לפני גזזיה נאלמה		but as a ewe before its shearers is silent,
ולא יפתח פיו		so he did not open his mouth.
8 מעצר וממשפט לקח		By oppression and judgment he was taken away,
ואת־דורו מי ישוחח		and who considered his generation?*
כי נגזר מארץ חיים		For he was cut off from the land of the living;
מפשע עמי		for the rebellion of my people ^{††}
נגע למו		a blow [came] to him.

9 ויתן את־רשעים קברו ואת־עשיר במתיו על לא־חמס עשה ולא מרמה בפיו	And he made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth.
10 ויהוה חפץ דכאו החלי	But it was YHWH's will to crush him; he made [him] infirm.
אם־תשים אשם נפשו יראה זרע יאריך ימים וחפץ יהוה בידו יצלה	When his soul lays down a guilt offering,** he will see offspring; he will prolong [his] days. And the will of YHWH will prosper in his hand.
11 מעמל נפשו יראה ישבע בדעתו	Out of the distress of his soul, he will see; he will be satisfied. By his knowledge**
יצדיק צדיק עבדי לרבים	the righteous one, my servant, will make righteous the many
ועונתם הוא יסבל	and he will carry their iniquities.
12 לכן אחלק־לו ברבים	Therefore, I will allot to him [a portion] among the many, ^o
ואת־עצומים יחלק שלל תחת אשר הערה למות נפשו	and he will divide the spoil with the strong because he exposed his soul to death
ואת־פושעים נמנה והוא חטא־רבים נשא ולפושעים יפגוע	and was numbered with those who rebel. And he bore the sin of many and intervenes for those who rebel.

* Some translate ישכיל as “prosper” (see the NRSV, NASB, JPSV; also Laato, *Servant of YHWH*, 130; similarly Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 344), but the primary connotations of the verb have to do with knowledge and insight (see, e.g., 41:20, 44:18, as well as the translation “act wisely” in the NIV and ESV of 52:13), which can produce success (see Terence E. Fretheim, “שכל,” *NIDOTTE* 3:1243; David J. A. Clines, *I, He, We, and They: A Literary Approach to Isaiah 53* [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1976] 14).

† Following two Heb. MSS, the Syr., and Tg., some translators read a 3rd per. masc. sg. form (see the NIV, NRSV; Clines, *I, He, We, and They*, 14; Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, “Gottesknecht und Gottes Knechte: Zur ältesten Deutung eines deuterotelesajatischen Themas,” in *Judentum* [ed. Peter Schäfer; vol. 1 of *Geschichte-Tradition-Reflexion*, ed. Hubert Cancik et al.; 2 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996] 23), but 1QIsa^a, 1QIsa^b, the LXX, and Vg. support the 2nd per. form, which should be retained as the harder reading.

‡ This follows the predominant understanding of מְשָׁחָה as derived from the root שָׁח (“to ruin, destroy”; see the English translations and ancient versions), though this form is unattested elsewhere. A few scholars translate it instead as “anointed/anointing,” noting that מְשָׁחָה is used in the Pentateuch to refer to “anointing oil” (see Exod 25:6; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:290–94; Peter John Gentry, “The Atonement in Isaiah’s Fourth Servant Song [Isaiah 52:13–53:12],” *SBJT* 11.2 [2007] 28–31). While this rendering is possible and would draw a tighter parallel between the two clauses in vv. 14b–15a, it is not clear what it would mean for “his appearance” (מְרֹאָהוּ) and “form” (תַּאֲרוֹ) to be anointed. Moreover, those same words are used in 53:2b to describe the servant’s appearance as unattractive, explaining why he was “despised and forsaken by men” (v. 3a; see also Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 438).

Elsewhere, the Hiphil of נָה is used exclusively in cultic contexts to describe the sprinkling of blood, water, or oil for purification or consecration. Some scholars are perplexed by the usage here, leading them instead to posit the meaning “startle” or, taking the nations as subject (cf. the LXX), “be astonished” (see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 346–47; Clines, *I, He, We, and They*, 11, 14; Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah Chapters 49–55*, 271–73; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 374 n. 56, who draw on the Arabic *nāza*, which means “to leap”; also

Gelston, "Isaiah 52:13–53:12," 192–93; Michael L. Barré, "Textual and Rhetorical-Critical Observations on the Last Servant Song [Isaiah 52:13–53:12]," *CBQ* 62 [2000] 10–11; Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, "The Fourth Servant Song in the Context of Second Isaiah," in *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources* [ed. Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher; trans. Daniel P. Bailey; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004] 23, who suggest a different root). The cultic understanding, however, fits with later verses, which allude to the "guilt offering" (אֵשֶׁת, 53:10) and use language connected with the practice of releasing a scapegoat on the Day of Atonement (cf. 53:6, 11 with Lev 16:21–22; see also Laato, *Servant of YHWH*, 133; Adams, *Performative Nature*, 173, 177; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:295; Gentry, "Atonement," 27; and cf. the Vg., Syr., and Tg.).

** This line presents significant difficulties. Note the variations found among the English translations. NRSV: "Who could have imagined his future?" NIV: "Yet who of his generation protested?" JPSV: "Who could describe his abode?" On the translation suggested above, see Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 303–8.

†† 1QIsa^a has עָמַר but is probably a harmonization to the 3rd per. references in the surrounding verses. The LXX, Vg., and Tg. support the MT.

‡‡ I.e., he offers himself (see the JPSV, NASB; also Adams, *Performative Nature*, 186; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:318–20; Gentry, "Atonement," 36). Alternatively, תָּשִׂים could be a 2nd per. masc. sg. form with YHWH as the implied subject (see the NRSV, NIV; also Laato, *Servant of YHWH*, 136), but the other references to YHWH in 53:1–11a are in the 3rd per.

The NRSV takes בָּרַעְתּוֹ with what precedes—"he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge" (similarly the JPSV; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 399)—but most translators, following the accents in the MT, see it as related to what follows (see the NIV, ESV, NASB, NLT; also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 346).

α Some translators read רַבִּים as "great" (see the NRSV, NIV, NASB; similarly Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 346), but רַבִּים is used throughout the passage to designate "many" (for that meaning here, see the ESV; also Goldingay, *Message of Isaiah*, 517–18). Koole follows the latter translation, also reading עֲצוּמִים in the next line as "numerous," but sees both as direct objects: "I will divide to him the many and he will possess numerous as booty" (*Isaiah 49–55*, 336–38; cf. the JPSV).

Although the servant's ignominious appearance has until now rendered him an object of horror rather than esteem (52:14), kings will see his purificatory sprinkling and adopt an attitude of respect and honor (52:15; cf. 49:7). Similarly, the we-group in 53:1–11a was initially repulsed by his "infirmity" (חֲלִי, v. 3), which they understood as God's punishment and so took as evidence of the servant's guilt (v. 4b; cf. 50:9). Now, however, they have come to recognize his innocence, realizing that he took on *their* "infirmities" (חֲלִינוֹ, v. 4a). Their own "rebellions" and "iniquities" prompted the divine "chastisement" that has fallen on him, and his vicarious suffering has brought them "peace" (v. 5).¹³⁷ The public shaming and beating

137. A natural reading of vv. 4–6 suggests vicarious suffering (see, e.g., Henning Graf Reventlow, "Basic Issues in the Interpretation of Isaiah 53," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins* [ed. William H. Bellinger Jr. and William R. Farmer; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 1998] 27–29; John H. Walton, "The Imagery of the Substitute King Ritual in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song," *JBL* 122 [2003] 741; Bernd Janowski, "He Bore Our Sins: Isaiah 53 and the Drama of Taking Another's Place," in *Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources* [ed. Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher; trans. Daniel

mentioned in chap. 50 have escalated, resulting ultimately in the servant's death: "He was cut off from the land of the living" (נָגַד מֵאֶרֶץ חַיִּים) (53:8).¹³⁸

As in earlier texts, the servant did not cry out for help (v. 7; cf. 42:2) or resist his oppressors (cf. 50:6), despite his innocence (v. 9b; cf. 50:5, 8–9). Instead, he submitted to being treated as guilty by "expos[ing] his soul to death and [being] numbered with those who rebel" (v. 12b; cf. v. 9a). By means of this passive role of yielding to the suffering and death brought upon him, rather than through any particular actions, the servant secures atonement for "the many."¹³⁹ Although he freely acquiesces, he does so not purely by his own design but in fulfillment of his divine master's will (53:10a) and as a demonstration of his master's power (53:1).

The we-group is undoubtedly composed of those Israelites who have "heard (שָׁמַע) the word of [YHWH's] servant" (50:10).¹⁴⁰ As a result, they proclaim what they have learned, demonstrating that they are the servant's true "offspring" (53:10), though their "report" (שְׁמוּעָה) is almost too astonishing to be believed (53:1). However, the servant's atoning work also has worldwide effects. In light of the "many nations" in 52:15, the "many" whose sins the servant bears (53:12) probably include foreigners.¹⁴¹

P. Bailey; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 69–70; Gentry, "Atonement," 42; Thomas D. Petter, "The Meaning of Substitutionary Righteousness in Isa 53:11: A Summary of the Evidence," *TJ* 2/32 [2011] 166; however, some interpreters dispute this point (see Orlinsky, "So-Called 'Servant of the Lord,'" 51–59; R. N. Whybray, *Thanksgiving for a Liberated Prophet: An Interpretation of Isaiah Chapter 53* [JSOTSup 4; Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1978] 29–76; Kristin Joachimsen, *Identities in Transition: The Pursuit of Isa. 52:13–53:12* [VTSup 142; Leiden: Brill, 2011] 366).

138. Whybray's argument that the servant was merely brought near to death (*Thanksgiving*, 92–106; also Orlinsky, "So-Called 'Servant of the Lord,'" 60–62; Barré, "Textual and Rhetorical-Critical Observations," 11–23; Sue Ann Fry, "From Suffering to Restoration: The Relationship between the Unnamed Servant and Zion in Isaiah 40–55" [Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2006] 86–99) does not satisfactorily account for the language of this verse, especially in light of its nearest parallel in Jer 11:19–21 (see also Childs, *Isaiah*, 416; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 353–54; Hermisson, "Fourth Servant Song," 37; Adams, *Performative Nature*, 202; Fredrick Häggglund, *Isaiah 53 in the Light of Homecoming after Exile* [EAT 2/31; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008] 26–27; cf. the LXX).

139. See Clines, *I, He, We, and They*, 42; Reventlow, "Basic Issues," 30; Mark Gignilliat, "Who Is Isaiah's Servant? Narrative Identity and Theological Potentiality," *SJT* 61 (2008) 133.

140. See also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 351; Tharekadavil, *Servant of Yahweh*, 142. The servant's innocence and his differentiation from the we-group provide strong evidence that the passage describes an individual servant who represents Israel rather than depicting Israel as a whole or even a remnant of Israelites as servant (Hugenberger, "Servant of the Lord," 109–10).

141. See also Laato, *Servant of YHWH*, 162–63; Petter, "Meaning of Substitutionary Righteousness," 180; Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 2:326; Martens, "Impulses to Mission," 228.

Drawing a connection between 53:12 and 43:24b ("you have enslaved me with your sins"), Adams contends that "by taking on the burden of sin the servant will forever relieve Yahweh of his servant role" (*Performative Nature*, 209). It may, however, be better to say that YHWH removes the burden of sin from himself and places it on his willing servant.

Earlier, the servant declared his trust in YHWH as his מַצְדִּיק (Hiphil ptc., 50:8); now he, in turn, יַצְדִּיק (Hiphil impf.) “the many” (53:11).¹⁴² While the terms are the same, however, an important difference obtains. The servant was innocent (50:5) and so sought YHWH’s *vindication*—resulting in his designation here as “the righteous one” (יַצְדִּיק)—whereas the many are guilty and so must be *made righteous* by the removal of their sin.¹⁴³ This act occurs “by his knowledge,” presumably that derived from the teaching YHWH has given him, which he passes on to all who will listen (see 50:4, 10).¹⁴⁴ Forming an inclusio with 52:13, 53:12 highlights the servant’s exaltation, but here it is implied that it proceeds from his obedient submission to his master’s will.

The passage informs its audience about the astonishing atoning work of the individual servant figure, presumably with the aim that it will move them to align themselves with the we-group.¹⁴⁵ The speech of the we-group may also function as a confession of sin leading to forgiveness.¹⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that both instances of עֲבַר in this passage are connected with the servant’s understanding (52:13, 53:11). YHWH desired for servant Israel to “know and believe” his divine master (43:10), but Israel has “neither heard nor known” (48:8). Therefore, this individual proves himself to be YHWH’s faithful servant Israel through his knowledge, which is not merely intellectual but expresses itself in a demonstration of radical obedience to his master’s will (53:10). By offering himself as an atoning sacrifice to cleanse “the many,” he provides the means for Jacob to return to YHWH (49:5) and embodies YHWH’s salvation as a light to the nations (49:6). His “offspring” (53:10) then take up the servant mantle, acting as YHWH’s messengers (cf. 42:19) by proclaiming the servant’s work (53:1).¹⁴⁷

142. On this connection, see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 350; Joachimsen, *Identities in Transition*, 359. The Hiphil of יַצְדִּיק appears elsewhere in Isaiah only in 5:23.

143. The syntax in 53:11 is difficult. רַבִּים is preceded by a ל prep. rather than the direct object marker, and elsewhere יַצְדִּיק functions as the object of Hiphil יַצְדִּיק in a collocation meaning “to vindicate/acquit the righteous” (Deut 25:1, 1 Kgs 8:32). Thus, Goldingay and Payne understand the clause as saying, “My servant will justify the just one [that is, the servant himself] to many” (*Isaiah 40–55*, 2:325–26; see also Clines, *I, He, We, and They*, 11, 21–22; Whybray, *Thanksgiving*, 66–71; similarly the LXX, though it takes YHWH as the implied subject). Daniel 12:3, however, may offer an early interpretation, clarifying הַרְבֵּים as the object. Moreover, that the servant “makes the many righteous” offers a better parallel to the subsequent line, “and he will bear their iniquities” (see also the Vg.; Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 148; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 404–5; Childs, *Isaiah*, 419).

144. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 350.

145. Clines argues that the passage’s ambiguity allows its audience to read themselves into any of the nondivine roles in the passage—“they,” “we,” or “he” (*I, He, We, and They*, 62–64). For the implied audience of rebellious Israelites, however, it invites them to recognize that the servant suffered on behalf of their sins and thus to become part of the “we.”

146. On the importance of confession for the efficacy of the guilt offering in cases of intentional sin, see Adams, *Performative Nature*, 204–5; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics* (CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004) 46.

147. Similarly Adams, *Performative Nature*, 194–95.

Summary

The solution to Israel's persistent blindness and deafness begins to emerge in chap. 49. YHWH's commitment to Israel as his servant remains unchanged, but for the moment, servant Israel consists of a remnant of one. This individual, whose identity is intentionally obscured, was originally tasked with bringing the nation back to YHWH. As the faithful embodiment of Israel, however, he now takes on the servant role of being "a light for the nations" (49:6; cf. 42:6). The people of Israel are urged to follow this servant, who models obedient trust in YHWH even in the midst of persecution (50:4–11). His willing submission to death provides the book's clearest depiction of loyal service to the divine master's will (52:13–53:12); thus, he is YHWH's servant par excellence. After his death, those who have responded to his teaching realize that he suffered on behalf of their sin (53:1–11a), healing them from the spiritual blindness that rendered them unfit to act as YHWH's servant.¹⁴⁸

Zion as YHWH's Servant: Isaiah 51:22

Breaking from the narrative progression of the book for a moment, we must examine the one instance where the master-servant metaphor is applied to YHWH's relationship with Zion in 51:22, part of a larger Zion passage in 51:9–52:12. After describing the city as lying helpless on the ground in a drunken stupor, inebriated by the "cup of [YHWH's] wrath" (v. 17), YHWH speaks a word of encouragement:¹⁴⁹

כה־אמר אֲדִינֶךָ יְהוָה	22	Thus says your master, YHWH,
וְאֵלֶיךָ יִרְיֵב עַמּוֹ		and your God [who] contends for his people,
הִנֵּה לִקְחָתִי מִיָּדְךָ		"Look, I have taken from your hand
אֶת־כּוֹס הַתַּרְעֵלָה		the cup of staggering,
אֶת־קִבְעַת כּוֹס חֲמָתִי		the goblet, the cup of my wrath.
לֹא־תוֹסִיף לְשׁוֹתוֹתָהּ עוֹד		You shall never drink of it again.
וְשָׂמְתִיהָ בְיַד־מוֹגִידָךְ	23	And I will place it in the hand of your tormenters,
אֲשֶׁר־אָמְרוּ לְנַפְשְׁךָ		who said to you,
שָׁחִי וְנִעְבְּרָה		'Bow down and let us pass over.'
וְתִשְׁמַי כְּאָרֶץ גֹּדֶר		And you made your back like the ground
וְכַחוֹץ לְעֵבְרִים		and like the street to pass over."

Although the destruction Zion has encountered has come from the hand of YHWH (vv. 17, 19), her enemies have capitalized on the opportunity to rule her oppressively, forcing her into a position of subservience and trampling all over her (v. 23b). Verse 22, however, reminds Zion that her enemies are not her true masters. That position belongs to YHWH her God, who executes justice for his people.¹⁵⁰ He will remove the judgment under

148. Similarly Schultz, *NIDOTTE* 4:1195; also Hermisson, "Fourth Servant Song," 45.

149. See further p. 95; also pp. 41 and 72.

150. Koole argues that אֲדִינֶךָ here evokes an image of YHWH as Zion's husband, citing Gen 18:12 (*Isaiah* 49–55, 206; also Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, 355; cf. Amos 4:1). This reading is certainly possible, but there is no other hint of marital imagery in the passage. Moreover,

which Zion has been languishing and place it instead on her enemies. Here, there is no hint of Zion's responsibility to act as YHWH's servant. Instead, these verses emphasize that her fate is in the hands of her divine master, who will exercise his power on her behalf to free her from her tormenters.

As already noted, several scholars have compared Zion with the individual servant figure in Isaiah 40–55, a few even identifying Zion as the servant,¹⁵¹ but to my knowledge, no one has explored the significance that this reference to YHWH as Zion's אֲדֹנָי might have for that discussion. Like the individual servant in the previous passage, Zion is also mistreated by others, involving injury to her "back" (גֵּב, v. 23; cf. 50:6).¹⁵² However, whereas the servant actively presents his "back (גֵּב) to those who strike," Zion passively submits to the abuse of her oppressors. Moreover, the servant stands resolute in his obedience to YHWH, trusting in divine vindication (50:5, 7–9), while Zion lies helpless on the ground, suffering YHWH's judgment (51:22). YHWH may be Zion's master, but she is currently in no position to act as his servant. The atoning death of the individual servant in chap. 53, however, sparks a transformation in Isaiah's use of the metaphor that has a significant effect on Zion's family.

The Faithful People as YHWH's Servants

In light of the emergence of a group who recognizes the significance of the individual servant's death, it is not surprising that after chap. 53 the singular servant is replaced by a plurality of servants. This transition, however, does not correspond to the book's major divisions; instead, the first instance in 54:17 forms a link between chaps. 40–55 and 56–66.¹⁵³

Textual Analyses

Isaiah 54:17

Following the fulfillment of the individual servant's mission in 52:13–53:12, chap. 54 highlights the benefits adhering to those now identified as YHWH's servants in an address to Lady Zion:¹⁵⁴

13	וְכָל־בְּנֵיךְ לִמּוּדֵי יְהוָה וְרַב שְׁלוֹם בְּנֵיךְ	"And all your children will be taught by YHWH, and great will be the peace of your children.
...
17	כָּל־כְּלִי יִצְרָה עֲלֶיךָ לֹא יִצְלַח וְכָל־לִשׁוֹן תִּקְוֶה־אֹתָךְ	Any weapon [that] is formed against you will not succeed, and every tongue [that] rises against you

elsewhere Isaiah uses בַּעַל to describe YHWH as husband (54:5; cf. the use of that root in 54:1; 62:4, 5). Furthermore, the complement of אֲדֹנָי is more commonly עַבְדֵּךְ, and the immediate context suggests a contrast between Zion's divine master and her exilic overlords.

151. See p. 3.

152. Leland Edward Wilshire, "The Servant-City: A New Interpretation of the 'Servant of the Lord' in the Servant Songs of Deutero-Isaiah," *JBL* 94 (1975) 361.

153. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 366.

154. See further p. 97; also pp. 43 and 118.

למשפט תרשיעי	for judgment you will condemn.
זאת נחלת עבדי יהוה	This is the heritage of the servants of YHWH,
וצדקתם מאתי נאם־יהוה	and their vindication from me," declares YHWH.

Among the many promises given to Zion in this chapter is the assurance that her "children will be taught by YHWH" (למורי יהוה, v. 13), just like the individual servant (50:4).¹⁵⁵ Moreover, they will enjoy an abundance of "peace" (שלום), due to the servant's "chastisement that brought [the we-group] peace" (שלומנו, 53:5).

YHWH abruptly introduces his servants in v. 17 by announcing that their "heritage" is YHWH's protection of Zion. Just as the individual servant trusted in YHWH as his "vindicator" (מצדיקי) before any "adversary" (בעל), literally "lord of my judgment," 50:8), so the servants of YHWH receive "their vindication" (צדקתם) from him before "every tongue [that] rises against [Zion] for judgment" (למשפט). However, whereas the servant passively trusted that no one could "condemn" (רשע) him (50:9), Zion will actively "condemn" (רשע) her accusers.¹⁵⁶ These servants should be identified both with Zion's well-instructed children (54:13) and with those who follow the individual servant (see 50:10),¹⁵⁷ who has qualified them for YHWH's "vindication" (צדקה) by making them righteous (יצידיק, 53:11).¹⁵⁸

The servant metaphor contributes to the passage's portrait of a complete reversal in Zion's fortunes by evoking associations of the protection a servant receives from his master. By promising to defend his servants' city from any attack, YHWH gives them security and a place of refuge. However, the metaphor also functions as a qualifier, suggesting that in order to benefit from YHWH's help, Zion's children are expected to act as his servants.

Isaiah 56:6

A clear challenge to any simple identification of YHWH's servants with Zion's children comes in 56:6, part of a rhetorical unit encompassing 56:1–8.¹⁵⁹ This passage addresses a rhetorical situation involving a lack of justice

155. The rare adjectival form למור appears elsewhere in Isaiah only in 8:16.

156. רשע appears in the Hiphil only in these two passages in Isaiah.

157. W. A. M. Beuken, "The Main Theme of Trito-Isaiah: 'The Servants of YHWH,'" *JSOT* 47 (1990) 67–68; Ulrich Berges, "Personifications and Prophetic Voices of Zion in Isaiah and Beyond," in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character and Anonymous Artist* (ed. Johannes C. de Moor; OtSt 45; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 69; A. van der Woude, "The Comfort of Zion: Personification in Isaiah 40–66," in *"Enlarge the Site of Your Tent": The City as Unifying Theme in Isaiah* (ed. Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen and Annemarieke van der Woude; OtSt 58; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 166.

158. Similarly, Childs, *Isaiah*, 431; Watts, "Consolation or Confrontation?" 55; John N. Oswalt, "The Kerygmatic Structure of the Book of Isaiah," in *Go to the Land I Will Show You* (ed. Joseph E. Coleson and Victor H. Matthews; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996) 155. See 48:18 on Israel's prior lack of "righteousness" (צדקה) and "peace" (שלום).

159. On the limits of the passage, see, e.g., Paul A. Smith, *Rhetoric and Redaction in Trito-Isaiah: The Structure, Growth, and Authorship of Isaiah 56–66* (Leiden: Brill, 1995) 50–

and righteousness among at least some of the people of Israel, as evidenced by the exhortation with which the passage begins:¹⁶⁰

1	כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה שְׁמְרוּ מִשְׁפָּט וַעֲשׂוּ צְדָקָה כִּי־קִרְבָּה יִשְׁוּעָתִי לְבוֹא וְצִדְקָתִי לְהַגְלוֹת אֲשֶׁר־אֲנֹשׁ יַעֲשֶׂה־זֹאת	Thus says YHWH, “Keep justice and do righteousness, for my salvation is soon to come and my vindication to be revealed.
2	וְבֶן־אָדָם יִחְזִיק בָּהּ שֹׁמֵר שַׁבָּת מִחֲלָלוֹ וְשֹׁמֵר יָדוֹ מִמַּעֲשׂוֹת כָּל־רָע וְאֵל־יֹאמַר בֶּן־הַנֶּכֶר הַגֵּלִיָּה אֶל־יְהוָה לֹא־מֵר הַבְדֵּל יַבְדִּילֵנִי יְהוָה מֵעַל עַמּוֹ	Blessed is the man [who] does this and the son of man [who] holds fast to it, who keeps the Sabbath without profaning it and keeps his hand from doing any evil. 3a Let not the foreigner say— he who attaches himself to YHWH— ‘YHWH will surely separate me from his people.’
6	וְבְנֵי הַנֶּכֶר הַגֵּלִיָּה עַל־יְהוָה לְשִׁרְתּוֹ וּלְאַהֲבָה אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה לְהִיּוֹת לוֹ לַעֲבָדִים כָּל־שֹׁמֵר שַׁבָּת מִחֲלָלוֹ וּמִחְזִיקִים בְּבְרִיתִי וְהַבִּיאֹתִים אֶל־הָר קֹדֶשׁ וּשְׂמֵחֵתִים בְּבֵית תְּפִלָּתִי עֹלֹתֵיהֶם וּזְבָחֵיהֶם לִרְצוֹן עַל־מִזְבְּחִי כִּי בֵיתִי בֵית־תְּפִלָּה יִקְרָא לְכָל־הָעַמִּים נָאֻם אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה מִקְבֵּץ נִדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד אֶקְבֹּץ עֲלָיו לְנִקְבְּצָיו	The foreigners who attach themselves to YHWH to minister to him and to love the name of YHWH, to be to him servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath without profaning it and who holds fast to my covenant, 7 I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them glad in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar. For my house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” 8 The Lord YHWH declares— he who gathers the scattered of Israel— “Still [others] will I gather to him, to his gathered ones.”

Whereas in 54:17 Zion's children were promised YHWH's "vindication" (צדקה) as his servants, now the failure to act righteously (צדקה) on the part of some of the people threatens to disqualify them from the "salvation" and "vindication" (צדקה) YHWH is about to bring (v. 1; cf. 51:5–6).¹⁶¹ Certainly those who cannot "keep justice" are unable to fulfill YHWH's original aim for his servant—to "bring forth justice to the nations" (42:1).

Verse 2 thus pronounces a blessing on "the man" (אנוש) who acts justly and righteously by keeping the Sabbath and refraining from doing evil.

54; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19B; New York: Doubleday, 2003) 130–31.

160. Raymond de Hoop, "The Interpretation of Isaiah 56:1–9: Postexilic Judah, or Postexilic Davidic King?" *JBL* 127 (2008) 681.

161. Similarly Raymond de Hoop, "Unit Delimitation and Exegesis: Isaiah 56 as an Introduction to the Theme," in *The Impact of Unit Delimitation on Exegesis* (ed. Raymond de Hoop, Marjo Korpel, and Stanley Porter; Pericope 7; Leiden: Brill, 2009) 16–17; Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 309; contra Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 529.

The use of the general term אֲנָשׁ (also בְּנֵי-אָדָם) reflects movement in a more universal direction,¹⁶² an outlook confirmed by subsequent verses, which declare that “foreigners who attach themselves to YHWH, to minister to him and to love the name of YHWH, [that is,] to be to him servants” (עֲבָדִים, v. 6a), should not expect to be cut off from YHWH’s people (v. 3a). Instead, they will be brought to Zion and given admittance to the temple where they will be able to offer sacrifices (v. 7).¹⁶³ Although this is the first time in Isaiah that foreigners have been described as YHWH’s “servants,” it constitutes the culmination of ideas already presented.¹⁶⁴ After all, the “many” whom the individual servant “make[s] righteous” include some from the nations (52:15, 53:11).

This portrait of a centripetal movement to Zion (cf. 2:2–4) contrasts with the centrifugal mission assigned to the servant in 42:1–9. Here, however, there is no longer any need for Israel to embody YHWH’s covenant before the nations (42:6) because these foreigners have already committed themselves to YHWH and to the stipulations of his covenant, thereby becoming servants themselves.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, they are now incorporated into YHWH’s people as he gathers to Israel not only the exiles but “still [others]” (v. 8).

Both the covenant and the servant role are still firmly tied to Israel, but now the definition of YHWH’s servant-people Israel is expanded to include not only “the children” (בְּנֵים) of Zion (54:13) but also “the children of the foreigner” (בְּנֵי הַנֹּכַר, 56:6a).¹⁶⁶ This broadening, however, is matched by a reciprocal narrowing as the focus shifts from YHWH’s obligations as master (54:17) to those of his servants, now defined as “everyone who keeps the Sabbath without profaning it and holds fast to [YHWH’s] covenant” (56:6b).

Although the passage addresses the status of foreigners, it is probably directed toward the people of Israel. Therefore, its rhetorical aim seems to be to call them to a life characterized by justice and righteousness, indicating that an active commitment to YHWH is the only true marker of those who belong to YHWH’s servant-people.¹⁶⁷ According to this passage, being a servant involves cultic observance, covenantal obedience, and love for the name (that is, honor) of the divine master. While v. 7 also conveys what

162. Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah Chapters 56–66* (vol. 3 of *Isaiah III*; trans. Anthony P. Runia; 3 vols.; HKAT; Leuven: Peeters, 2001) 9.

163. By addressing the status of eunuchs (vv. 3b–5) along with foreigners, this passage recalls and overturns Deut 23:2–9[1–8], which denies access to “the assembly of YHWH” to those who have been emasculated, to Ammonites and Moabites, and to first- and second-generation Edomites and Egyptians (see further Bernard Gosse, “Sabbath, Identity and Universalism Go Together after the Return from Exile,” *JSOT* 29 [2005] 364–65).

164. Cf. 19:21–23, which uses the verbal form of עָבַד to describe the sacrificial worship of YHWH offered by Egyptians and Assyrians.

165. This transformation is precipitated by 55:3–5 (on which, see Williamson, *Variations on a Theme*, 116–21, 155).

166. Similarly Muilenburg, “Isaiah 40–66,” 5:658; Koole, *Isaiah 56–66*, 21.

167. See also Hoop, “Unit Delimitation,” 17.

YHWH will do for his foreign servants, there is no hint of the benefits of protection or help mentioned in earlier passages but merely a promise of access to his presence. The idea is simply that if these foreigners will act as YHWH's servants, then he will accept them as servants.

Isaiah 63:17

After the surprising designation of foreigners as YHWH's servants, the term disappears for several chapters, reemerging as the self-identification of the people of Israel in the lament in 63:7–64:11[12].¹⁶⁸

כִּי־אַתָּה אֲבִינוּ	63:16	But you are our father,
כִּי אֲבֹרָהֶם לֹא יֵדְעֵנוּ		though Abraham does not know us
וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִכְרֹנוּ		and Israel does not regard us.
אַתָּה יְהוָה אֲבִינוּ		You, O YHWH, are our father;
גָּאֵלֵנוּ מֵעוֹלָם שְׁמֶךָ		our Redeemer from of old is your name.
לָמָּה תַתְּעֵנוּ יְהוָה	17	Why do you make us wander, O YHWH,
מִדְרָכֶיךָ		from your ways
תִּקְשִׁיחַ לִבֵּנוּ מִירֹאֲתֶךָ		[and] harden our hearts from fearing you?
שׁוּב לַמֶּעַן עַבְדֶּיךָ		Return for the sake of your servants,
שְׁבֹטֵי נַחֲלָתְךָ		the tribes of your inheritance.
...		...
הָייֵנוּ מֵעוֹלָם	19a	We have been [as those whom] from of old*
לֹא־מִשְׁלַת בָּם		you have not ruled over†
לֹא־נִקְרָא שְׁמֶךָ עֲלֵיהֶם		and your name has not been called over.

* Cf. the JPSV, ESV, NASB; alternatively, מֵעוֹלָם could describe how long the Israelites have been alienated from YHWH: “we have long been like those over whom” (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 253; cf. the NRSV).

† Cf. the LXX and Vg., followed by most English translations; see also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 253; Smith, *Isaiah* 40–66, 684; Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 391. For an alternate understanding of the verse as meaning, “we have been [yours] from of old; you have not ruled over them,” see the NIV (cf. the Tg.).

A lamenter calls on YHWH to “return for the sake of (לַמֶּעַן) your servants (עַבְדֶּיךָ)” (v. 17b), echoing YHWH’s earlier declaration that Cyrus would rebuild Jerusalem (44:28) “for the sake of (לַמֶּעַן) my servant (עַבְדִּי) Jacob” (45:4), a promise that has not been completely fulfilled (see v. 18). The lamenter then identifies YHWH’s servants with the people of Israel as a whole, as demonstrated by the appositional phrase “the tribes of your inheritance.”¹⁶⁹

Before mentioning their servant role, however, he asks, “Why do you make us wander, O YHWH, from your ways [and] harden our hearts from fearing you?” (v. 17a; cf. 64:6[7]). This question seems calculated to preempt a response on the part of YHWH that, if they are his servants, they have

168. See further p. 29.

169. Contra Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 93–96; see further Brooks Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah: Reconstructing the Cultic History of the Restoration* (JSOTSup 193; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995) 152–54.

not been acting like it. Servants follow the ways delineated by their master, showing him respect and honor. Therefore, anticipating the question of whether the people's failings have negated YHWH's responsibility toward his servants, the lamenter places the blame for their faults on him.

Whereas earlier YHWH called Israel to "return" (שוב) to him (44:22), now the lamenter contends that it is YHWH who must "return" (שוב) in order to restore his relationship with his people (v. 17b).¹⁷⁰ Their current situation (see v. 18) does not reflect their status as YHWH's servant-people; therefore, they implicitly call on YHWH to treat them as his servants by again "rul[ing] over" them, thus bringing them under his protection (v. 19). The lamenter's plea for YHWH to observe the people's distress and act on their behalf (vv. 15, 17b) forms the passage's rhetorical aim, and it is grounded not only in their position as YHWH's servants but also in his role as their father (v. 16).¹⁷¹ These overlapping metaphors emphasize the people's claim on YHWH as their advocate and defender. The question posed in v. 17a also evokes the associated commonplace of a servant's duty to follow and respect his master, but it asserts that the divine master is currently preventing his servants from fulfilling that obligation.

Isaiah 65:8, 9, 13, 14, 15; 66:14

YHWH's response to this lament, given in the book's final rhetorical unit in chaps. 65–66, combines affirmation with refutation.¹⁷² First, YHWH vindicates himself against the charge that he has prevented the people from acting as his servants and reassigns the blame for the breach in their relationship to his audience (see 65:2; cf. 63:17a). Second, he picks up on their closing question, "Will you keep silent (חשה) and afflict us beyond measure?" (64:11[12]), by affirming, "I will not keep silent (חשה)," but he also reveals that his intervention will not provide the reprieve they are looking for—"I will repay . . . your iniquities" (65:6–7).¹⁷³ Nevertheless, YHWH

170. The Qal impv. of בוש appears nowhere else in chaps. 40–66.

171. Paul Niskanen interprets the implied appeal that YHWH would "rule over" them (v. 19) within the framework of the latter metaphor ("Yhwh as Father, Redeemer, and Potter in Isaiah 63:7–64:11," *CBQ* 68 [2006] 402). However, despite the significant authority fathers had within their households, there is no evidence that a father would have been understood to "rule over" (משל) his children. Thus, it is better to subsume that statement under the umbrella of the servant metaphor, which, in any case, is invoked in closer proximity to it (v. 17). On the relationship between משל and עבד, see 1 Kgs 5:1[4:21], Prov 22:7.

172. See further pp. 33 and 104; also p. 47.

173. Richard Nysse, "Rebels from Beginning to End," *WW* 19 (1999) 167; see also David McLain Carr, "Reading Isaiah from Beginning (Isaiah 1) to End (Isaiah 65–66): Multiple Modern Possibilities," in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996) 208; Judith Gärtner, "' . . . Why Do You Let Us Stray from Your Paths . . . ' (Isa 63:17): The Concept of Guilt in the Communal Lament Isa 63:7–64:11," in *The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; vol. 1 of *Seeking the Favor of God*; 3 vols.; SBLJL 21; Atlanta: SBL, 2006) 151–52.

promises that their punishment will not entail the complete destruction of Israel:

כה אמר יהוה	65:8	Thus says YHWH,
כאשר ימצא התירוש		"As wine is found
באשכול ואמר		in the cluster, and [one] says,
אל־תשחיתוהו כי ברכה בו		'Do not destroy it, for there is blessing in it,'
כן אעשה למען עבדי		so I will do for the sake of my servants
לבלתי השחית הכל		not to destroy them all.
והוצאתי מיעקב זרע	9	And I will bring out from Jacob offspring
ומיהודה יורש הרי		and from Judah a possessor of my mountains,
וירשוה בחירי		and my chosen ones will possess it (i.e., the land),
ועבדי ישכנו־שמה		and my servants will dwell there.
...		...
ואתם עזבי יהוה	11	But you who forsake YHWH,
השכחים את־הר קדשי		forgetting my holy mountain,
הערכים לגד שלחן		who set a table for Fortune
והממלאים למני ממסך		and who fill a mixing vessel for Destiny,
ומניתי אתכם לחרב	12	I will consign you to the sword.
וכלכם לטבח תכרעו		And all of you will bow down to the slaughter
יען קראתי ולא עניתם		because I called and you did not answer,
דברתי ולא שמעתם		I spoke and you did not listen.
ותעשו הרע בעיני		And you did evil in my eyes,
ובאשר לא־חפצתי בחרתם		and what I did not delight in you chose."
לכן כה־אמר אדני יהוה	13	Therefore, thus says the Lord YHWH,
הנה עבדי יאכלו		"Look, my servants will eat,
ואתם תרעבו		but you will be hungry.
הנה עבדי ישתו		Look, my servants will drink,
ואתם תצמאו		but you will be thirsty.
הנה עבדי ישמחו		Look, my servants will rejoice,
ואתם תבשו		but you will be put to shame.
הנה עבדי ירנו	14	Look, my servants will shout with joy
מטוב לב		from gladness of heart,
ואתם תצעקו מכאב לב		but you will cry out from anguish of heart
ומשבר רוח תילילו		and wail from brokenness of spirit.
והנחתם שמכם	15	And you will leave your name
לשבועה לבחירי		as a curse to my chosen ones,
והמיתך אדני יהוה		'and the Lord YHWH will put you to death,'*
ולעבדיו יקרא שם אחר		but his servants he will call another name."

* On this understanding of the line as denoting the fate of the wicked addressees by using the words of the curse they engender, see Koole, *Isaiah* 56–66, 440–41; also the JPSV.

Echoing the lamenter's plea to YHWH to "return for the sake of your servants" (למען עבדיך, 63:17), YHWH declares, "So I will do for the sake of my servants" (למען עבדי, 65:8). He, however, restricts that label to a faithful remnant,¹⁷⁴ promising merely to preserve a few through the coming judg-

174. Lindhagen, *Servant Motif*, 249; Schramm, *Opponents*, 158; Gärtner, "Why Do You Let Us Stray," 152; Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, "Two Prophets, Two Laments and Two Ways of Dealing with Earlier Texts," in *Die Textualisierung der Religion* (ed. Joachim Schaper; FAT 62; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 198.

ment. Moreover, the lamenter asks YHWH to “make known your name to your adversaries” (צריך, 64:1[2]), that is, to execute judgment on the foreigners who “trampled your sanctuary” (63:18). YHWH responds positively by promising to “show indignation against his enemies” (איביר, 66:14; cf. v. 6) and announcing that he will send emissaries to “declare [his] glory among the nations” (66:19). Here, however, YHWH’s “enemies” are Israelites, who have dishonored YHWH’s “holy mountain” (הר קדשי, 65:11) just like the foreign armies who destroyed the “sanctuary” (מקדש, 63:18).¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, when YHWH’s messengers proclaim his “glory among the nations,” it will result not in the foreigners’ judgment but in their inclusion among YHWH’s servant-people (66:20–21).

Thus, YHWH’s redefinition of his servant-people on the basis of behavior rather than birth is now complete,¹⁷⁶ and it is brought into sharp relief by the contrast in 65:8–15 between his “servants” (appearing 7 times)—that is, those “who have sought” him (v. 10)—and those “who forsake” him (v. 11a). The former group, also identified as his “chosen ones” (יריחב),¹⁷⁷ will inherit the land (vv. 9–10), which will be completely restored in YHWH’s creation of a “new heavens and new earth” (vv. 17–25).¹⁷⁸ Moreover, these servants’ appetites will be sated (v. 13), their hearts will be filled with joy (v. 14), and they will be given a new name reflecting their renewed status (v. 15).

By contrast, the rebellious will have both empty stomachs (v. 13) and distressed hearts (v. 14), and their name will be cut off by death, remembered only for the purpose of invoking a curse (v. 15). This judgment will come upon them because they have “not heard” (לא שמעתם) YHWH and thus “have chosen what [he] did not delight in” (ובאשר לא־הפצתי בחרתם),¹⁷⁹ even engaging in pagan religious practice (vv. 11–12, cf. 66:4). They have still not overcome the deafness that earlier plagued servant Israel (42:19–20), but now this indictment is not followed by an oracle of salvation (as in 43:1–7) or accompanied by a call to listen (see 42:18).¹⁸⁰ At this point in the drama, a clear line demarks the two groups, and the fates of both are sealed.¹⁸¹

175. Koole, *Isaiah* 56–66, 435; also Odil Hannes Steck, “Beobachtungen zur Anlage von Jes 65–66,” *BN* 38–39 (1987) 107–10, who notes several other connections between the two passages.

176. See Schramm, *Opponents*, 158–59.

177. Cf. 41:8–9, 42:1, 43:10, 44:1–2, 45:4, 49:7.

178. Michael J. Chan, “Isaiah 65–66 and the Genesis of Reorienting Speech,” *CBQ* 72 (2010) 458.

179. Note the contrast between these rebels and the eunuchs in 56:4, “who choose what [YHWH] delight[s] in” (בחרו באשר הפצתי) and thereby find inclusion and reward alongside YHWH’s foreign servants (Hoop, “Interpretation of Isaiah 56:1–9,” 686).

180. In fact, the rebels are not asked to do anything. The commands in chaps. 65–66 are all either found in recorded speech (65:5, 8) or addressed to the faithful (65:18; 66:5, 10).

181. See Carr, “Reading Isaiah,” 204, 212; contra Nysse, “Rebels,” 168–70; Se-Hoon Jang, “Hearing the Word of God in Isaiah 1 and 65–66: A Synchronic Approach,” in *The*

YHWH's "servants" appear one final time in 66:14, which again distinguishes between them and the rebellious:

וראתם ושל לבכם	14 And you will see, and your heart will rejoice,
ועצמותיכם כדשא תפרחנה	and your bones will flourish like grass.
ונודעה	And it will be known
יד־יהוה את־עבדיו	[that] the hand of YHWH is with his servants,*
וזעם את־איביו	but he will show indignation against his enemies.

* Although most English translations take this clause as stating that "the hand of YHWH will be made known to his servants" (see the ESV, NIV, NASB), אֵת more commonly means "with" in poetic contexts (see the NRSV; Koole, *Isaiah 56–66*, 503; Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 743).

Everyone will recognize YHWH's power enacted on behalf of his servants, who should be identified with Zion's children in vv. 7–12. By his hand, they will receive nourishment from an eschatologically restored Zion (vv. 10–13), leading them to "flourish like grass" (v. 14a). Moreover, through Zion they will enjoy the "peace like a river" (כְּנֹהַר שָׁלוֹם, v. 12) earlier denied Israel because of his neglect of YHWH's commands (see 48:18).¹⁸²

The passage's rhetorical aim is to promise help in response to the lamenter's pleas but also to transform the people's understanding of what that help will look like. YHWH subtly reshapes their assumptions about the character and qualifications of those who are truly his people by picking up on their single reference to themselves as his servants (63:17), rather than their multiple claims to be his children (63:8, 16; 64:7[8]), and repeating it eight times. YHWH's servants will indeed receive all the blessings the lamenter hoped for and more, but he is mistaken in applying that designation to the people of Israel as a whole rather than using it as a measuring rod against current behavior.

More explicitly than in chap. 54, the servant metaphor here qualifies that of the people as Zion's children, specifying that the distinguishing characteristic of those who will inherit YHWH's promises to Zion is adherence to the will of their divine master.¹⁸³ The passage focuses on their general disposition toward YHWH rather than on any particular mission, such as

One Who Reads May Run (ed. Roland Boer, Michael Carden, and Julie Kelso; LHBOTS 553; New York: T&T Clark, 2012) 45. For discussions of the groups' identities, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, "A Jewish Sect of the Persian Period," *CBQ* 52 (1990) 5–20; idem, "The 'Servants of the Lord' in Third Isaiah: Profile of a Pietistic Group in the Persian Epoch," in *"The Place Is Too Small for Us": The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship* (ed. Robert P. Gordon; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995) 392–412; Ulrich Berges, "Who Were the Servants? A Comparative Inquiry in the Book of Isaiah and the Psalms," in *Past, Present, Future: The Deuteronomistic History and the Prophets* (ed. Johannes C. de Moor and Harry F. van Rooy; OtSt 44; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 1–18.

182. Beuken, "Main Theme," 84; this collocation is found only in these two verses in the HB.

183. See also Emmanuel Uchenna Dim, *The Eschatological Implications of Isa 65 and 66 as the Conclusion of the Book of Isaiah* (BH 3; Bern: Peter Lang, 2005) 90; Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, 650; Woude, "Comfort of Zion," 166.

that assigned to servant Israel in chap. 42. Nevertheless, 66:18–20 declares that YHWH will send “survivors” to the ends of the earth to “declare [his] glory” and bring scattered Israelites, and presumably some from the nations, back to Jerusalem (cf. 42:6–7, 49:6). The passage also indicates that YHWH is a magnanimous master, who offers rewards of bountiful provision, joyous blessing, and mighty deliverance to those who take on the role of servant.

Summary

Although YHWH’s עבדים appear in only a few passages in chaps. 56–66, the inclusio in 56:6 and 66:14 and the eightfold appearance of the term in chaps. 65–66 indicate their importance to this final major section of the book.¹⁸⁴ Their introduction, however, comes in 54:17, connecting them with the singular servant who holds such a prominent place in chaps. 40–55. These servants are the legitimate offspring and heir of the individual servant, who reap the benefits of his atoning work and follow his model of obedience to YHWH.

By presenting YHWH’s servants as the children of Zion, chaps. 54 and 66 cast them as inhabitants of the holy city and recipients of YHWH’s promises of restoration and continued protection.¹⁸⁵ By contrast, chaps. 56 and 65 focus on their character—YHWH’s servants are those who adhere to his covenantal requirements, both ethical and religious, regardless of their background. These chapters confound the expectations of both Israelites who think their ethnic identity qualifies them to be YHWH’s servants (63:17) and foreigners who assume they are excluded on the same basis (56:3, 6). All who accept YHWH as master will receive the title and benefits of a servant.

Conclusion

Both ancient and modern discussions of servanthood in Isaiah have focused most of their attention on the identity of the enigmatic figure in the “Servant Songs.” As Tull Willey notes, however, “The question the text seems bent on answering rather is ‘Who is Israel in relation to YHWH?’ The oft repeated answer in Isaiah 41–45 is, ‘Israel is YHWH’s servant.’”¹⁸⁶ Given the situation of exile presupposed by chaps. 40–55, the servant metaphor is initially evoked in 41:8–9 to communicate YHWH’s enduring commitment to his people, and elsewhere it highlights his protection of and provision for his servant(s) (e.g., 44:1–2, 21b; 54:17; 65:8–9, 13–15; 66:14).

However, the metaphor most readily conveys the responsibility of the servant(s) to carry out the divine master’s will. In chaps. 40–48, that duty

184. Indeed, Beuken contends that the servants are the central concern of chaps. 56–66 (“Main Theme,” 68).

185. On the close connection between the servants and Jerusalem, see further Ferry, *Isaïe*, 193.

186. Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 176.

involves servant Israel's mission to "bring forth justice to the nations" (42:1) and bear witness to YHWH's sovereignty (43:10, 12; 44:8; cf. 48:20). But Israel's blindness (42:18–19) temporarily disqualifies all but a remnant of one from fulfilling this role. This faithful representative of Israel restores many of his people to YHWH and embodies YHWH's salvation to the nations (49:6) by enduring persecution and death in order to present himself as a guilt offering to "make righteous the many" (53:11), trusting in YHWH's vindication (50:4–9).

Those who recognize the significance of the servant's suffering and follow his example of radical obedience take on the designation of YHWH's "servants" (54:17).¹⁸⁷ This transition from servant to servants also coincides with a change in the theme's portrayal. The servant's mission and the focus on his knowledge (or lack of knowledge) of YHWH's supremacy recede into the background.¹⁸⁸ Now, the emphasis shifts from a particular task to characteristic action and from knowledge to behavior as these chapters paint a portrait of life in the eschatologically renewed Zion. Although these servants are identified with the children of Zion (chaps. 54 and 66) and are therefore closely connected to Israel's capital city, they include foreigners who follow YHWH (chap. 56) and exclude Israelites who do not (chap. 65). Only those who truly "seek" YHWH (65:10), demonstrating their loyal service by a life of obedience and cultic purity, will receive the protection and provision of their divine master (65:8–10, 13–15; 66:14).

187. See Blenkinsopp, "Servants of the Lord," 411.

188. On the servant's knowledge, see, e.g., 43:10, 48:8, 53:11, and note the "blindness" motif (42:18–19, 43:8).

Chapter 6

Conclusion: Integrating the Metaphors— A Portrait of the People of YHWH

Now that we have examined each of Isaiah's metaphors for the people of Israel and its capital city deriving from the realm of household relationships—sons/children, daughter(s), mother, wife, and servant(s)—we can compare their rhetorical uses and consider how they are interwoven within the book's drama. Although the women of Israel are occasionally called the "daughters" of YHWH or Zion, the female metaphors of daughter, wife, and mother are generally reserved for the city, whereas the nation and people are designated by the masculine (or gender-inclusive) images of sons/children and servant(s). While Daughter Zion is scattered throughout the book, the other images are grouped in sections, with major seams occurring in chaps. 40/41, 49, and 54.

YHWH's Children vis-à-vis His Servant(s)

Although the metaphor of the people as YHWH's בָּנִים appears in 63:7–64:11[12] and 66:13, it does not have the same power to illuminate the people's self-understanding as in earlier passages. In the former text, YHWH's fatherhood constitutes a ground for the lamenter's plea that is not reaffirmed in YHWH's reply (chaps. 65–66), and the latter offers merely an illustrative simile comparing YHWH's comfort to that of a mother. Elsewhere, the metaphor is restricted to chaps. 1–48, overlapping in chaps. 40–48 with Jacob/Israel as YHWH's servant. In that section, both metaphors convey YHWH's continued commitment to his people in spite of past sins and the apparent finality of exile (41:8–9; 43:6, 10), and both express the people's failure to live up to their end of the relationship (42:19, 43:23, 45:11). The latter theme culminates in chap. 48 with an extended critique of Israel's persistent stubbornness, but that chapter also holds out hope for YHWH's redemption as well as for Jacob's continued status as servant (v. 20).

The seam in chap. 49 moves toward an individualizing of the servant figure and shifts the spotlight from Jacob/Israel to Lady Zion. Indeed, the singular figure of Jacob/Israel disappears completely after 49:5,¹ and nowhere

1. Although "Jacob" and "Israel" appear later in the book, they either refer to the patriarch (58:14, 63:16) or appear as the second term in a construct chain that functions as a divine title (e.g., 49:7, 26) or are used to designate a group of Israelites (e.g., 56:8). For

after that point does the book hint that YHWH's salvation will come to the nation as a whole. Moreover, 59:20 specifically limits YHWH's redemption to "those who turn from rebellion in Jacob," and chaps. 56 and 65–66 redefine YHWH's servants. No longer is that title coterminous with the people of Israel; instead, it designates those who follow YHWH regardless of ethnicity.

Thus, chap. 49 signifies YHWH's rejection of the nation as a whole as his servant due to its continual rebellion. Israel's blindness (42:19) is so complete that only a single individual remains unwaveringly faithful to YHWH. He fulfills the servant mission to be a light for the nations (49:6; cf. 42:6), while also drawing a group of Israelites back to YHWH through his example of obedience and his atoning suffering (see 50:10, 53:3–6). They carry on his legacy as YHWH's "servants" (54:17) and the true "offspring from Jacob" (65:9).

By portraying this remnant as YHWH's servants rather than his children, the latter chapters of the book heighten the people's responsibility to live under his authority.² Unlike a parent and child, a master and servant are tied together not by intimate bonds of blood but by an agreement of faithful work on the part of the servant and economic relief or protection on the part of the master. Too strong a reliance on the privileges of their filial relationship to YHWH could lead to complacency and a lack of devotion, ultimately incurring YHWH's judgment, as the exile made painfully clear. By contrast, the servant metaphor gives the people no ground for trusting in YHWH's help and support aside from their loyal service to him. Chapters 65–66 also demonstrate, however, that YHWH is a magnanimous master, providing his servants with abundant support and blessing (65:8–25, 66:10–14).

The child metaphor is not cast aside in chaps. 49–66 but merely transformed as the people are regularly depicted as children of Zion, rather than YHWH. That image stresses the indissoluble bond between the people and their city-mother, climaxing in a portrait of Zion's inhabitants as contented babes, glorying in their mother's lavish care (66:10–12).

similar comments restricted to 49:7–55:13, see Peter Wilcox and David Paton-Williams, "The Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah," *JSOT* 42 (1988) 82–84.

2. A similar pattern is evident in Deuteronomy 32, which uses parent-child imagery throughout vv. 5–20 to describe Israel as YHWH's unfaithful children, who thus receive his judgment (vv. 19–35), but switches to the servant metaphor when describing their restoration (vv. 36, 43). This transition may be due to YHWH's rejection of the people as "not his children" because of their corruption (v. 5), perhaps suggesting an annulment of their adoption (on which, see James Earl Harriman, "Our Father in Heaven: The Dimensions of Divine Paternity" in Deuteronomy [Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005] 178–79). See also Thomas A. Keiser, "The Song of Moses as a Basis for Isaiah's Prophecy," *VT* 55 (2005) 497, who observes that both Deuteronomy 32 and Isaiah 40–48 raise the question "Who really are Yahweh's servants?"; and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, "The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32.1–43) in Isaiah 40–55," in *God's Word for Our World* (ed. J. Harold Ellens et al.; 2 vols.; *JSOTSup* 388; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 1:162–64, who notes a parallel shift in both Deuteronomy 32 and Isaiah 40–66 from the collective designation "Jacob" to the plural reference to "servants."

Lady Zion vis-à-vis the Servant

Due to Israel's persistent rebellion, YHWH's promises of redemption, which in chaps. 40–48 are directed toward both Israel and Zion, are addressed to Zion alone beginning in chap. 49 (cf. 1:25–28). As a more flexible symbol than Israel, Zion can be used to represent YHWH's continued commitment to his people without necessarily conveying the idea that his promises of restoration encompass the whole nation.

As several scholars have noted, Isaiah 49–54 alternates scenes featuring the individual servant figure with scenes showcasing Lady Zion³:

<i>Servant</i>	<i>Zion</i>
49:1–13	49:14–50:3
50:4–51:8 ⁴	51:9–52:12 ⁵
52:13–53:12	54:1–17

These passages also present some striking similarities in their characterization. As we have already noted, YHWH refers to himself as Zion's אֲדֹנָי (“master,” 51:22), drawing her into the sphere of the master-servant metaphor.⁶ Moreover, both the individual servant and Zion are described as “afflicted” (עָנָה, 53:4; עָנִי, 54:11) and “desolate” or “appalling” (שָׁמֵם, 52:14, 54:1).⁷

Despite their suffering, both will ultimately experience prosperity (53:12, 54:11–12) and receive “offspring” (זָרַע, 53:10, 54:3),⁸ though in the meantime, they give voice to feelings of discouragement (49:4, 14).⁹ At this point, however, significant differences emerge. The individual servant couples his dismay with an expression of trust in YHWH's vindication (cf. 50:7–8), which contrasts sharply with Zion's accusation concerning YHWH's neglect,¹⁰

3. For similar structural analyses, see Patricia Tull Willey, “The Servant of YHWH and Daughter Zion: Alternating Visions of YHWH's Community,” in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1995* (SBLSP 34; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 273; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2002) 60; Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40–66* (NAC 15b; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009) 337.

4. On this delineation of the rhetorical unit, see further p. 159.

5. See further p. 95.

6. See further p. 168.

7. Marjo C. A. Korpel, “The Female Servant of the LORD in Isaiah 54,” in *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkelen van Dijk-Hemmes* (ed. Bob Becking and Meindert Dijkstra; BIS 18; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 163.

8. Tull Willey, “Servant of YHWH,” 302; John F. A. Sawyer, “Daughter of Zion and Servant of the Lord in Isaiah: A Comparison,” *JSOT* 44 (1989) 100; Knud Jeppesen, “Mother Zion, Father Servant: A Reading of Isaiah 49–55,” in *Of Prophets' Visions and the Wisdom of Sages* (ed. Heather A. McKay and David J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 162; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 109–10.

9. Sawyer, “Daughter of Zion,” 99; Jeppesen, “Mother Zion,” 112.

10. See also Uta Schmidt, “Servant and Zion: Two Kinds of Future in Isaiah 49,” in *My Spirit at Rest in the North Country (Zechariah 6.8)* (ed. Hermann Michael Niemann and Matthias Augustin; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2011) 87.

mirroring Israel's earlier expression of despair (40:27).¹¹ Indeed, coming immediately after a call for the whole cosmos to break into singing because "YHWH has comforted his people" (49:13) through the ministry of the servant (vv. 1–9), Zion's complaint in 49:14 may be construed as a failure to acknowledge YHWH's promise of comfort through the work of his servant.¹²

Moreover, both Zion and the servant are connected with the "gathering" of the people (אסף in 49:5; קבץ in 49:18),¹³ as well as the revelation of YHWH's "salvation" (ישועה) to the "end(s) of the earth" (קצה הארץ in 49:6, אפסי־ארץ in 52:10).¹⁴ However, while the servant plays a major role in enacting YHWH's deliverance, Zion is primarily a passive recipient.¹⁵ The exhortation that she partner with YHWH in her own liberation in 52:1–2,¹⁶ though significant, is the exception rather than the rule, and she plays no part in securing the return of her children.¹⁷

Although they share many traits, the individual servant and Zion are distinct figures with separate narrative roles in chaps. 49–54;¹⁸ however,

11. As Mark J. Boda observes, the lengthy sections opening with Israel's (40:27) and Zion's laments (49:14) ultimately result in calls to praise employing similar vocabulary (רנה and פצה) because of YHWH's deliverance (49:13, 54:1; "'Uttering Precious Rather Than Worthless Words': Divine Patience and Impatience with Lament in Isaiah and Jeremiah," in *Why? . . . How Long? Studies on Voice(s) of Lamentation Rooted in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* [ed. LeAnn Snow Flesher, Carol J. Dempsey, and Mark J. Boda LHBOTS 552; London: Bloomsbury, 2014] 89–90). In Isa 49:13, however, the exhortation is addressed not to Israel, who disappears as a character after the emergence of the individual servant in Isa 49:1–9, but to the heavens, earth, and mountains.

12. Similarly, Katie Heffelfinger, *I Am Large, I Contain Multitudes: Lyric Cohesion and Conflict in Second Isaiah* (BIS 105; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 233.

13. Leland Edward Wilshire, "The Servant-City: A New Interpretation of the 'Servant of the Lord' in the Servant Songs of Deutero-Isaiah," *JBL* 94 (1975) 361.

14. Cf. the working of YHWH's "arm" (ערוך) in 52:10 and 53:1 (Tull Willey, "Servant of YHWH," 302).

15. See Sue Ann Fry, "From Suffering to Restoration: The Relationship between the Unnamed Servant and Zion in Isaiah 40–55" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2006) 217–18.

16. Korpel cites this text as evidence that Daughter Zion, like the servant, is an active character ("Female Servant," 165).

17. See 49:18, 22. Even when she bears children later in the book (66:7–9), she does so without laboring as YHWH brings them to birth.

18. See Jeppesen, "Mother Zion," 124; Tull Willey, "Servant of YHWH," 272–73; Jim W. Adams, *The Performative Nature and Function of Isaiah 40–55* (LHBOTS 448; London: T&T Clark, 2006) 114; Fry, "From Suffering to Restoration," 217–18; Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, *For the Comfort of Zion: The Geographical and Theological Location of Isaiah 40–55* (VTSup 139; Leiden: Brill, 2010) 317; also Schmidt, "Servant and Zion," 89–91, who, however, sees these figures in Isaiah 49 as offering two alternative models for the people of Israel to follow. Contra Wilshire, "Servant-City," 367; Korpel, "Female Servant," 162–66; K. D. Jenner, "Jerusalem, Zion and the Unique Servant of Yhwh in the New Heaven and the New Earth: A Study on Recovering Identity versus Lamenting Faded Glory (Isaiah 1–5 and 65–66)," in "Enlarge the Site of Your Tent": *The City as Unifying Theme in Isaiah* (ed. Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen and Annemarieke van der Woude; OtSt 58; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 179–80, 184; Athalya Brenner, "Identifying the Speaker-in-the-Text and the Reader's Location in Prophetic Texts: The Case of Isaiah 50," in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Ap-*

the servant theme is tightly connected to the drama of Mother Zion. The servant's call to be "a covenant (ברית) for the people" (49:8), along with his role in bearing "the chastisement of our peace" (שלומנו, 53:5), results in YHWH extending his "covenant of peace" (ברית שלומי) to Zion (54:10) and her children (54:13).¹⁹ Furthermore, the servant, who trusts in his "vindicator" (מצדיק, 50:8), "make[s] the many righteous" (יצדיק צדיק, 53:11), allowing Zion to "be established in righteousness" (בצדקה, 54:14) and her children to receive YHWH's "vindication" (צדקה, 54:17). Indeed, 53:1 seems to identify the servant with "the arm of YHWH," which is also the means of salvation coming to Zion in 52:7–10.²⁰

The first and last references to YHWH's "servants" (54:17, 66:14) also appear in passages focused on Mother Zion and implicitly identify the servant's offspring with hers.²¹ Moreover, Mother Zion's glorification in chap. 60 resembles that of the servant (52:13), and her reflection of YHWH's "light" (אור), which draws "nations" (גוים) to her (60:1–3), recalls the servant's call to "be a light for the nations" (לאור גוים, 49:6). Thus, Beuken may be right that, to some extent, "here Zion takes over the function of the servant."²²

Ultimately, the servant and mother images portray two aspects of the same reality—YHWH's restoration of the remnant and of their land. While the mother-child metaphor emphasizes the close relationship between people and land, the servant metaphor clarifies that only those who devote themselves to YHWH can legitimately claim to have a part in Zion's glorious future.

The Significance of Gender

In light of ancient gender stereotypes, it is unsurprising that the female personification of Zion is connected with the need for deliverance, enacted

proaches, Methods and Strategies (ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine; Chicago: Dearborn, 2001) 147–48.

19. On the parallel references to שלום, see Sawyer, "Daughter of Zion," 100.

20. J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993) 427; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 375–76. Moreover, just as "the nations" (הגוים) will "see" (ראה) YHWH's salvation when he bares his "holy arm" (52:10), so kings will "see" (ראה) when the servant sprinkles "many nations" (גוים, 52:15). These connections are strengthened in the LXX, which uses ἀποκαλύπτω both to describe how YHWH "reveals" his arm (52:10) and to ask "to whom the arm of YHWH has been revealed" (53:1; Catrin H. Williams, "The Testimony of Isaiah and Johannine Christology," in *As Those Who Are Taught: The Interpretation of Isaiah from the LXX to the SBL* [ed. Claire Mathews McGinnis and Patricia K. Tull; SBLSymS 27; Atlanta: SBL, 2006] 121).

21. Tull Willey, "Servant of YHWH," 273; Annemarieke van der Woude, "Can Zion Do without the Servant in Isaiah 40–55?" *CTJ* 39 (2004) 114.

22. W. A. M. Beuken, "The Main Theme of Trito-Isaiah: 'The Servants of YHWH,'" *JSOT* 47 (1990) 70; see also Ulrich Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja: Komposition und Endgestalt* (HBS 16; Freiburg: Herder, 1998) 437; Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 499.

by her male protector, YHWH, while the male servant is YHWH's agent. That distinction may suggest another reason for the switch from Israel to Zion in chap. 49. As a male figure, Israel is given a divine commission to embody YHWH's salvation before the nations. When it becomes clear that Israel cannot fulfill that commission because the nation itself needs saving, Isaiah turns to a female metaphor, evoking the image of a damsel in distress.

The female associations of vulnerability and the need for protection also figure prominently in the references to Daughter Zion in chaps. 1–39 (1:8, 10:32, and 37:22), presenting a striking contrast to YHWH's בָּנִים, whose primary characteristic in these chapters is rebelliousness (1:2, 4; 30:1, 9). The latter image is employed in contexts addressing the internal threat to Israel's relationship with YHWH posed by the people's behavior. By contrast, contexts dealing with external threats to Israel's security turn to the image of Daughter Zion, portraying her as utterly helpless without the intervention of her divine parent-protector.²³

Daughter Zion is once accused of disobedience like YHWH's בָּנִים, but gender plays a role there as well with its characterization of her waywardness as sexual promiscuity (1:21). Similarly, 3:16–17 rebukes the daughters of Zion for their unwonted concern for their appearance, a stereotypically feminine trait. For some feminist scholars, such uses of gendered imagery present a serious problem. For example, Kathleen O'Connor disapproves of the biblical text's tendency to present "a structure of relationship in which males represent God and females . . . symbolize erring nations and cities."²⁴ In a slightly different vein, Patricia Tull contends concerning Isa 1:21 that

displacing Jerusalem's male leaders' sins onto its female personification deflects attention from the greed of powerful men, pointing fingers instead at female sexual ethics, reinforcing a vision of women as fundamentally saints or whores, and allowing readers to forget that women were not the immediate cause of the city's injustice but were among its victims.²⁵

As Tull herself points out, however, Isaiah's gendered "imagery is not static, but contains promising elements that unsettle any notion that God is ontologically male and that the feminine is truly powerless."²⁶ After all,

23. Note, however, the assurance of protection implied by 16:1.

24. Kathleen M. O'Connor, "Jeremiah," in *Women's Bible Commentary* (ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998) 272; also Carleen R. Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (SemeiaSt 58; Atlanta: SBL, 2007) 32; Gale A. Yee, "Hosea," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, 299. See the similar comments on the Christian appropriation of the marriage metaphor for Christ and the church by Carolyn Osiek, "The Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22–33): A Problematic Wedding," *BTB* 32 (2002) 38–39.

25. Patricia K. Tull, "Isaiah," in *Women's Bible Commentary* (ed. Carol Ann Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley; 3rd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012) 258; cf. 265.

26. Tull, "Isaiah," 257.

the book offers female images for God (e.g., 49:15, 66:13) and calls upon Daughter Zion to “arise” and “loose the chains from [her] neck” (52:2). Moreover, Isaiah uses both male and female images to portray Israel’s depravity.²⁷ Along with the references to YHWH’s rebellious בנים, the nation’s male leaders also receive their share of condemnation (e.g., 7:13; 9:14–15[15–16]; 28:7, 14–19; 56:10–12), and the male figure of servant Israel is admonished for spiritual blindness (42:19). Finally, the female imagery for Zion is given a markedly positive character in many of the portraits of restoration dominating chaps. 40–66.

Although the more egalitarian climate of modern Western culture may lead readers to balk at the gender assumptions underlying the biblical text, it should be no surprise that these texts reflect the social conventions of the ancient world. The biblical authors employed these metaphors to portray the unfamiliar, the people’s relationships with their God and their land, in terms of the familiar, the stereotypical associations evoked by various household relationships. Understanding metaphor as mapping elements in the source domain (the vehicle) onto the target domain (the tenor) suggests a unidirectional process.²⁸ Israel’s understanding of the role of daughters is used to convey something about Zion, not vice versa. Even the HB itself provides some warrant for challenging ancient Israel’s gender inequality (see, e.g., Genesis 1–2), but this need not entail rejection of the gendered metaphors adopted by the prophets as understood against their ancient backgrounds.

Distinguishing between Zion’s Feminine Roles

Although Isaiah’s portraits of Zion as daughter, mother, and wife overlap in drawing on stereotypically female associations, this overlap is not complete. Each also presents distinctive facets of Zion’s character, and thus these metaphors should not be equated.²⁹ First of all, while Zion’s vulnerability is common to all these depictions, the daughter metaphor is the primary vehicle for conveying her need for divine protection. Second, both the daughter and wife images depict the intimacy of Zion’s relationship with YHWH, but the former emphasizes paternal delight, while the latter evokes a greater sense of mutuality.

27. On this issue in the prophetic literature more broadly, see Robert P. Carroll, “Desire Under the Terebinths: On Pornographic Representation in the Prophets—A Response,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets* (ed. Athalya Brenner; FCB 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995) 277–79.

28. See p. 10.

29. As, e.g., by Stephen L. Cook, “The Fecundity of Fair Zion: Beauty and Fruitfulness as Spiritual Fulfillment,” in *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Dempsey, and LeAnn Snow Flesher; SBLAIL 13; Atlanta: SBL, 2012) 77; Mary Donovan Turner, “Daughter Zion: Lament and Restoration” (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1992) 282; also Marvin A. Sweeney, “The Legacy of Josiah in Isaiah 40–55,” in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* (ed. A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim; SBLAIL 4; Atlanta: SBL, 2009) 124–25, 128–29, based on his interpretation of Zephaniah 3.

Third, these images present different perspectives on the exile. The parent-daughter relationship transcends that breach (52:2, 62:11); indeed, YHWH insists that he cannot forget to show compassion toward Zion, like a mother for her helpless infant (49:15). Despite Zion's perception of YHWH's disregard (49:14), the possibilities of parental neglect or disownment fall outside the scope of Isaiah's use of the daughter metaphor. The marriage metaphor, by contrast, incorporates the aspect of divorce to convey a complete rupture in Zion's relationship with YHWH during the exile (50:1). Nevertheless, the image of marital reconciliation also conveys YHWH's renewed commitment to the city following that period of estrangement (54:4–10).

Fourth, while the concern for a woman's sexual purity appears within the framework of both metaphors, it has different implications in each case. Against the background of the daughter image (1:21), Zion's promiscuity is not an offense directly aimed at YHWH, and thus it affects him not primarily by introducing alienation in that relationship but by shaming him before others. Within the marriage metaphor, however (57:3–13), Zion's adulterous liaisons with idols constitute a flagrant violation of her marital obligations to YHWH, thus posing a severe threat to that relationship.

Finally, Zion's motherhood illuminates her relationship with her people, rather than YHWH, highlighting associations of feminine powerlessness and shame with depictions of her barrenness (49:21, 54:1) and her utter desolation without any sons to help her (51:18–20). These, however, are displaced by promises of the joy, honor, and familial intimacy she will soon experience as a mother of many (49:18–20; 54:1–3; 60:4, 9; 66:7–14). No single female metaphor is sufficient to portray the multifaceted reality of Zion's identity in Isaiah.

Israel and Zion as Members of YHWH's Royal Household

Although the book of Isaiah does not present a single, consistent family portrait, both Israel and Zion are described as part of YHWH's household. Because the book of Isaiah is unified in depicting YHWH as king—note especially the references to YHWH's "throne" (כִּסֵּא) that frame the body of the book following its lengthy introduction in chaps. 1–5 (6:1, 66:1)³⁰—YHWH's household should be understood as royal. That idea is most clearly conveyed by Isaiah's use of the servant metaphor. As YHWH's "messenger"

30. See also 6:5, 24:23, 33:22; cf. v. 17. Richard Schultz contends that even the messianic text in Isaiah 9 emphasizes the idea that YHWH is "the true king," and he sees YHWH's kingship as occurring at structurally significant points in Isaiah 1–39 to emphasize the sovereign exercise of his power both "through and despite human kings" ("The King in the Book of Isaiah," in *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* [ed. Philip E. Satterthwaite, Richard S. Hess, and Gordon J. Wenham; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995] 149, 154, emphasis original). On the pervasiveness of this metaphor, evoked by a wide variety of royal associations, see Marc Zvi Brettler, *God Is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).

(42:19) and “witnesses” (43:10) to his sovereign power, Israel is called to serve as the emissary of a king, rather than as a menial laborer for a commoner.³¹ Indeed, just a few verses after commissioning servant Israel to function as his witnesses, YHWH declares, “I am YHWH, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your (pl.) King” (מֶלֶךְ, 43:15), a statement that also forms part of the background for YHWH’s designation of the people as his “sons” and “daughters” in 43:6.

This pattern continues in Isaiah 44, where YHWH’s reassurance of servant Jacob/Israel (vv. 1–2) is soon followed by his self-identification as “the King (מֶלֶךְ) of Israel” (v. 6). Moreover, the servant text in 42:1–9 is part of a larger rhetorical unit that begins with the designation of YHWH as “the King (מֶלֶךְ) of Jacob” (41:21).³² Thus, the servant’s kingly task of “bring[ing] forth justice to the nations” (42:1) reflects his duty to act on behalf of the divine king.

Daughter Zion is also connected with the theme of royalty in Isaiah 52. As noted earlier, when she is enjoined to arise from the ground and sit in v. 2, the contrast with the portrait of Lady Babylon in 47:1 suggests the image of Daughter Zion sitting on a throne.³³ Moreover, she can draw courage and strength to obey this exhortation from the proclamation of the messenger who declares to her, “Your (fem. sg.) God reigns” (מֶלֶךְ, v. 7).³⁴ Finally, in connection with the metaphors of Zion as mother and wife, 62:3 portrays Zion as a “crown of splendor” and a “royal diadem.”³⁵ An-

31. However, the contrast between royal and common domestic servants should not be drawn too sharply. The roles servants played in the households of commoners, particularly wealthy commoners, were not limited to menial tasks. Note, for example, Abraham’s initial intention to bequeath his property to his servant Eliezer of Damascus (called a “son of [his] household,” Gen 15:2–3) and his commissioning of the servant “who ruled over all that belonged to him” (perhaps this same Eliezer) to find a bride for his son Isaac (Gen 24:1–4). As Richard Schultz observes, this narrative demonstrates the servant’s “close relationship to his master, his great responsibility, and his considerable freedom” (“Servant, Slave,” *NIDOTTE* 4:1185). While the tasks assigned to servants could vary widely, the expectations of the servant’s obedience and the master’s protection remained essentially the same across the socioeconomic spectrum of Israelite households, from those residing in standard small pillared dwellings to the occupants of the royal palace.

32. See further p. 138.

33. See p. 73. It is also possible that יושבת ציון in Isa 12:6 refers not to a female inhabitant of Zion but to Zion as a royal figure (see John J. Schmitt, “The City as Woman in Isaiah 1–39,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* [ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; 2 vols.; VTSup 70; Leiden: Brill, 1997] 102).

34. Trygve N. D. Mettinger argues that “the idea of the Divine Warrior, who vindicates his kingship in a new victory over the forces of chaos,” is a unifying image in Isaiah 40–55 and sees the announcement of YHWH’s kingship in 52:7 as the section’s climax (“In Search of the Hidden Structure: YHWH as King in Isaiah 40–55,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* [ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; 2 vols.; VTSup 70; Leiden: Brill, 1997] 1:150).

35. Christl M. Maier also sees the description of Zion as a city rebuilt with precious stones in Isa 54:11–13 as suggesting the image of a mural crown and notes its connection to the restoration of her marriage with YHWH (“Daughter Zion as Queen and the Iconog-

dersen may be correct in understanding vv. 3–5 as portraying a regal wedding in which Zion functions both as the bride and as the crown YHWH places upon the head of the royal bridegroom—Zion’s sons.³⁶ Whatever the function of the crown, it clearly casts Zion in a queenly light, an image supported by 60:10–12, which envisions kings serving her (cf. 49:23) and bringing their wealth as tribute.³⁷

Although 62:4–5 also uses a marital simile to depict YHWH rejoicing over Zion, it is not clear how YHWH functions in relation to the household built around a marriage between Zion and her people. Similarly, as has already been noted, the passages portraying Zion as mother of her people do not acknowledge YHWH’s role as father.³⁸ Nevertheless, YHWH is the one who overturns Zion’s desolate state in 62:4–5, and she becomes a crown in his hand (62:3). Also in 60:10–12 the foreign kings exalt Zion because she reflects “the glory of YHWH” (vv. 1–3). Thus, Zion and her sons/bridegroom derive their royal status from YHWH. Moreover, even if YHWH does not claim an immediate relationship to Mother Zion and her children, Psalm 68 affirms that as divine king (v. 25[24]) he acts as a “father of the fatherless and defender of widows . . . who settles the solitary in a home” (vv. 6–7a [5–6a]). Perhaps it is in this role that he draws desolate Mother Zion and her exiled children into his royal household. His beneficent care ultimately results in the miraculous (re)birth of Zion’s children and an abundance of comfort and provision (66:7–14).

As Philip King and Lawrence Stager observe, Israelite society was conceptualized as “a three-tiered structure based on a series of nested households.” Built on the model of the *בית אב*, the king also plays the role of *paterfamilias* for a larger household comprising the entire kingdom. Similarly, YHWH, as “the supreme patrimonial lord,” exercises the highest level of “patrimonial authority” over the house of Israel.³⁹ As master, father, husband, and sovereign protector, as well as divine king, YHWH confers on Israel and Zion the honor and privilege attending those found in the royal household.

However, YHWH also has certain expectations of those within his domestic sphere. When his wife abandons him for another *מלך* and promiscuously engages in affairs with idols (57:6–9), she will cry out in vain for deliverance (v. 13). Nevertheless, since YHWH has pledged himself to Zion

raphy of the Female City,” in *Images and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean* [ed. Martti Nissinen and Charles E. Carter; FRLANT 233; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009] 154–56).

36. See p. 127.

37. See further Corinna Körting, “Isaiah 62:1–7 and Psalm 45—or—Two Ways to Become Queen,” in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Chronological and Thematic Development in Isaiah 40–66* (ed. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer and Hans M. Barstad; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014) 103–23.

38. See pp. 49–50.

39. Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (LAI; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 4–5.

in an eternal marriage covenant (54:6–10), her unfaithfulness will lead no longer to divorce (as in 50:1) but merely to a temporary removal of his protection, followed by a renewal of his affectionate delight (62:5). Similarly, rebellious princes (1:2–4; 30:1, 9) and a promiscuous Daughter Zion (1:21) threaten not only YHWH's paternal authority but also the order within his kingdom. Thus, YHWH demands that his children demonstrate their devotion by faithfully acting as his servants, rejecting those who obstinately resist his lordship (see esp. 65:8–16). He does not treat his servants harshly, however, but generously provides for their needs and bestows on them a magnificent inheritance in a new heavens and new earth (65:8–25). Furthermore, he purifies Daughter Zion from her uncleanness (1:24–26) and delivers her from her enemies (62:11–12), restoring her to her rightful place on the throne (52:1–2).

The dignity and security of Israel and Zion are firmly rooted in their inclusion in YHWH's royal household. Due to their sin and the judgment of exile, both people and city become estranged from their *paterfamilias* and lose the protection of the *בית אב*. Ultimately, however, YHWH restores his relationship with Zion as cherished wife and delivers her with a paternal zeal. Moreover, those of his children who repent and serve him as master find new life in the embrace of their Mother Zion.

Conclusion

Metaphors taken from the realm of household relationships are central to Isaiah's development of the characters of both people and city. In the opening act of Isaiah's drama, Zion takes the stage as a vulnerable daughter in need of paternal protection (1:8), who shamelessly engages in promiscuity (1:21). Ultimately, however, she experiences the salvation enacted by her divine father (62:11–12) and is transformed into a radiant and caring mother, miraculously giving birth to her children before the onset of labor pains (66:7–12). Similarly, the people are first presented as rebelling against their divine parent's authority, but after the judgment of exile they are eventually rebirthed by Mother Zion to become contented babes nursing at her breast (66:11–12) and receiving YHWH's maternal comfort (66:13). However, not all of YHWH's rebellious children are beneficiaries of these rewards. Only those who willingly take on the role of servant in YHWH's royal household (66:14; cf. 65:8–9, 13–15) experience the comfort of home and the contentment and delight of Zion's maternal care.⁴⁰

40. On the significance of "the language of home," see Sarah J. Dille, *Mixing Metaphors: God as Mother and Father in Deutero-Isaiah* (JSOTSup 398; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 176–77.

Appendix 1

Distribution Charts

The italic entries throughout designate verses in which the metaphor is clearly implied but not explicitly stated and are totaled separately in parentheses. See Appendix 3 (p. 200) for a table listing these passages and the textual evidence for including them in this study.

Summary Distribution of Metaphors

<i>Section</i>	<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Sons/ Children</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Servant</i>	<i>Total</i>
Chaps. 1–39	1	1:2, 4	1:8				3
	3		3:16, 17	<i>3:16, 17</i>			2 (2)
	4		4:4	<i>4:4</i>			1 (1)
	10		10:32				1
	16		16:1				1
	22		22:4				1
	30	30:1, 9 (2×)					3
	37	37:3	37:22 (2×)	37:3			3 (1)
	Total	6	9	(4)	0	0	15 (4)
Chaps. 40–55	41					41:8, 9	2
	42					42:1, 19 (2×)	3
	43	43:6	43:6			43:10, 23	3 (1)
	44					44:1, 2, 21 (2×), 26	5
	45	45:11				45:4	2
	48					48:20	1
	49	49:17, 20, 22, 25	49:15, 22	<i>49:17, 20, 22, 25</i>		49:3, 5, 6, 7*	9 (5)
	50	50:1		50:1 (2×)	50:1	50:10	3 (2)

* In 49:7, the individual servant figure is described as a “servant of rulers,” rather than of YHWH as elsewhere.

Summary Distribution of Metaphors

Section	Chapter	Sons/ Children	Daughter	Mother	Wife	Servant	Total
Chaps. 40–55 (cont.)	51	51:18 (2×), 20		51:18, 20		51:22	3 (3)
	52		52:2			52:13	2
	53					53:11	1
	54	54:1, 13 (2×)		54:1, 13	54:5, 6 (2×)	54:17	6 (3)
	Total	12 (1)	3 (1)	2 (8)	2 (2)	21 (2)	40 (14)
Chaps. 56–66	56					56:6	1
	57	57:3		57:3	57:3		1 (2)
	60	60:4, 9	60:4	60:4, 9			3 (2)
	62	62:5	62:11	62:5	62:4, 5 [2×]		2 (5)
	63	63:8, 16				63:17	2 (1)
	64	64:7[8]					(1)
	65					65:8, 9, 13 (3×), 14, 15	7
	66	66:8, 13		66:8		66:14	2 (2)
	Total	6 (3)	2	(5)	(4)	10	18 (13)
Total		24 (4)	14 (1)	2 (17)	2 (6)	31 (2)	73 (31)

Sons/Children

Section	Chapter	Sons/Children of Y ^{HWH}	Sons/Children of Zion	Total
Chaps. 1–39	1	1:2, 4		2
	30	30:1, 9 (2×)		3
	37		37:3	1
	Total	5	1	6
Chaps. 40–55	43	43:6		1
	45	45:11		1
	49		49:17, 20, 22, 25	4
	50		50:1	(1)
	51		51:18 (2×), 20	3
	54		54:1, 13 (2×)	3
	Total	2	10 (1)	12 (1)

Sons/Children

<i>Section</i>	<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Sons/Children of Y_{HWH}</i>	<i>Sons/Children of Zion</i>	<i>Total</i>
Chaps. 56–66	57		57:3	1
	60		60:4, 9	2
	62		62:5	1
	63	63:8, 16		1 (1)
	64	64:7[8]		(1)
	66	66:13	66:8	1 (1)
	Total	1 (3)	5	6 (3)
Total		8 (3)	16 (1)	24 (4)

Daughter(s)

<i>Section</i>	<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Daughter</i>		<i>Daughters</i>		<i>Total</i>
		<i>Zion/Jerusalem</i>	<i>My People</i>	<i>of Zion</i>	<i>of Y_{HWH}</i>	
Chaps. 1–39	1	1:8				1
	3			3:16, 17		2
	4			4:4		1
	10	10:32				1
	16	16:1				1
	22		22:4			1
	37	37:22 (2×)				2
	Total	5	1	3	0	9
Chaps. 40–55	43				43:6	1
	49	49:15		49:22		1 (1)
	52	52:2				1
	Total	1 (1)	0	1	1	3 (1)
Chaps. 56–66	60			60:4		1
	62	62:11				1
	Total	1	0	1	0	2
Total		7 (1)	1	5	1	14 (1)

Mother/Wife

Section	Chapter	Mother of Her Inhabitants	Wife		Total
			of Y _{HWH}	of Her Sons	
Chaps. 1–39	3	3:16, 17			(2)
	4	4:4			(1)
	37	37:3			(1)
	Total	(4)	0	0	(4)
Chaps. 40–55	49	49:17, 20, 22, 25			(4)
	50	50:1 (2x)	50:1		2 (1)
	51	51:18, 20			(2)
	54	54:1, 13	54:5, 6 (2x)		1 (3)
	Total	2 (8)	2 (2)	0	4 (10)
Chaps. 56–66	57	57:3	57:3		(2)
	60	60:4, 9			(2)
	62	62:5	62:5	62:4, 5	(4)
	66	66:8			(1)
	Total	(5)	(2)	(2)	(9)
Total		2 (17)	2 (4)	(2)	4 (23)

Servant(s)

Section	Chapter	Servant			Servants: Remnant of Israelites	Total
		Israel/ Jacob	Unidentified Representative of Israel	Zion		
Chaps. 1-39	Total	0	0	0	0	0
Chaps. 40-55	41	41:8, 9				2
	42	42:1, 19 (2×)				3
	43	43:10, 23				1 (1)
	44	44:1, 2, 21 (2×), 26				5
	45	45:4				1
	48	48:20				1
	49		49:3, 5, 6, 7*			4
	50		50:10			1
	51			51:22		(1)
	52		52:13			1
	53		53:11			1
	54				54:17	1
	Total	13 (1)	7	(1)	1	21 (2)
Chaps. 56-66	56				56:6	1
	63				63:17	1
	65				65:8, 9, 13 (3×), 14, 15	7
	66				66:14	1
	Total	0	0	0	10	10
Total		13 (1)	7	(1)	11	31 (2)

* In 49:7, the individual servant figure is described as a “servant of rulers,” rather than of YHWH as elsewhere.

Appendix 2

Overview of Passages

Passages Organized Categorically

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Rhetorical Unit</i>	<i>Focus Verses</i>
Chap. 2	1. YHWH's Children	1	1:1–31*	1:2, 4
		2	30:1–18	30:1, 9
		3	42:18–43:21*	43:6
		4	45:9–25	45:11
		5	63:7–64:11[12]*	63:8, 16; 64:7[8]
		6	65:1–66:24*	66:13
	2. Zion's Sons/Children	7	36:1–37:38*	37:3
		8	49:14–50:3*	49:17, 20, 22, 25; 50:1
		9	51:9–52:12*	51:18, 20
		10	54:1–17*	54:1, 13
		11	57:3–13*	57:3
		12	60:1–22*	60:4, 9
		13	62:1–12*	62:5
		14	65:1–66:24*	66:8
Chap. 3	1. Daughter Zion/Jerusalem	1	1:1–31*	1:8
		2	10:5–34	10:32
		3	15:1–16:14	16:1
		4	36:1–37:38*	37:22
		5	49:14–50:3*	49:15
		6	51:9–52:12*	52:2
		7	62:1–12*	62:11
	2. Daughter, My People	8	22:1–25	22:4
	3. The Women of Israel as Zion's Daughters	9	3:16–4:6*	3:16, 17; 4:4
		10	49:14–50:3*	49:22
		11	60:1–22*	60:4
	4. The Women of Israel as YHWH's Daughters	12	42:18–43:21*	43:6
Passages marked with an asterisk (*) are also found in another chapter or section.				

Passages Organized Categorically

Chapter	Section	#	Rhetorical Unit	Focus Verses
Chap. 4	3. Zion as Mother of the People of Israel	1	3:16–4:6*	3:16, 17; 4:4
		2	36:1–37:38*	37:3
		3	49:14–50:3*	49:17, 20, 22, 25; 50:1
		4	51:9–52:12*	51:18, 20
		5	54:1–17*	54:1, 13
		6	57:3–13*	57:3
		7	60:1–22*	60:4, 9
		8	62:1–12*	62:5
		9	65:1–66:24*	66:8
	1. Zion as YHWH’s Wife	10	49:14–50:3*	50:1
		11	54:1–17*	54:5, 6
		12	57:3–13*	57:3
		13	62:1–12*	62:5
	2. Zion as Wife of Her Sons	14	62:1–12*	62:4, 5
Chap. 5	1. Jacob/Israel as YHWH’s Servant	1	41:1–20	41:8, 9
		2	41:21–42:17	42:1
		3	42:18–43:21*	42:19, 43:10
		4	43:22–45:8	43:23; 44:1, 2, 21, 26; 45:4
		5	48:1–22	48:20
	2. An Unnamed Representative of Israel as YHWH’s Servant	6	49:1–13	49:3, 5, 6
		7	50:4–51:8	50:10
		8	52:13–53:12	52:13, 53:11
	3. Zion as YHWH’s Servant	9	51:9–52:12*	51:22
	4. The Faithful People as YHWH’s Servants	10	54:1–17*	54:17
		11	56:1–8	56:6
		12	63:7–64:11[12]*	63:17
		13	65:1–66:24*	65:8, 9, 13, 14, 15; 66:14
Passages marked with an asterisk (*) are also found in another chapter or section.				

Passages Organized Sequentially

#	Rhetorical Unit	Book Chapter and Section	Focus Verses
1	1:1–31	2.1—The People of Israel as YHWH's Children	1:2, 4
		3.1—Daughter Zion/Jerusalem	1:8
2	3:16–4:6	3.3—The Women of Israel as Zion's Daughters	3:16, 17; 4:4
		4.1—Zion as Mother of the People of Israel	
3	10:5–34	3.1—Daughter Zion/Jerusalem	10:32
4	15:1–16:14	3.1—Daughter Zion/Jerusalem	16:1
5	22:1–25	3.2 –Daughter, My People	22:4
6	30:1–18	2.1—The People of Israel as YHWH's Children	30:1, 9
7	36:1–37:38	2.2—The People of Israel as Zion's Sons/Children	37:3
		3.1—Daughter Zion/Jerusalem	37:22
		4.1—Zion as Mother of the People of Israel	37:3
8	41:1–20	5.1—Jacob/Israel as YHWH's Servant	41:8, 9
9	41:21–42:17	5.1—Jacob/Israel as YHWH's Servant	42:1
10	42:18–43:21	2.1—The People of Israel as YHWH's Children	43:6
		3.4—The Women of Israel as YHWH's Daughters	
		5.1—Jacob/Israel as YHWH's Servant	42:19, 43:10
11	43:22–45:8	5.1—Jacob/Israel as YHWH's Servant	43:23; 44:1, 2, 21, 26; 45:4
12	45:9–25	2.1—The People of Israel as YHWH's Children	45:11
13	48:1–22	5.1—Jacob/Israel as YHWH's Servant	48:20
14	49:1–13	5.2—An Unnamed Representative of Israel as YHWH's Servant	49:3, 5, 6
15	49:14–50:3	2.2—The People of Israel as Zion's Sons/Children	49:17, 20, 22, 25; 50:1
		3.1—Daughter Zion/Jerusalem	49:15
		3.3—The Women of Israel as Zion's Daughters	49:22
		4.1—Zion as Mother of the People of Israel	49:17, 20, 22, 25; 50:1
		4.2—Zion as YHWH's Wife	50:1
16	50:4–51:8	5.2: An Unnamed Representative of Israel as YHWH's Servant	50:10

Passages Organized Sequentially

#	Rhetorical Unit	Book Chapter and Section	Focus Verses
17	51:9–52:12	2.2—The People of Israel as Zion's Sons/Children	51:18, 20
		3.1—Daughter Zion/Jerusalem	52:2
		4.1—Zion as Mother of the People of Israel	51:18, 20
		5.3—Zion as YHWH's Servant	51:22
18	52:13–53:12	5.2—An Unnamed Representative of Israel as YHWH's Servant	52:13, 53:11
19	54:1–17	2.2—The People of Israel as Zion's Sons/Children	54:1, 13
		4.1—Zion as Mother of the People of Israel	
		4.2—Zion as YHWH's Wife	54:5, 6
		5.4—The Faithful People as YHWH's Servants	54:17
20	56:1–8	5.4—The Faithful People as YHWH's Servants	56:6
21	57:3–13	2.2—The People of Israel as Zion's Sons/Children	57:3
		4.1—Zion as Mother of the People of Israel	
		4.2—Zion as YHWH's Wife	
22	60:1–22	2.2—The People of Israel as Zion's Sons/Children	60:4, 9
		3.3—The Women of Israel as Zion's Daughters	60:4
		4.1—Zion as Mother of the People of Israel	60:4, 9
23	62:1–12	2.2—The People of Israel as Zion's Sons/Children	62:5
		3.1—Daughter Zion/Jerusalem	62:11
		4.1—Zion as Mother of the People of Israel	62:5
		4.2—Zion as YHWH's Wife	
		4.3—Zion as Wife of Her Sons	62:4, 5
24	63:7–64:11[12]	2.1—The People of Israel as YHWH's Children	63:8, 16; 64:7[8]
		5.4—The Faithful People as YHWH's Servants	63:17
25	65:1–66:24	2.1—The People of Israel as YHWH's Children	66:13
		2.2—The People of Israel as Zion's Sons/Children	66:8
		4.1—Zion as Mother of the People of Israel	
		5.4—The Faithful People as YHWH's Servants	65:8, 9, 13, 14, 15; 66:14

Appendix 3

Texts with Implied Metaphors

Texts with Implied Metaphors

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Textual Evidence for Inclusion</i>
Chap. 2: Sons/ Children	50:1	"your (m. pl.) mother"
	63:16	"you are our father"
	64:[7]8	"you are our father"
	66:13	"As a man whose mother comforts him, so I will comfort you (m. pl.)"
Chap. 3: Daughter(s)	49:15	"Can a woman forget her nursing baby . . . Even these may forget, but <i>I</i> will not forget you (f. sg.)"
Chap. 4: Mother	3:16	"daughters of Zion"
	3:17	"daughters of Zion"
	4:4	"daughters of Zion"
	37:3	"Children have come to the breaking open [of the womb]"
	49:17	"your (f. sg.) children"
	49:20	"the children of your (f. sg.) bereavement"
	49:22	"your (f. sg.) sons . . . and your (f. sg.) daughters"
	49:25	"your (f. sg.) children"
	51:18	"all the sons she has borne"
	51:20	"your (f. sg.) sons"
	54:1	"For more are the children of the desolate one than the children of one who is married"
	54:13	"your (f. sg.) children"
	57:3	"children of a sorceress"
	60:4	"your (f. sg.) sons . . . and your (f. sg.) daughters"
	60:9	"your (f. sg.) children"
	62:5	"your (f. sg.) sons"
	66:8	"her children"

Texts with Implied Metaphors

Chapter	Text	Textual Evidence for Inclusion
Chap. 4: Wife	50:1	"Where is the certificate of divorce of your mother"
	54:5	"your Maker is your husband"
	57:3	"offspring of an adulterer and [a woman who] is promiscuous"
	62:4	"and your (f. sg.) land [will be called] Married"
	62:5	"For [as] a young man marries a maiden, so your sons will marry you, and with the rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride, your God will rejoice over you"
Chap. 5: Servant(s)	43:23	"I have not enslaved you"
	51:22	"your (f. sg.) Master"

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