

Isaiah 54:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

Analysis

For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. This verse employs marital imagery to describe Israel's relationship with God. The threefold description—"forsaken" ('azuvah, עזובה), "grieved in spirit" (va'atzuvat ruach, עצובת רוח), "refused" (me'usah, מאושה)—depicts a wife experiencing abandonment and rejection. Yet the opening phrase "the LORD hath called thee" introduces redemptive reversal—God takes back the rejected wife.

"A wife of youth" (eshet ne'urim, אשת נערים) emphasizes the relationship's early covenant origins, recalling Israel's initial betrothal to Yahweh (Jeremiah 2:2, Ezekiel 16:8). Though the wife experienced rejection (exile), God now summons her back, demonstrating covenant faithfulness despite her unfaithfulness. The title "thy God" maintains personal relationship even through estrangement.

From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates unconditional election and persevering grace. Israel's restoration doesn't depend on her worthiness but God's covenant commitment. The church, though comprised of former covenant-breakers, is called back through Christ's mediation. Hosea's marriage to Gomer provides parallel imagery (Hosea 1-3)—God loves His people with covenant loyalty despite spiritual adultery. This verse confronts Arminian theology that makes salvation dependent on sustained human faithfulness; instead, God's calling and reclaiming proves His sovereignty in salvation.

Historical Context

The marital metaphor for God-Israel relationship appears frequently in prophetic literature (Hosea, Jeremiah 2-3, Ezekiel 16, 23). Ancient Near Eastern treaties sometimes used marriage language for covenant relationships. Israel's exile seemed to terminate this relationship—God appeared to divorce His people for adultery (idolatry).

Yet Isaiah promises remarriage, demonstrating covenant faithfulness. The "wife of youth" recalls Sinai covenant establishment, Israel's "marriage" to Yahweh after Egypt's exodus. Despite subsequent unfaithfulness leading to exile, God promises restoration. This pattern finds ultimate expression in Christ's relationship with the church—He betroths a bride "not having spot, or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:27), transforming former adulterers into pure bride through His sanctifying work.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does understanding God's initiative in calling back the 'forsaken' affect your view of salvation?
2. What aspects of your spiritual history involve feeling 'refused' or 'grieved in spirit'?
3. How should God's persistent calling despite unfaithfulness shape your confidence in perseverance?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	וְאֵשֶׁת	שָׁוֹבֵת הָיָה	וְעֵזֶץ וְבָתֶה	וְעֵזֶץ וְבָתֶה	רִים	הָבָא גַּם	יְהִי הָבָא
H3588	and a wife	forsaken	and grieved	in spirit	hath called	For the LORD	
	H802	H5800	H6087	H7307	H7121		H3068
וְאֵשֶׁת	נָעָר יָמִים	כִּי	תִּפְאֵס		אָמַר:	אֱלֹהִים:	
and a wife	of youth	H3588	when thou wast refused		saith	thy God	
H802	H5271		H3988		H559		H430

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 62:4 (References Lord): Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

Ecclesiastes 9:9 (Parallel theme): Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.

Proverbs 5:18 (Parallel theme): Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

Malachi 2:14 (References Lord): Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.