

Isaiah 57:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore.

Analysis

Isaiah dramatically shifts from commanding the righteous to condemning the wicked with this harsh summons. The Hebrew term ("you") is emphatic, creating sharp contrast with the previous verses about the righteous who perish. The threefold designation—"sons of the sorceress," "seed of the adulterer and the whore"—employs covenant language to depict spiritual adultery. In biblical theology, idolatry is consistently portrayed as spiritual harlotry, violating Israel's exclusive covenant relationship with Yahweh (Hosea 1-3, Ezekiel 16). This verse indicts not merely individual sins but generational patterns of covenant unfaithfulness, emphasizing that children of apostates inherit their parents' spiritual rebellion. From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates the doctrine of original sin and corporate guilt, while also highlighting God's righteousness in judgment against those who persist in covenant violation.

Historical Context

This oracle addresses the syncretistic religious practices rampant in Judah during Isaiah's ministry (8th century BC) and possibly the later period of Manasseh's reign (7th century BC). Archaeological evidence from Judah reveals widespread fertility cult practices, household idols, and worship at "high places" combining Yahwism with Canaanite Baal worship. The reference to sorcery reflects the prevalence of divination and occult practices explicitly forbidden in the Mosaic law (Deuteronomy 18:9-14). The sexual imagery draws from the terminology of sacred

prostitution associated with Canaanite and Mesopotamian fertility cults, practices that had infiltrated Israelite worship.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does spiritual compromise in one generation impact subsequent generations?
2. What modern forms of idolatry function as spiritual adultery against Christ?
3. How does God's covenant faithfulness contrast with Israel's covenant unfaithfulness in this passage?

Interlinear Text

וְעַתָּה	אֶתְתָּ	לִרְבֹּו	בְּנֵי	הַ	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	עַתָּה הַ	זֶה
H859		H2008			H1121		H6049	H2233
But draw near			hither ye sons			of the sorceress	the seed	

מְתָא בָּ	וְתִזְהָה :
of the adulterer	and the whore
H5003	H2181

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 16:4 (Parallel theme): A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

1 John 3:10 (Parallel theme): In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

James 4:4 (Parallel theme): Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

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