

ENTHRONING THE DAUGHTER OF ZION: THE CORONATION MOTIF OF ISAIAH 60-62

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Isaiah 60–62 contains powerful and evocative poetic images describing a future redemption for Zion. Viewed by most scholars as a complete unit, the pericope encapsulates and even thematically resolves events and depictions of many earlier passages in Isaiah with its message of eventual peace and salvation for Zion and its people. This essay will argue that Isaiah 60–62 possesses a literary motif representing the rites of an ancient coronation. The text employs figurative language that calls to mind some of the most culturally common elements of ancient coronation ritual. Much has been written about the symbolism of Isaiah 60–62, but while allusions to cultic practices, sacred festivals, marriage, fertility, kingly and priestly symbols have been acknowledged, the concept of a complete coronation motif that connects these allusions together has not been proposed. The basis of this essay is that thematic elements¹ of enthronement ritual, either practiced or understood in ancient Israelite culture, are represented through imagery and allusion in the received text of Isaiah 60–62. This essay will examine ten elements attested in biblical and other ancient coronation ceremonies that are thematically present in the passage. They are:

- ritual humiliation
- ritual rebirth
- granting of new names
- anointing with oil
- bestowal of a special clothing
- crowning
- a royal procession
- sacrifices
- a communal meal
- acclamations

The rites occur for both the personified woman Zion as well as the inhabitants that comprise her. This coronation imagery reinforces and enhances the literal message of Zion's salvation in the passage. In doing so, the picture of her forthcoming salvation is coupled with royal glory.

Ritual Humiliation

In many ancient Near Eastern coronations, a process of ritual humiliation took place for the prospective regent. This humiliation symbolized the termination of the original order or the former life of the prospective regent and the forthcoming change in status. The rite could include ritually enacted derision, combat, beatings, or even a drama depicting death. In some instances, the rite was meant to symbolize the triumph of the king over the chaotic forces of the cosmos.² Combat and death could also symbolize the primordial chaos so that the subjugation of enemies paralleled the regeneration of the cosmos. Aage Bentzen notes that during the Babylonian *Akitu* festival, the king's "royal insignia are taken away, and he is boxed on the ears and pulled on the ears by the priest."³ Egyptian installation rites included ritual combat followed by "the burial of the defeated old king and his subsequent resurrection in the person of his successor."⁴ Ritual combat preceding a royal accession is alluded to in several of the Psalms⁵ as well as some of the prophetic texts.⁶ Psalm 110, generally accepted as an enthronement text, is an example:

“YHWH has sworn, and will not repent: ‘You are a priest forever after the manner of Melchizedek.’ The Lord at your right hand crushes kings in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations; He fills it with the dead bodies, He crushes the head over a wide land.”

Isaiah 60 and 61 contain numerous allusions to the notion of humiliation contrasted with a state of impending honor to which Zion is ascending. Language reminiscent of the ritual appears first in Isaiah 60:10, where YHWH explains, “for in my wrath I smote you, but in my favor I have had compassion on you.”⁷ This violent, combative term for smiting, (הכיתִּירָךְ), is contrasted with compassion in much the same way a monarch would be ritually humiliated and then rejuvenated in the enthronement process. Isaiah 60:12 continues the theme with the language of combat: “For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish and the nations will be utterly desolate.” Isaiah 60:14 depicts “the children of [Zion’s] humiliators” (בְּנֵי מְעַבְּרֵיךָ) as bowing and paying homage at her feet, creating a reversal where humiliation is

replaced with obeisance. In Isaiah 60:15 the reversal continues: “Instead of your being Forsaken and Hated, so that no one passed through you, I will set you up for an eternal majesty, a joy from generation to generation,” Isaiah 60:18 describes the changing circumstances as well, where “violence” (סַחַר) and “crushing” (שָׁצַר) are used to describe Zion’s former condition. The vivid words call to mind the ferocity of combat. Here again, though, the emphasis is on Zion’s change of status.

In Isaiah 60:20, Zion is informed, “the days of your mourning will be complete.” The language indicating a fixed time arrangement adds nicely to the ritualistic flavor of the imagery. A similar contrast is found in Isaiah 61:1–2, where the speaker announces a “setting up”⁸ of Zion’s “brokenhearted” and “imprisoned” people. This pronouncement is followed by the bestowal of a headdress, oil, and a robe, which parallel royal paraphernalia as will be discussed further below.

Ritual Rebirth

Rituals of rebirth represented a new life, new identity, or regeneration for the recipient. Ricks and Sroka point out that a king could be ritually “reborn” in a number of ways including “being swallowed by a monster, acting like a newborn babe, being endowed with divine qualities, going through a burial ceremony, or simply being reawakened.”⁹ The notion of rebirth could be also represented implicitly through the rituals of ablution, anointing, receiving a new name, or the bestowal of clothing.¹⁰ A. M. Hocart notes this idea in Egyptian images of kingship where the king “is represented on monuments as being suckled by the wife of the principal god.”¹¹ Comparable images were used for the dead to illustrate their rebirth: “They were conceived and born, Isis suckled them, they became kings.”¹² A Late Bronze Age poem from Ugarit portrays a similar notion¹³ evoking the image of goddesses suckling a royal child at Baal’s request:

She shall bear Yassib the lad,
who shall draw the milk of Asherah,
suck the breasts of the maiden Anath,
the two wet-nurses of the gods.¹⁴

The image of a prospective regent portrayed as a young child or baby is attested biblically. Again, Psalms 110 uses imagery of birth: “Your troops will be willing on the day of your battle, You shall rule in the midst of your enemies; in the splendor of holiness, from the womb of dawn you have the dew of your birth.”¹⁵ Isaiah 9:6 also employs such

imagery: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” The birth imagery is followed by a pronouncement that “the government shall be upon his shoulders,” and the bestowal of several titles which imply kingship.

These representations of a suckling child bear a striking resemblance to the imagery of Isaiah 60:16. Zion, depicted as a group of people and a grown woman throughout the rest of the passage, is suddenly given the characteristics of a newborn babe: “You will suck the milk of the nations; you will suck the breast of kings.” This abrupt shift in Zion’s age is perplexing and the suckling imagery here has generated much critical and interpretive speculation ranging from identifying it as a haphazard redaction to an awkwardly created metaphor.¹⁶ However, when one considers the coronation motif present in the passage, the suckling imagery actually fits quite nicely into the flow of the passage. The personified Zion is reduced to a suckling child who is nourished through the wealth of kings and nations.

New Names

In connection with ritual rebirth, the reception of new names or titles is a common element of ancient Near Eastern coronations.¹⁷ Mesopotamian and Egyptian kings received new names at their accession. Royal renaming also appears in the Hebrew Bible. Joseph appears to receive a new title as a part of his rise to authority in Egypt. Ricks and Sroka note that several Israelite kings appear to have had “birth names” and “regal names,” though it is not certain whether the regal names were bestowed at the ascension to the throne.¹⁸ Though not explicitly royal in connotation, Abraham, Jacob, and Sarah received new names as part of their covenantal relationship with YHWH.¹⁹

In Isaiah 60-62, Zion is granted multiple name-like titles as well, symbolizing her new status. Often the old name is contrasted with a new one to emphasize the change that is taking place. The renaming process is applied to all aspects of the conceptual Zion, including the buildings, the inhabitants, and the symbolic woman herself.

The first name, pronounced in Isaiah 60:14, is articulated by YHWH but is actually to be pronounced by Zion’s former afflictors. The titles “the City of YHWH” and “the Zion of the Holy One of Israel” express a sense of custody and belonging. In Isaiah 60:18, specific elements of the city are singled out: “You will call your walls ‘Salvation’ and your gates ‘Praise.’” Again, YHWH designates the names, but Zion is the one described as giving them voice. Isaiah 61:6 recounts the next title,

which is addressed to the city's people: "And you will be called 'Priests of YHWH; 'The Ministers of Our God,' it will be said of you." The use of these titles is particularly intriguing, since they are usually reserved for members of the Israelite cultic priesthood.²⁰ In Isaiah 62:4, Zion is given an additional set of names, "I Delight in Her" (הִנָּחֵם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ) and "Married" (הִתְקַדְּשׁ), which this time connote marriage and divine affection.²¹ The names are bestowed upon Zion's land and the personified woman herself.

The final group of titles occurs in the last verse of the passage, concluding the theme of renaming established in this pericope. YHWH articulates that "the ends of the earth," will address Zion's people: "They shall call them "The Holy People," "The Redeemed of YHWH." Zion will be called "Sought Out," "A City Not Forsaken" (Isaiah 62:11–12). These attributes together form a rich image of both a sacred, royal queen and a sacred, royal people.

Anointing and Clothing

As an act of investiture, anointing with oil was generally reserved for those with unique power or social status, such as kings and cultic priests. It usually preceded the bestowal of special clothing meant to confer the authority of kingship or priesthood. Anointing with oil is a common element of ancient Near Eastern kingship rites. Widengren notes that the Sumerian king was described as having been "anointed with the oil from the life-tree,"²² and a Hittite text mentions the "fragrant oil for the coronation."²³ Anointing oil is well attested in Israelite coronation ritual and poetry as well. Saul, David, and Solomon were anointed with oil as part of their royal investiture as were at least three other kings in the Biblical text.²⁴

An anointing with oil appears Isaiah 61:3. A group identified as "the mourners of Zion" receives the "oil of joy" (שֶׁן־שִׂמְחָה). The phrase "oil of joy" is significant. Young notes that this phrase appears only one other time in the Hebrew Bible,²⁵ in Psalms 45:7: "You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness, therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy above your companions." The unique nature of this phrase so closely connected to kingship in Psalms 45 suggests that its presence in Isaiah 61:3 could also be meant to convey the idea of a royal anointing.²⁶ In investiture rites, anointing and clothing were often closely associated. This is true for the anointing and clothing imagery of Isaiah 61 as well. Although anointing is referenced in a single verse, its placement at the center of the pericope is probably significant. The

imagery is complemented by an additional reference to the bestowal of clothing found in Isaiah 61:10.

Ceremonial Clothing

Ceremonial clothing was an integral part of the cultic and regal accoutrements anciently as well. Ricks and Sroka point out that Egyptians employed this rite during the *Sed* festival, in which the king donned a ceremonial garment.²⁷ O. R. Gurney notes an example of investiture in a letter from Hattusilis III, a Hittite king, in which he refers to the “royal vestments” necessary for his ascension rites.²⁸ A Babylonian text includes a similar idea, equating the “sovereignty” of the chief god with his royal robe and crown.²⁹ No examples of royal investiture are explicit in the Biblical text, but there are a few possible inferences to special royal clothing. Ezekiel 26:16 refers to “princes of the sea” who “come down from their thrones and lay away their robes, and put off their brodered garments.” 1 Kings 22:10 mentions robes “put on” by Jehoshaphat while sitting on his throne, and Isaiah 22:21 describes robes used to invest governing power. Although not specifically within a coronation context, the clothing is closely connected to kingship. Ringgren notes the lack of royal investiture in the Hebrew Bible but points to the robes of the high priest described in Exodus 28 as a “post-exilic copy of the royal robe.”³⁰

In keeping with the enthronement motif, Zion’s inhabitants are given clothing in the passage. In Isaiah 61:3, a “mantle of praise” (מַעֲטֵף תְּהִלָּה) is bestowed upon them. Isaiah 61:10 includes another reference in which the speaker declares that YHWH has “clothed me in the garments of salvation. He has wrapped me (מְצַוֵּר) in the mantle (מַעֲטֵף) of righteousness.” The clothing references here work well as symbols of joy and redemption and are also remarkably reminiscent of rituals of investiture that add nicely to the motif of a royal coronation.

Crowning

Crowning is perhaps the most identifiable aspect of coronation ritual. Royal headgear associated with kingship has a long and venerable tradition. In fact, the term “coronation” comes from the Latin *coronare* meaning “to crown.”³¹ The receipt of a crown is present in most ancient Near Eastern enthronement rites. Pharaoh as a sign of his leadership received the iconic double crown.³² The Hittite ceremony is recorded as including a crowning³³ as is the Assyrian ceremony, in which the king received a crown in the temple of the goddess Inanna.³⁴ In the

Israelite tradition, Joash received a crown (כִּנֹּר) during his ceremony (2 Kings 11:12) and Psalm 21:3 speaks of YHWH bestowing a crown (עֲטֹתָה) upon a monarch's head.

A headdress appears in Isaiah 61:3, Isaiah 61:10 and Isaiah 62:3. Three distinct terms are used for the crowns. Isaiah 61:3 and 10 both use the term (פֶּאֶר), “crown,”³⁵ and Isaiah 62 describes a couplet of crowns: a “crown of splendor” (עֲטֹת תִּפְאֵרֶת) and a “royal headdress” (צִנּוּף מְלוּכָה). The imagery is fluid, with Zion at first receiving the crown and then becoming a crown herself. The phrase “crown of splendor” is used at least one other time in a royal context in Jeremiah 13:18, where it is used to describe the headgear of a royal couple. This term, paired with the צִנּוּף מְלוּכָה suggests a royal setting and fits well into the theme of a royal investiture.

Royal Procession and Acclamations

A royal procession was another a common feature of kingship rituals in the ancient Near East. Prospective Egyptian Pharaohs circumambulated the walls of the city as part of the coronation ritual.³⁶ The Babylonian *Akitu* festival included a royal procession that both began and ended at the temple.³⁷ In the Biblical tradition, King Solomon's enthronement included a procession in which “All the people then marched up behind him, playing on flutes and greatly rejoicing” in a procession from the sanctuary to the throne. (1 Kings 1:40) The temple or other sacred space was a central location for such rituals. Joash's coronation is recorded as taking place in the temple (2 Kings 11:4–14; 2 Chronicles 23:3–12), and it is possible that the consecration of other Israelite kings took place there as well.³⁸

Imagery of a procession is also evoked in the opening events of Isaiah 60. The passage includes a large assembly, including Zion's “sons” and “daughters,” kings of nations, their wealth, flocks, rams, and camels, all moving together toward Zion. Zion is told to “Lift up your eyes around you and see! Everyone has gathered; they have come to you!” (Isaiah 60:4) The procession starts “from far off” (Isaiah 60:4) and culminates around the altar of YHWH's temple. Procession imagery concludes the passage as well. In Isaiah 62:10, the speaker declares, “Pass through! Pass through the gates! Turn open the way of the people.” The collective, directed nature of the movement here is especially striking. The imagery conveys a sense of deliberate motion towards a sacred location.

Acclamations are an element less evident in other Near Eastern coronation traditions but well attested in the Israelite tradition.³⁹

The Hebrew Bible has at least three instances of acclamation for the new king.⁴⁰ A trumpet was blown at Solomon's coronation while the people called out, "May King Solomon live" (1 Kings 1:34).⁴¹ A similar acclamation is described at Saul and Joash's coronations (2 Kings 11:12 & 1 Samuel 10:24). Mettinger notes that these instances "cannot be regarded as a spontaneous expression of joy, but [are] part of the ceremony" by virtue of their formality.⁴²

In a similar vein, Isaiah 62:11 includes instruction by YHWH for an acclamation meant for Zion. YHWH declares (יהוה הַשְּׁמִיעַ) the instructions to "the ends of the earth." They are charged to say to Zion, "Behold, your salvation is come!" The declaratory nature of these instructions is evocative of ritual context and adds to the idea of an enthronement motif.

Sacrifices and Communal Meal

The existence of sacrifice in coronation ceremonies of other Near Eastern cultures is less commonly attested,⁴³ however the Hebrew Bible attests several instances of sacrifice accompanying coronation ceremonies. They occurred as part of coronation ritual associated with Saul (1 Samuel 9:12) and David (1 Samuel 16:3–5) and appear to have been a part of Solomon's ceremonies as well, as described in 1 Chronicles 29:21–23: "And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings unto the Lord, on the morrow after that day, even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel." Although there is no actual mention of a sacrificial rite in Isaiah 60:7, the "flocks" and "rams" are on their way to the altar and the "House of [YHWH's] glory," which seems to imply potential sacrificial offerings. In the light of the coronation imagery found throughout the pericope, it works nicely as another element of that theme.

A communion or ritual meal is also associated with the rites of coronation. The food or drink utilized in the meal could be part of animal offerings or from an offering of consecrated victuals and was most often enacted within the temple. This element, again, is not well attested in other ancient Near Eastern traditions⁴⁴ but does appear in the Israelite tradition. Solomon's coronation included "drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel, and [they] did eat and drink before the Lord on that day with great gladness" (1 Chronicles 29:21–23),⁴⁵ and Samuel prepared what Patai views as a communal meal of sacrificial meat for Saul just prior to his investiture in 1 Samuel 9:15–16.⁴⁶

An allusion to a sacrificial or communal meal appears in Isaiah 62:9, where the grain and wine of Israel's produce is not to be eaten by her enemies, but "those who garner it will eat it, and will praise YHWH; and those who gather it will drink it in the courts of my Sanctuary." This communal eating and drinking in the temple could be a reference to the annual cultic offerings of pilgrimage festivals; scholars almost universally agree that Isaiah 62:8–9 is a reference to the offering of the firstfruits (Cf. Deuteronomy 12:17–18) kept as part of Israel's regular annual cultic cycle.⁴⁷ However, the ceremonial eating and drinking described here also fits well within the coronation motif and works as a good allusion to kingship rites as well. As with other elements of the pericope, the motif of coronation is used to facilitate the message. The offerings consumed in the temple represent the communal meal element of the motif.

Conclusion

As the message of Zion's salvation unfolds in the passage of Isaiah 60–62, its descriptions are marked by imagery and allusion that, when viewed as a whole, create a striking motif of the rites received by prospective regents in ancient coronation ceremonies. Viewing Isaiah 60–62 in light of this motif adds to the splendor of the message of Zion's redemption. Not only does it convey the dramatic transformation Zion undergoes, but also it adds a royal luster to that transformation. While the rites occur for both the personified woman Zion and the inhabitants that comprise her, ultimately it is the complete concept of Zion that is depicted as receiving the rites of coronation.

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Endnotes

1. Several scholars have addressed the issue of coronation ceremonies, shedding light on possible elements of enthronements in the ancient world. This essay relied mainly on the following studies: A. M. Hocart, *Kingship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); Stephen D. Ricks and John J. Sroka, "King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History," in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book 1994), 236–71, and Raphael Patai, "Hebrew Installation Rites," in *On Jewish Folklore* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), 110-73. Although these individual studies examine coronation elements present in ceremonies of both the ancient and the modern world, they are important in creating a framework from which the list of elements discussed in this essay was derived. The three studies share many elements. See Hocart's *Kingship*, 70-71, lists twenty-six elements common in coronation rituals throughout the world, anciently and otherwise. His discussion of ancient Near Eastern rites, though not detailed, is helpful in identifying common ritual elements of coronation ceremonies. For a complete list of the twenty-six aspects, see 70–71. Of his twenty-six, only six are identified with enthronement ceremonies described in the Hebrew Bible. The elements Hocart attributes to Israelite coronations are rebirth, an admonition to rule justly, an anointing with oil, royal acclamations, a crowning, and being seated on a throne, Hocart, *Kingship*, 86. Ricks and Sroka in "King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History," review a list of twenty-seven common elements of coronation rites cross-culturally. Their study expands Hocart's number of elements identified in Israelite ceremonies as well as other Near Eastern rites. For a complete list of the common elements; see Hocart, *Kingship*, Appendix A, 260–62. The elements Ricks and Sroka identify are an admonition to rule justly, an anointing with oil, sacrifices, acclamations, the reception of new names, rebirth, a royal procession, a reception of a special garment, a crowning, a reception of regalia, being seated on a throne, a communion, a feast and rites depicting dominion, see Appendix B, 263. Patai's "Ancient Hebrew Installation Rites" compiles a list of twenty-one probable elements of ancient Israelite coronations. Patai compiled the list by comparing Biblical coronation accounts with African tribal coronation ceremonies; for his complete list, see Patai, "Hebrew Installation Rites," 153. Interestingly, Patai's list,

though intentionally limited to ancient Israelite ceremonies, parallels very closely the more general lists created by Hocart and Ricks and Sroka. A fusion of these studies assisted in creating the framework of common elements of ancient coronation rites used by this author. The framework was placed over the passage of Isaiah 60–62 in order to identify a pattern of coronation imagery. Also see G. Widengren's discussion of ancient installation rites in "Das sakrale Königtum," in *Religionsphänomenologie*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1969), 360–393, especially his list of rituals on 377.

2. Ricks and Sroka, "King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History," 249.
3. Aage Bentzen, *King and Messiah* (London: Lutterworth, 1955), 26. He gives a good discussion on the death verses humiliation themes of ancient Near Eastern ritual found on 24–34.
4. T. H. Gaster, *Thespis: Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East* (New York: Gordian Press, 1975), 80.
5. Cf. Psalms 21:7-9, 45:3–5, 110:5–6, and 89:10 for some examples of this concept.
6. Bentzen, *King and Messiah*, 13, 26–27. He notes that Deutero-Isaiah is one of the foremost in utilizing poetic allusions to this rite. Cf. Isaiah 51:9–11 for a good example pertaining to the Zion theme.
7. Author's translation.
8. The term סָדַן used here as "setting up" is found at least once in a coronation context. 2 Kings 10:3 uses it as "to set upon a throne" (cf. 2 Kings 10:3). The root's meaning is very broad, however, and can be construed in several ways. It is noteworthy that in Isaiah 61 it is YHWH who is "setting up" Zion. This involvement gives the action a ritualistic feel. The verb shows up also in Isaiah 60:15, with a depiction of YHWH "setting" Zion up as "a majesty forever" (לְבָנוֹן עוֹלָם) and "a joy from generation to generation."
9. Ricks and Sroka, "King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History," 246.
10. Ibid., 247. The new name marked rebirth, just as an original name marked the receiver's original birth. The bestowal of clothing indicated change and newness in body or person. A greater discussion of the symbolism of oil anointing and clothing follows below.
11. Hocart, *Kingship*, 84.

12. *Ibid.*, 83.
13. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, The Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 216.
14. “KTR B” *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. J. B. Pritchard, 2nd edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 145–47. Hereafter abbreviated as *ANET*.
15. Author’s translation.
16. Westermann sees this verse as an allusion to Isaiah 49:23 and notes Zimmerli’s argument that the “nursing” phrase became communized as “conventional statements in use among the devout”; see C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40–60: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 362. Westermann relies on Zimmerli’s figure of speech theory for his explanation of many of the repeated phrases in Trito-Isaiah, and Zimmerli deals with the gender problem with this explanation; see W. Zimmerli, “Zur Sprache Tritojesajus,” *Schweizerische Theologische Umschau* 3/4, (1950): 5f. Westermann also notes that “the picture of the wet-nurse, which Deutero-Isaiah used in its literal meaning is here emptied of that to become a non-literal figure of speech and is made to apply — not happily — to the kings as well.” His notion of “communization,” however, assumes that the phrase is thrown in haphazardly among the multiple redactions, but neither Westermann nor Zimmerli are taking into account the cohesiveness created by viewing this passage in the context of a metaphorical coronation. The phrase may well have become a figure of speech, as Zimmerli and Westermann assert, but its placement in this passage and the other images surrounding it are strong evidence the image was used decisively and is meant to allude to a coronation rite for the recipient Zion. Westermann’s “unhappy” application of suckling to kings may not be as awkward as it first appears, since kings are the divinely guided source of wealth and nourishment that brings about Zion’s symbolic status.
17. Ricks and Sroka, “King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History,” 244. See also Widengren’s discussion on the ritual of new names in “Das sakrale Königtum,” 381–382.
18. *Ibid.*, 245.
19. Receiving a new name is one of the few rites associated with coronation that can be attested as occurring for a female, which creates a precedent for the Isaiah pericope. Although Sarah’s name change

is contextually not a regal designation, the fact that she received a change in name helps support the case for female renaming in the Hebrew tradition. Two other female figures are given new names in the Hebrew Bible. Esther undergoes a name change at her promotion to queen, though it is possible her name was changed more to conceal her identity than for ritual purposes. (See T. D. Andersen, "Renaming and the Wedding Imagery in Isaiah 62," *Biblica*, 67 No. 1 (1986) 78.) Additionally, the personified city of Babylon has a change of titles in Isaiah 47:1: "You will no more be called Tender and Delicate," and, "You will no more be called The Lady of Kingdoms." (For a discussion on this passage and its relationship to the "lady" Zion in Isaiah, see C. A. Franke, "The Function of the Satiric Lament over Babylon in Second Isaiah (XLVII)," *Vetus Testamentum*, 41 No. 4 [Oct. 1991] 416.)

20. The names are intriguing, since the cultic titles attributed to Zion via her people are incongruent with the designation of cultic roles. Not all of Zion's people are Levites or, for that matter, male. The problem is compounded by the fact that the personified city, if she is the antecedent of "you" in verse 6, is a female. It should be noted that the assignation of incongruent roles is a fairly common technique in the literary patterns of the book of Isaiah, as in Isaiah 60:16. Whybray suggests that the reference should be viewed as "a privileged status." Zion's people are given this title because of their role as the spiritual leaders; see R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, New Century Bible Commentary, gen. eds. R. E. Clements and M. Black (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1975), 243. Blenkinsopp, J. *Isaiah 56-66*, 226 agrees with his position. Another explanation for this unusual renaming is offered by Watts, who suggests that a substantial portion of Jerusalem's population was made up of priests and Levites, thus the name is appropriate for the city as a whole; see J. D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, Vol. 25 of *Word Biblical Commentary*, gen. eds. D. A. Hubbard, G. W. Barker, Old Testament ed. J. D. W. Watts (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1987), 304. It is also possible that what is going in here literally is "an astonishing democratization of the formerly exclusive sacerdotal office," as Hanson suggests, see P. D. Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1995), 68. The imagery of the chapter certainly hints at such a phenomenon. Priestly language is used throughout these few verses (cf. with Deuteronomy 18:5). Rites that closely resemble priestly ordination appear to be conferred upon Zion's people, and the terms used in these

names are explicit and rarely used outside a specifically cultic setting. Interestingly enough, one of these very few exceptions is found just verses later in Isaiah 61:10's marriage motif. The appearance of the root כהן twice in this chapter, once as a title for Zion's people and once as the action of a bridegroom, indicates that the prophet may have a very intentional, albeit flexible, usage for the term. The flexibility of the term works with the metaphor of a coronation, especially since priesthood has links to kingship historically.

21. The intent of these names may be more fully expressed by the imagery in the intervening verse 3. Squarely in the center of the naming references is parallel imagery of crowns. These crowns will be discussed in more detail below, but their presence between the two naming verses (vs. 2 and 4) is indicative of the next step in the ritual progression. Also worth noting here is that in Isaiah 62:4, both Zion's new and former titles are borrowed names of prominent Israelite queens. "Azubah" (*Forsaken*), Zion's former name, is the name of the mother of King Jehoshaphat (2 Kings 22:42). "Hephzi-bah," her new name, is the name of the mother of King Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1), who was, intriguingly, a contemporary of Isaiah. Zion appears to be taking on the names of Israelite royalty. For a greater discussion of the possible significance of these names, see B. Halpern, "The New Names of Isaiah 62:4: Jeremiah's Reception in the Restoration and the Politics of 'Third Isaiah.'" *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 117 No. 4 (Winter 1998) 637–638.
22. G. Widengren, *King and the Tree of Life*, King and Saviour IV (Uppsala, Sweden: A. B. Lundequistska Bokandeln, 1951), 59–60. See also his discussion on anointing in "Das sakrale Königtum," 385–386.
23. O. R. Gurnery, "Hittite Kingship" in *Myth, Ritual and Kingship: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Kingship in the Ancient Near East and in Israel* ed. S. H. Hooke (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press 1958), 118.
24. They are Jehu (2 Kings 9:6), Joash (2 Kings 11:12), and Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:30). Absalom was also anointed to become king (2 Samuel 19:10).
25. E. J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–60, Vol. 3* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1972), 461.

26. The circumstances surrounding the oil of Isaiah 61:3 are relatively vague. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 242, could be correct in attributing the oil simply to a festive occasion. Anointing oil is used often to connote a sense of festive happiness (cf. Ecclesiastes 9:8, Songs 4:10, 2 Samuel 12:20, 14:2 Psalms 23:5), but no other of these instances use the explicit phrase “oil of joy.” Whybray suggests it was probably one of the attentions “a host lavished on his guests.” He references Psalm 23:5 as evidence of this principle, yet his suggestion does not quite work in his favor, as this psalm is also likely a royal psalm.
27. Ricks and Sroka “King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History,” 256. This ritual carried with it a “sense of re-investiture.” Hocart also points out that the Pharaoh was ceremoniously clothed each day before his ritual anointing; see Hocart, *Kingship*, 84. See also Widengren’s discussion on this in “Das sakrale Königtum,” 381–382.
28. The Hittite ceremony was what Gurney describes as “more cumbrously [called] ‘the festival when the king sits down on the throne of kingship and the queen on the throne of queenship,’” a nice example of the inclusion of the queen in the proceedings. He explains that segments of the surviving Hittite proceedings included dressing up a prisoner of war in special garb as a substitute king who was then “handed over to the gods to avert an evil omen.” The process involved giving him a royal name, arraying him in vestments and a crown; see Oliver R. Gurney, “Hittite Kingship,” in *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Kingship in the Ancient Near East and in Israel*, ed. S. H. Hooke, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 118.
29. G. Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism*, King and Saviour II: Studies in Manichaeism, Mandaean, and Syriac-Gnostic Religion (Uppsala, SWE: A. B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1946), 33.
30. H. Ringgren, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Chicago: Allenson, 1956), 13. Israelite high priests wore special clothing to represent their consecrated status as did the other priests and Levites. Their clothing defined their roles in the cult. Prophets were also known to wear distinguishing clothing as a sign of authority (cf. 1 Samuel 28:14, 2 Kings 2:13–14)
31. *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* ed. Phillip Babcock Gove, (Springfield, IL: G. and C. Merriam Company, 1971), 509.

32. Hocart, *Kingship*, 84, makes the interesting assertion that the two crowns were considered to be goddesses.
33. See Gurney, "Hittite Kingship," 118.
34. See E. O. James, *Myth and Ritual in the Ancient Near East: An Archaeological and Documentary Study* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1958), 96.
35. As mentioned above, a headdress (פָּאֵר) is given to Zion's people together with the clothing and oil spoken of in Isaiah 61:3. The term is found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in a wide variety of circumstances. Used to depict the headgear of rulers, cultic priests, and bridegrooms (in Isaiah 61:10), it is also among the trappings of the daughters of Zion in Isaiah 3:20. (See Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 802 (hereafter *BDB*) and also J. Hausmann's discussion in "פֶּאֵר" in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol. XI* eds. G. J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, and H. Fabry (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 464–467.) Because of the term's apparent versatility, the purpose of its usage in Isaiah 61:3 is admittedly debatable. Within the framework of the clothing and oil, it is arguable that a ritualistic kingly or a priestly connotation is the context. In fact, Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 231, concurs with this assessment and connects the headdress of Isaiah 61:3 to that of 61:10. He views these two usages as related to the turban-like headdress of a priest and the ritual dressing of a king. Although this particular form of the root פֶּאֵר is not used in reference to a royal headdress in any other of its contexts, the root is used to identify the cultic priestly headdress several times throughout the Hebrew Bible (cf. Ex 28:2, 40, 39:28). This correlates with the new names, "Priests" and "Ministers," given to Zion's people just a few verses later in Isaiah 61:6 and the clear priestly reference in Isaiah 61:10, where פֶּאֵר is placed as the accusative of the quite unusual verb יָכַהֵן. "As a bridegroom 'priests' himself with a crown of glory, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels...." Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 245, to deal with this odd verbal form, suggests an emendation and proposes it read "yakin" or "ye'koneh," which could mean to "fix on the head" since, he asserts, the use of יָכַהֵן, "makes no sense." The two instances of פֶּאֵר in chapter 61 are too contiguous to be wholly unrelated. The use of this almost exclusively cultic verb with the term does seem to lend it a genuine ceremonial sense, intriguingly more priestly than royal. The verb

יָכַהֵן, used in this verse to describe the actions of a bridegroom, should literally be translated “to act as a priest” (*BDB*, 464). Its use in this wedding context is one of the few times it appears outside of cultic framework.

36. Hocart, *Kingship*, 85. Ricks and Sroka, “King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History,” 253.
37. Ricks and Sroka, “King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History,” 254. Again, though the *Akitu* festival is not specifically a coronation ceremony, the king played a vital role in the proceedings, and H. Frankfort notes that “It is ... clear that his renewal investiture with the insignia of royalty signified a renewal of kingship,” quoted in Ricks and Sroka, 248.
38. *Ibid.*, 238, They cite R. de Vaux in this assertion.
39. Hocart, *Kingship*, 86–88, includes this in his list of coronation elements. However the only ancient Near Eastern cultures that exemplify the element are Israelite and the Roman conquerors, see 8.
40. See *Ibid.*, 71, as well as 86.
41. Both 1 Kings 1:34 and 2 Kings 11:12 are the author’s translation.
42. T. N. D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (Lund, SWE: Wallin and Dalholm, 1976), 131–32.
43. The ancient Egyptian installations rites included sacrifice. Hocart, *Kingship*, 84, notes that it sometimes included human sacrifice, 84, and Mercer included animal sacrifice in conjunction with the communal meal offered at coronation ceremonies; see S. A. B. Mercer, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt* (London: Luzac, 1949), 360. R. Patai, “Ancient Hebrew Installation Rites,” 119, includes sacrifice in his list of ancient Israelite coronation elements, remarking that the prospective regent came to the sacrificial ceremony “as the last one, after the sacrificial animal had been slaughtered and prepared.”
44. It is attested in at least one tradition. Egyptian coronation rites included special feasts (Mercer, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*, 364-365) or sacrifices that were offered and then eaten communally (Mercer, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*, 360). Widengren also includes it in his list of coronation rites, see “Das sakrale Königtum,” 377.
45. This passage may be describing a renewal of Solomon’s kingship, but the presence of animal sacrifices and drink offerings that accompany

a ritual meal is noteworthy. Ancient Egyptian renewal rites parallel this idea.

46. Patai, "Ancient Hebrew Installation Rites," 119–121.

47. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 240; Whybray *Isaiah 40–66*, 250; Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 378.

