

Second Isaiah Servant and Bride

Interpreting the Text:

1. The author of Second Isaiah suggests both that God has predetermined the events that have transpired, and that God feels great sadness for Zion, personified as a woman. How do these two things work together? How should we as readers hold this tension in God's reaction to the exile of the Israelites?
2. How do the Servant and Zion relate to each other? Why are both part of God's plans?
3. How do the creation, the exodus, and the restoration from exile "mirror" each other? Why is it important that we understand that they do?

Applying the Text:

1. Two dramatic players emerge prominently in this division of Isaiah: the Lord's Servant and Daughter Zion. Do you relate to one of these figures more than the other? What qualities of that persona draw your attention and empathy?
2. It sounds odd to many modern people to consider beauty a central part of God's saving plans, yet Second Isaiah highlights this theme. How do you react to the idea that beauty is of importance in spirituality? Have you or someone you know ever had an experience of beauty that was life-changing, or even life-saving?
3. Have you or someone you've known ever had occasion to emulate the lifestyle modeled by the Servant of the Lord? Have you ever put yourself in harm's way out of other-centered caring? Was any person (or persons) affected? Were "hot coals" heaped on anyone's head? If you do not wish to share from personal experience, can you recall any compelling illustrations from literature, the cinema, or the daily news?

Yale Divinity School, 409 Prospect Street, New Haven, CT 06511
www.yalebiblestudy.org