

Isaiah

Chapter 54
Christ Church

Fall 2025

- **FRAGMENT OF ASSYRIAN CUNEIFORM
INSCRIPTION DISCOVERED IN JERUSALEM**
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- Category: Breaking News
- Created: 26 October 2025

- A tiny, extremely rare pottery sherd bearing a cuneiform inscription in the Akkadian language from about 2,700 years ago was discovered in an archaeological excavation near the Western Wall of the Temple Mount, north of the City of David. This is an extraordinary find and the first of its kind – the only Assyrian inscription from the First Temple period (8th to 7th centuries BCE) ever found in the city.



- An expert summarizes the inscription as follows: “And here we actually have a direct letter signed with the seal of the king of Assyria addressed to the king of Judah saying to him, *‘Dear king of Judah, send the tribute quickly by the first of Av and if not, the consequences will be severe.’*”
- One possible biblical connection to this artifact appears in 2 Kings 18:7, which records that Hezekiah *“rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.”*

- Because of the Servant's work in Isaiah 52, 53, (Songs of the Servant), Israel breaks out in song (54:1-3)
- v. 1 may be the most disobeyed command in the Bible – “*burst into song!*” “Let joyful songs explode out of you”
- God is exuberant and is creating a new world of boisterous happiness in Jesus

- The test of a Christian's faith is not only the soundness of their doctrine but also the gladness of their worship



- In Isaiah 54 the prophet uses three images to portray the decrepitude of Israel
- In Galatians 4:21-31, Paul picks up Isaiah 54:1 to show the nature of God's grace in the work of salvation – esp. v. 27

- In vv.1-10 Israel is depicted in the image of a disgraced woman
 - She is barren in vv.1-3
 - She is a widow in vv. 4-5
 - She is divorced in vv. 6-8
- Remember this is an *honor/shame* society



- vv.1-3 **Barrenness**
- Barrenness is a key theme in Isaiah – see 26:16-18; 29:22-23; 37:3; 66:9



- In the Ancient Near East almost the worst fate that could befall a woman was to have no children
- Consider several barren women stories
 - Sarah
 - Rebekah
 - Rachel
 - Hannah
 - Manoah's wife
 - Elizabeth

- vv. 4,5 **Widowhood**
- A woman made her contributions to society through her husband



- Widows

- Tamar
- Naomi
- Orpah
- Ruth
- Abigail
- Bathsheba
- Widow of two sons
- Widow of Zarephath
- Mother of Hiram from Tyre
- Zeruah, mother of Jeroboam
- Anna
- Widow of Nain
- Widow with two mites
- Persistent widow
- Tabitha

- vv. 6-8 **Divorced**
- I repeat - A woman made her contributions to society through her husband
 - See Proverbs 31:10-31; esp. 23, 31
- Remember that God divorced Israel
 - Isaiah 50:1; Jeremiah 3:8
- This is the “RIV” of the prophets



- Who marries Israel? Who delivers her from her disgrace?
- v. 5 rings with His titles
 - The Creator
 - The One who is “Yahweh of Heaven’s Armies” or as the NIV says: “Lord Almighty”
 - The Holy One
 - The Redeemer
 - The God of the whole earth
- Who could be sad if this is The One who has taken you as His own?

- In v. 8, “In a surge of wrath’ is also a ‘little wrath’. The Hebrew is ‘*shetzef getzef*’. You can almost see the Lord giving a dismissive hand wave and saying: “No big deal, that was nothing, because we will now be together forever.”



- In vv. 9, 10 we reach the climax of The Lord’s grace. He says that His “unfailing love” and His “covenant of grace” are forever
- Clearly, The Servant’s sacrifice in 52:13-53:12 is the means to this end

- Isaiah 1:5-6 describes Zion as diseased and wounded
- Now in Isaiah 54:11-12 she gets a makeover







- In vv.11-12 we see the makeover of the ‘whore city’ (Isaiah 1:21). This is Isaiah’s fourth image of grace
 - She is a bride, adorned with jewels
 - She is a city with foundations of sapphires/lapis lazuli, gates of jewels, and ruby fences/walls

- Who built this city? Who had the imagination? Who had the wealth?
- God did. This city is where His people will live forever – see Revelation 21:18-21

- The word in v. 11 for ‘turquoise’ is ‘*puk*’ in Hebrew
 - It is translated as ‘eye makeup’ or ‘mascara’ in II Kings 9:30
- How secure could a city be with jewel building material and cosmetic mortar? What does that suggest?



- This will be a city of **great learning** – vv. 13-17
 - The Lord is the professor – v. 13
 - The curriculum will be ‘shalom’, righteousness, and security
 - The classes about ‘Tyranny’ and ‘Terror’ are outlawed – v. 14
 - It is tuition free if you gladly accept the role of ‘servants of the Lord’ – v. 17

