

## Isaiah, Chapter 2

### Jerusalem / Zion--a Marvelous, Universal Future, But a Depressive Present<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The following end-notes are found at the end of **chapter two**:

- (1) Occurrences of the Phrase **בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים**, “At End of the Days” in the **Hebrew Bible**
- (2) **Micah 4:1-5**
- (3) Sacred Mountains in World Religions
- (4) Mentions of **כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם**, “All the Nations,” in the **Book of Isaiah**
- (5) Coming of the Nations to Zion / YHWH’s Care for the Nations in the **Hebrew Bible**
- (6) 63 Visions of Hope in the **Book of Isaiah**
- (7) Occurrences of the Noun **מִלְחָמָה**, “War,” in the **Book of Isaiah**
- (8) Occurrences of the Title **בֵּית יַעֲקֹב** “House of Jacob” in the **Hebrew Bible**
- (9) Passages in **Isaiah** Promising Light / Revelation to Israel, and Beyond
- (10) Occurrences in the **Hebrew Bible** of the Verb **שָׁפַק / סָפַק**, “Slap / Clap”
- (11) Mention of Horses in the **Book of Isaiah**
- (12) Passages in the Greek Translation of the **Hebrew Bible** Using **χειροποίητος**, “Hand-made”
- (13) Passages in the **Hebrew Bible** with **יּוֹם יְהוָה**, “Day of YHWH”

Slotki, states concerning **chapters 2-4**, “The artistic and literary unity of these three chapters is evident from:

- (1) the superscription in **2:1**;
- (2) the introduction (**2:2-4**) describing the glories of the Messianic age [the text makes no mention of the Messiah or ‘the Messianic age’], the dissemination of true religion and the spontaneous submission of the nations to the authority of the God of Israel;
- (3) the series of exhortations to the people, judges and princes (**2:5-4:1**) condemning idolatry, pride, robbery, oppression, ostentation and luxury, and announcing the retribution that would follow; and
- (4) the conclusion (**4:2-6**) alluding again to the Messianic times and enumerating the blessings that would be enjoyed by the escaped remnant, *every one that is written unto life that shall be called holy*, who would be protected, as was Israel of old (**Exodus 13:21-22**), *by a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night.*” (P. 9)

Alexander states that **chapters 2-4** “constitute the second prophecy, the two grand themes of which are the reign of the Messiah [the Messiah is not mentioned in **2:1-4** or in **4:2-6**, but the code-name for the Messiah, ‘the Branch,’ is mentioned in **4:2-6**], and intervening judgments on the Jews [that is, on those forsaken by YHWH because of their idolatry] for their iniquities...

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“In the first [grand theme], the prophet foretells the future exaltation of the church [Alexander uses the word ‘church’ for both the Jewish and the Christian bodies of believers; we would substitute ‘Zion,’ meaning by it the purified body of the people of God] and the accession [‘joining,’ ‘being added to’] of the Gentiles [non-Jews], **2:1-4**...

“In the second [grand theme], he sets forth the actual [tragic, sinful] condition of the [Jewish] church and its inevitable consequences, **2:5-4:1**.

In the third [grand theme? Alexander has stated there are ‘two grand themes’], he reverts to its pure, safe, and glorious condition under the Messiah [no, under the ‘Branch,’ a code-name for the Messiah], **4:2-6**.” (P. 95)

Alexander adds that “As the state of things which [**2:5-4:1**] describes could scarcely have existed in the prosperous reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, or in the pious reign of Hezekiah, it is referred with much probability to the reign of Ahaz...when Judah was dependent on a foreign power and corrupted by its intercourse with [Assyria’s religion].” (P. 96)

Gray entitles **chapters 2-4** “Jerusalem ideal and actual.” He describes these two chapters as follows:

2:1	Title
2:2-4	Jerusalem [we insist, ‘exalted Jerusalem] the religious center of the entire world
2:5-22	The Day of Yahweh, which is about to bring low the land of Jacob, now wealthy, self-sufficient, and forgetful of Yahweh
3:1-15	Jerusalem and Judah denounced and threatened
4:2-6	The holiness and glory of Jerusalem after a purifying judgment

He comments that “Jerusalem is the prominent, when it is not the exclusive, subject of every section, except **2:5-22**. The entire section consists of warnings by Isaiah of judgment to come (**2:5-4:1**) enclosed between two poems of exilic or post-exilic writers who had an eye only for glory to come, and either disregarded judgment altogether (**2:2-4**), or looked upon it as, in large part at least, accomplished (**4:2-6**).” (Pp. 40-41)

Oswalt entitles **2:1-4:6** “The Problem: What Israel Is Versus What She Will Be.”

He comments that “**Chapters 2-4** form the second major unit in the introductory section, **chapters 1-5**. As such, they depict in the starkest terms the contrast between what Israel is destined to be and what she is in fact...The import of the section is that the Israel of **2:6-4:1** can only fulfill the destiny given to her in **2:2-4** by experiencing the judgment expressed **2:6-4:1** and the purification described in **4:2-6**...

“Proud, self-sufficient Israel can become the witness to the greatness of God only when she has been reduced to helplessness by His just judgment and then restored to life by His unmerited grace.” (P. 113)

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Ortlund entitles **2:1-4:6** “Judah’s Hope, Guilt, Hope.” He comments that “Within the reassuring context of glorious Divine promise (**2:2-4; 4:2-6**), the prophet identifies the sinful human obstacles standing in the way of the promised hope (**2:6-4:1**).”

Motyer states that “Like **chapter 1**, this section is a mosaic of originally separate pieces, each undated, no longer bound to the historical circumstances which gave them birth but now woven into a fresh presentation...

“The opening poem (**2:2-4**) introduces the theme: the vision of Jerusalem as the center of world pilgrimage, revelation and peace. It expresses poetically the ‘Abrahamic’ status of Israel (**Genesis 12:3; 22:18**) as the elect of God, chosen as the means of universal blessing.” (P. 51)

But Isaiah’s vision is not of the City of Jerusalem of Isaiah’s day as the center of world pilgrimage--it is the vision of a future exalted temple mountain of YHWH, and a renewed Zion / Jerusalem, raised to the top of the mountains and above the hills, enlarged to such an extent that all the nations and many peoples both can and will stream there, to receive the God of Jacob’s teaching, which will issue from that exalted new site. Nothing is said in the poem concerning the “Abrahamic status of Israel,” or of Israel’s being the “means of universal blessing.” These are biblical ideals indeed, drawn from outside this passage, and being read into it by Motyer, but are valid when the passage is considered in that broader context.

<sup>2</sup>Oswalt entitles **2:1-5** “The Destiny of the House of Jacob.” But this is a misnomer, since the vision has to do with the destiny of YHWH’s exalted house / temple, not Jacob’s house.

Ortlund comments on **2:1-5** that “Isaiah reveals the triumph of God’s purpose for His people, when the nations will hurry to learn His ways as the only way. The fulfillment of this prophecy is foreseeable in the progress of Christian missions.” (P. 1243)

See **Luke 24:46-48**,

- 46 And he (Jesus) said to them that  
     In this way it was written—  
 the Anointed One / Christ (was) to suffer,  
     and to rise up from dead people on the third day.  
 47 and to be proclaimed / preached in His name,  
     repentance for forgiveness of sin,  
 to all the nations,  
     beginning from Jerusalem.  
 48 You people (are) witnesses of these things.

It is certainly an historical fact that Christian missions have reached out to all the nations with the knowledge of the God of Jacob / Israel, beginning from the earthly City of Jerusalem, and in this way the followers of Jesus as his church have become a sort of “New Jerusalem,” spreading the knowledge of God throughout the world.

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## עַל־יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם:

The word / message<sup>3</sup> which Isaiah, son of Amots saw / envisioned<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>(...continued)

But this is hardly what Isaiah's vision foresees—which says nothing about world evangelism (such a vision is to be found in **Second Isaiah** and **Third Isaiah's** description of YHWH's "servant" later in the book), but depicts all the nations and many peoples mutually deciding to come to the exalted Zion / Jerusalem to receive **torah** / teaching from the God of Jacob.

And the embarrassing fact of Christian missions is that in spite of much good that they have accomplished, building churches, schools, and hospitals, and reaching out to the world's peoples with the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ, they have all too often been the tool of colonialism, and division into warring factions, and as a result the world-wide peace that Isaiah envisions and promises has not come to actuality through them. Instead, just as the history of Israel is punctuated by continuous wars, so the history of Christianity has been likewise punctuated by religious war after religious war.

Ortlund evidently recognizes this fact, but claims that Isaiah's vision will ultimately be fulfilled through the progress of Christian missions.

We have to conclude that Isaiah's beautiful vision is, as far as Jewish and Christian history are concerned, truly an "impossible dream," impossible for human beings, only possible for God, only possible as a future Divine action, as the lovers of God become obedient, "suffering servants," suffering for justice and righteousness. What do you think?

<sup>3</sup>**Brown-Driver-Briggs** notes that **דְבַר** in the singular means "speech," or "discourse," or "saying," as the sum of that which is spoken. Isaiah has "seen" or "envisioned" his speech in a vision, and that vision is followed by words, sermons preached by Isaiah. Again, we remember first line of the first verse in the **Book of Isaiah**,

חִזוֹן יִשְׁעִיהוּ בֶן־אֲמוּץ  
אֲשֶׁר חָזָה

Vision of Isaiah, son of Amots,  
which he saw...

See **1 Samuel 3:1b**, where "word" and "vision" are used together as a description of prophecy:

And YHWH's word was rare / precious in those days;  
there was no vision spread abroad / frequent.

It is, we think, very important to keep this idea of "vision" and "visionary" prominent throughout the reading of the **Book of Isaiah**, alongside the teaching of **Numbers 12:6-8** and **1 Corinthians 13:9-12**, concerning the "enigmatic," puzzling nature of prophetic vision, which includes the words spoken by the prophet. Thus we should not expect clarity, or exactness in such visionary material,

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concerning Judah and Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>(...continued)

or be disturbed by vagueness, or inaccuracy, or mistakes or contradictions. When interpreters treat visionary materials such as the **Book of Isaiah** as if it were meant in precise, exact clarity, they have to go to inordinate extremes in explaining the materials.

<sup>4</sup>Compare **Amos 1:1**,

Words of Amos,

who was among the sheep-herders from Tekoa,  
which he saw concerning Israel  
in (the) days of Uzziah, king of Judah,  
and in (the) days of Jeroboam, son of Joash, king of Israel,  
two years before the earthquake.

This and **Isaiah 2:1** are the only passages which describe a prophetic book / message as having been “seen / envisioned.”

Oswalt comments that “Isaiah is saying that he has perceived (in a visionary mode,  $\text{רָאָה}$ ) some things about Judah and Jerusalem and here expresses them in an oracular and binding way.” (P. 114)

We agree that Isaiah is saying he has “perceived in a visionary mode,” but see nothing in the text that mentions or implies “an oracular and binding way,” and suspect that this is an expression of Oswalt’s view of biblical inspiration, rather than a comment on the text itself.

**Rahfs**, instead of “which he saw,” has to  $\delta\ \gamma\epsilon\iota\nu\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , “which came,” i.e., “from (the) Lord to Isaiah.”

Kaiser states that “It is likely that we should see in this heading an express claim that the prophecy of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, which also appears with slight changes in the **Book of Micah**, should be attributed to the prophet Isaiah.” (P. 48)

Yes...there is no such claim to authorship of the passage in the **Book of Micah**, but the author affirms that the prophecy has come ultimately from the mouth of YHWH of Armies (**4:4**).

Gray states that the title occurring here in **2:1** was “never intended to cover **chapters 13-23**, which mainly consist of prophecies concerning foreign nations, and are provided with another title (**13:1**.” (P. 40)

It is for this reason that Gray understands **2:1** to be referring to chapters **2-12**. We agree.

<sup>5</sup>Oswalt notes that the Qumran manuscript 1QIs<sup>a</sup> along with about 50 Hebrew manuscripts begins this sentence with a  $\text{ו}$  waw, ‘and’ or ‘then.’ (P. 113)

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<sup>5</sup>(...continued)

This opening verse of **chapter 2** is closely similar to the first half of the opening verse of **chapter 1**:

- 1:1a Vision of Isaiah, son of Amots,  
which he saw / envisioned concerning Judah and Jerusalem
- 2:1 The word / message which Isaiah son of Amots  
saw / envisioned concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

Here in **chapter 2**, instead of וַיִּזְוֶה, “a vision which he saw,” Isaiah uses וַיְהִי־בַרְ, “the word / message which he saw.” And, like the entirety of **chapter 1**, **chapter 2** is “concerning Judah and Jerusalem.”

Again in this opening verse of **chapter 2** we recognize the “visionary” nature of Isaiah’s prophecy, and keep in mind that oftentimes the prophetic vision is enigmatic, puzzling. We are not to expect from such visions exact, literal, straight-forward statements, but rather materials that are closely akin to dreams, filled with symbolism and metaphor, with puzzle and enigma. See our end-note 1 on **chapter 1**, with its discussion of **Numbers 12:6-8**.

Ortlund comments on **verse 1** that “This superscription marks the beginning of a new section. After the introductory confrontational **chapter 1**, this section begins and ends with hope (**2:2-4; 4:2-6**), also taking into account the sinful human obstacles standing in the way of that hope (**2:6-4:1**). This vision expands the hope of **1:25-28**.” (P. 1243) Yes!

Oswalt comments that “The appearance of another superscription here so shortly after the opening one and in the absence of another in the rest of the **book** has occasioned a great deal of scholarly comment.” Why the two superscriptions in the first two chapters, and then not another in the remaining 64 chapters? [We say there are number of other superscriptions: at **13:1, 14:28, 15:1, 17:1, 19:1, 21:1, 21:11, 21:13, 22:1, 23:1, 30:6, and 38:9**, with none in the remaining chapters.]

He adds that another question has to do with “the extent of the materials that this superscription introduces. Basically there are three possibilities:

1. It introduces **chapters 2-12**;
2. It introduces a collection of materials extending at lest through **4:6** and maybe other portions as far as **10:11**;
3. It introduces **2:2-4**.

Oswalt’s personal opinion is that “it seems most appropriate to see the superscription as applying to **chapters 2-4** and possibly to **chapter 5** with the understanding that a new group of sayings begins at **chapter 6**.” (P. 114)

Motyer states that “Apart from **1:1**, this is the only superscription in the Isaianic literature [see our list of other superscriptions above; why do scholars repeat this obviously mistaken view? Have  
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they looked at the evidence, or just repeated what others have said?] and this raises the question why it occurs here. It must indicate a collection of Isaianic material which once had independent circulation and which has been simply incorporated here...Isaiah repeats his conviction that revelation prompted his message and inspiration prompted his words." (Pp. 52-53)

But this is to read a great deal into Isaiah's words, which say nothing about "revelation prompting the message," or anything about "inspiration prompting the words." What Isaiah repeats is the visionary nature of the "word" or "message," and that means the reader should expect materials that are "enigmatic," puzzling in nature, not exact, precise materials, clear in nature. And we say, that is exactly what we find so often in reading the entire **Book of Isaiah**. What do you say?

Watts observes that "**Verse 1** has usually been understood as a superscription for a separate section, parallel to **1:1**. It is superficially similar. But it is distinctly different...Rather than ascribing Divine origin to the words, **2:1** claims them for Isaiah ben Amoz...This may be intended to counter the claim that these words belong to Micah (**Micah 4:1-3**). But what is more important in the **Book of Isaiah** is the claim that this view of Zion's future without nationalistic goals actually belongs to Isaiah of eighth-century Jerusalem. It was not an invention of convenience by the post-exilic community.

"Parties in Judaism were prepared in fifth-century Jerusalem [the returnees from Babylonian captivity] to claim God's promises and blessing for new forms of nationalistic efforts. Some were Zionists (compare **chapters 60-62**). Some were Israelites (compare **63:7-64:12**). The purpose of the **Book of Isaiah** is to deny both their claims (compare **65:1-16**) and put forward an entirely different view of Zion's destiny.

"[This passage, **2:2-4**] is the first clear statement: The city will be redeemed. The kingdoms will perish [where is this said?], but the city has an abiding place in God's future. The absolute requirements of justice and righteousness will be achieved. Thus the city will be equipped to be God's instrument. It will be ready to have His presence, to be His dwelling place.

"After the purge (**1:28-31**), Zion reflects neither the ambitions of Joshua nor those of David. The important thing about Zion is her reputation as Yahweh's dwelling. It is *Yahweh's house*, the temple, which stands out. And that is important because He is present and active there.

"Yahweh's presence in the temple lifts its importance to supremacy. This supremacy has nothing to do with Israel or Judah, their kings or leaders. Purely because Yahweh is there, Zion attracts the nations.

"Yahweh's actions are those of *torah* and word. These constitute judging and making wise. They result in turning the nations to peaceful pursuits.

"It is important to note that Yahweh's purpose has been a part of Israel's tradition throughout [the biblical story]. Abraham was called to be a blessing to all the families of the earth (**Genesis 12:3b**). Israel was called to be a 'kingdom of priests' (**Exodus 19:6**). But they had not succeeded. In Isaiah's vision God moves to take things into His Own hands. He will do what is necessary to  
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<sup>5</sup>(...continued)

establish the city and judge the nations. He will remove all elements from the population that do not fit this new mode of operation.

“The vision of Isaiah [meaning the entire **Book of Isaiah**] pictures God’s search for a people for His city. The vision will depict successive generations of the people of God: Israelites, Judeans, Jerusalemites, and proselytes who refuse roles in Yahweh’s new city and its program.

“What is this new city and its program? **Verses 2-4** show a city centered in Yahweh Himself. The city is simply the place where He lives. His attraction for nations and peoples is so great that they ‘flow’ uphill to the summit of the mountains to learn from ‘the God of Jacob’ the lessons to which Israel and Judah turned deaf ears. What they learn from Yahweh will eliminate war among them. The age of peace will come.

“What will be the role of God’s people in this city? The rest of the **Book of Isaiah** will speak to that question. Righteousness and justice have already been shown to be non-negotiable requirements. Willingness and obedience have been named as needed qualities. Faith, patience, and humility will be among the virtues taught to the servants of the King of Zion, Yahweh, the God of Israel.

“This little gem [**2:2-4**] seems to hang suspended between the domestic court scene in **chapter 1** and the ‘Day of Yahweh’ scene in **2:5-22**. In a very real sense it expresses the condensed and controlling theme of the entire vision. Accented by the claim that this is an authentic word from Isaiah himself (**verse 1**), it looks to ‘the end’ [בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים], ‘at end of the days’; ἐν ταῖς ἔσχαταις ἡμέραις, ‘in the last days’] and the role of Zion in that time. Zion is portrayed as a temple city, the greatest and most popular pilgrimage city in the world. It holds this distinction because it is the place of Yahweh’s dwelling. Zion will be identified with Yahweh as ‘the God of Jacob.’ He will be sought out as a Teacher of individuals and as a Judge Who brings peace and order among nations.

“This irenic picture of Zion and of Yahweh is a far cry from those of David’s Jerusalem in the **Psalms**. There Yahweh (and the Davidic king) rules the world from Jerusalem. The rulers of the nations are forced to come there to acknowledge the sovereignty of Yahweh and the Davidic king and bring tribute. The vision of Isaiah presents the immediate future in terms of turmoil and violence. Yahweh instigates and takes a primary part in it. However, this view (**2:2-4**) looks at Jerusalem beyond the battles.

“It is very practical and realistic. There is little here of the idealistic perfection pictured in **11:6-9** or **35:1-10**. It nonetheless describes a sharp reversal of policy and goal. There is nothing here of political dominance or of nationalism. Zion’s appeal will be religious and universal. The progress of the vision of Isaiah will mark the steps toward this goal. They are marked especially in **4:2-6**; **12:1-6**; **24:21-23**; **40:1-11**; **49:5-54:17** (especially **chapters 52-53**); and **65:17-66:24**.

“This beautiful picture defines the form that the restoration of the city, announced in **1:26-27**, will assume. In it the first of the dominant themes of the vision of Isaiah begins to take shape.” (Pp. (continued...))



<sup>5</sup>(...continued)  
28-29)

This is a very powerful understanding of **2:2-4**, and takes in large sections elsewhere in the **Book of Isaiah**. We will be remembering Watt's comments here, especially when we come to **Second** and **Third Isaiah**.

What do you think? Do you believe that the goal of YHWH, the Divine Man of War, is universal peace among all the nations and peoples? And do you believe that such peace can come only if YHWH's people are willing to become suffering servants, such as Second Isaiah depicts in **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**, being willing to die on behalf of bringing salvation / justice to others, and committed to loving and serving all people and nations, with the kind of righteousness that will be depicted by Third Isaiah in **Isaiah 58**?

Watts claims that **Isaiah 2:2-4** is an "authentic word of Isaiah himself," and we agree. But this does not eliminate the passage from being "visionary," having the qualities of enigma, puzzle, vagueness. And when its promise is placed alongside the many other promises in the **Book of Isaiah**, we wonder how they can all be combined. See our end-note 6 with its 63 visions / promises of hope in the **Book of Isaiah**.

<sup>6</sup>Alexander comments that "The prophecy begins with an abrupt prediction of the exaltation of the church [he means the true believers who constituted the Jewish church, but he also extends this to include the Christian church; we think it would be better to say 'Zion'], the confluence of nations to it, and a general pacification as the consequence, **verses 2-4**...The prophet sees [Zion] permanently placed in a conspicuous position, so as to be a source of attraction to surrounding nations." (P. 97) But we say, Not just "surrounding nations"—"all the nations"!

Oswalt comments on **verses 2-4** that "The abruptness of the shift in mood from **chapter 1** is very striking. There...the main focus of attention was upon Israel's rebellion, hypocrisy, and injustice [what about YHWH's invitation to dialogue, the promise of full forgiveness, and the prediction of Zion's being redeemed by justice?]."

"Suddenly here, with no transition at all, the focus is upon Israel's glorious destiny as a lighthouse to the nations for truth and peace. One is tempted to ask, 'What happened?' Will God merely forget Israel's sin? How can this Israel become that Israel?" (Pp. 114-15) Yes...and these questions reflect the "enigmatic," puzzling nature of the vision.

Oswalt adds that "In its present context the passage seems to fulfill two functions:

"First, it emphasizes the certainty of Israel's destiny. Whatever the present may be, however grim the immediate future may be, the distant future beckons the Judeans to live in its certain light...

"The second function...is motivational. What can convince the present Judeans to live lives of faithfulness and righteousness? Not so much the threat of punishment as the promise of

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נִכּוֹן יִהְיֶה תֵּר בֵּית־יְהוָה בְּאַשׁ הַהָרִים

וְנִשְׂא מִגְּבֻעוֹת

וְנִהְרֹו אֱלֹוּ כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם:

And it will happen in (the) future / latter part / end of the days,<sup>7, 1, 2</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>(...continued)

greatness...It is the conviction that they exist not merely as another nation but in order that the nations might be redeemed.” (P. 116)

However this may be, the fact is that Isaiah looks out into the future, in the light of his vision, and predicts a wonderful future, not only for Israel, but for the whole world, for all the nations!

Faith in YHWH, the Creator and Father of all humanity, Who holds the whole world in His hands, calls for some such statement of universal hope. If YHWH made us, and loves us as His children, and if He is all-powerful and good, He must have a wondrous future for us, a future which intrigues us, and inspires the creation of images of what it will be like. Isaiah does not disappoint us in his vision, even though it raises all sorts of questions and puzzles!

<sup>7</sup>This exact phrase, וְהָיָה | בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים, is given varying translations:

**King James**, “And it shall come to pass in the last days” (**Young**, same; **New International**, similar);

**Tanakh**, “In the days to come” (**New Revised Standard**, similar)

**New Jerusalem**, “It will happen in the final days”;

**Rahlfs**, ὅτι ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, “Because it will be in the last days”;

**Oswalt**, “And it will happen in future days.”

**Slotki**, “in the end of days,” commenting that it means “in the remote future.” (P. 10)

This same phrase occurs elsewhere in the **Hebrew Bible** at:

**Jeremiah 49:39**,

And it will happen at end of the days / in the future, etc.

I will return Elam’s captivity.

A saying of YHWH.

(**Jeremiah 49:34-39** is a prophecy of total destruction of the Nation of Elam; but it closes with the Divine promise of restoration of Elam from captivity, reminding us of **Ezekiel 16:53-55**.

For the phrase “At the end of the days,” see our end-note 1)

**Micah 4:1** is the opening statement of **Micah 4:1-3** which is a prophetic message almost exactly identical to **Isaiah 2:2-4**, but says nothing concerning its origin as does **Isaiah**. For the passage, **Micah 4:1-5**, see our end-note 2.

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Ortlund comments that “Nearly the same wording [as that of **Isaiah 2:2-4**] appears in **Micah 4:1-3**. It is possible that one borrowed from the other, or both used a common source; in any event the two were contemporaries and shared the same expectation for God’s purpose.” (P. 1243)

But this does not take into consideration **Micah 4:5** which rejects the prediction of all the nations walking in YHWH’s paths, to again affirm Israel’s exclusive loyalty to YHWH.

For the shorter phrase, **בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים**, “at end of the days,” see our end-note 1.

The statement here at **Isaiah 2:2** is not to be understood as a prediction of “the end of the world,” or “the end of time,” but rather is a prediction of the “good times coming” in a far-off distant time, when the temple, raised up above the hills and mountains in Isaiah’s vision, will be given an exalted status among the nations, all of whom will come to YHWH and His temple, to be taught by YHWH, resulting in world-wide peace. In fact, the prediction envisions the beginning of a new world, a world at peace.

Ortlund states that “The latter days [this is the **English Standard Version’s** translation] is an expression for the future beyond the horizon...which sometimes refers specifically to the time of the Messiah (**Hosea 3:5** [Israel will return to David their King]). It is not immediately clear here whether Isaiah is so specific, but the way **11:4** echoes **2:4** shows that the oracle speaks of the messianic era...

“**New Testament** authors use the various Greek translations of the expression (generally rendered ‘in the last days’) in the belief that, since Jesus inaugurated His Messianic Kingship by His resurrection, the latter days have arrived in a decisive way, while at the same time the last days await their complete realization and final fulfillment at the end of the age:

**Acts 2:17**, Peter is quoting **Joel 3**, applying it to the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost in Jerusalem:

And it will be in the last days, says the God,  
I will pour out from the Spirit of Mine upon all flesh,  
and your sons will prophesy,  
and your daughters, and your youths will see visions,  
and your older men will dream dreams  
(interpreting the beginnings of the Christian mission in the first century C. E. as being “in the last days”)

**2 Timothy 3:1**,

But then know this,  
that in (the) last days difficult times will be present  
(here, the “last days” are still pointed to as being in the distant future)

(continued...)

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<sup>7</sup>(...continued)

**Hebrews 1:2**, whereas in the past God has spoken to the ancestors through the prophets,

Upon / at end of these days

He spoke to us in / through a son,  
whom He placed / made heir of all things,  
though whom also He made the ages.

(Identifying the time of the Christian faith as being “at the end of these days”)

**James [Jacob] 5:3**,

The gold of yours and the silver has been rusted;  
and their rust will be a witness to you,  
and will devour your flesh like fire!

You stored up treasure in (the) last days!  
(Here the author describes the time in which he lives and writes as “the last days”)

**2 Peter 3:3**,

knowing this first, that they will come in the last days,  
mockers with mocking,  
(who) are walking / going according to their own desires  
(pointing to a future when such believers will be confronted with such mockery)

**1 Peter 1:20**, Christ, the spotless Lamb,

having been known before indeed,  
before (the) foundation of the world,  
but then being made manifest at (the) end of the times for your sake.  
(Here again the time of the Christians is identified as “(the) end of the times”)

**1 John 2:18**,

Little children, it is a last hour,  
and even as you heard that Anti-Christ is coming,  
also now many Anti-Christ have come—  
so that we know that it is a last hour.  
(The time of the Christians in the first century C.E. is here identified as a “last hour”)

“Isaiah’s future orientation in this section is also marked by his sevenfold use of ‘in that day’ (Isaiah 2:11, 17, 20; 3:7, 18; 4:1, 2)...including both the near and the distant future.” (P. 1243)

See our end-note 5 regarding “YHWH’s Day.” We think Ortlund’s view is basically correct. What do you think?

(continued...)

(the) mountain of YHWH's house / temple<sup>8</sup> (will be) established firmly<sup>9</sup> on top of the

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<sup>7</sup>(...continued)

Alexander observes that the phrase **בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים**, “at end of the days,” according to “the Rabbins [meaning, we think, the Jewish Rabbis who gave leadership to Israel following the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 A.D.], always means the days of the Messiah. [But, Alexander adds], “In itself [the phrase] is indefinite.” (P. 97) We agree.

<sup>8</sup>The “mountain of YHWH's house / temple” is the relatively tiny hill to the west of the Mount of Olives, just across the Kidron Valley, which was purchased by King David and became the site of the building of Solomon's house / temple.

Ortlund comments that “The Temple Mount in Jerusalem, though unimpressive from the lofty gaze of human religion, was God's choice (**Psalm 68:15-16**) and the true hope of the world (**Psalm 48:1-2**).” (P. 1243)

We say, Isaiah's vision is not of the physical temple in the City of David, where he had worshiped and been given his vision, but rather, that temple as seen in his vision, lifted up above the hills and mountains, so enlarged that all the nations could come together and be instructed by YHWH in it.

It is a visionary temple, mysteriously exalted and enlarged, not to be understood any longer as the earthly temple built by Solomon, but as a temple high enough to be seen by “all the nations,” a place of gathering large enough to accommodate them all.

Ortlund disagrees, stating that “The Gods of antiquity supposedly lived on mountains. The exaltation of the Lord's temple as the peak of world religion will be attractive to the nations. ‘Highest’ here means ‘most exalted in honor,’ not actually physically higher.” (P. 1243)

What do you think? Is Isaiah describing the physical temple in Jerusalem, or a visionary temple, lifted above the hills and to the top of the mountains, a “spiritual sanctuary” large enough to contain all the nations of the earth? Here again, the “enigmatic,” puzzling nature of Isaiah's vision becomes obvious.

<sup>9</sup>Gray translates the niphal participle **נִבְּוֶן** by “firmly set.” See:

**Judges 16:26,**

And Samson said to the youth, the one holding strongly by his hand,  
Cause me to rest and feel the pillars  
upon which the house / temple is firmly set,  
and I will lean upon / against them.

**Psalm 93:1-2,**

(continued...)

- 
- <sup>9</sup>(...continued)
- 1 YHWH reigned!  
     He was clothed (in) majesty!  
 YHWH was clothed--  
     He girded / wrapped Himself (with) strength!  
 Also He will firmly set (the) world,  
     it will not be moved / tottered!
- 2 Your throne is firmly set from that time / of old;  
     You (are) from long-lasting time!

Gray comments that “the word is the opposite of **מוֹט**, **mot**, which describes the tottering or shaking of that which has become insecure, whether mountains or kingdoms. After all the commotions which will precede the Messianic age, removing the things that can be shaken, Mount Zion and the universal kingdom of which it will be the center (**Psalm 87**) will remain immovable, unshaken, because the one true God, Governor and Judge of all nations...is there.” (Pp. 44-45)  
 See:

**Haggai 2:6-7,**

- 6 Because in this way YHWH of Armies spoke:  
     Again, it is one little (time),  
 and I am shaking / about to shake the heavens and the earth,  
     and the sea, and the dry ground!
- 7 And I will cause all the nations to shake,  
     and they will come (to the) desire of all the nations,  
 and I will fill this house / temple (with) glory--  
     said YHWH of Armies!

(The second line of **verse 7** is given varying translations:

**King James**, “And the precious things of all the nations shall come *here*”;

**Tanakh**, “so that the treasure of all nations shall come”;

**New Revised Standard**, “so that the treasure of all nations shall come”;

**New International**, “and the desired of all nations will come”;

**New Jerusalem**, “and the treasures of all the nations will flow in.”

(In fact, the noun is singular, and the verb is plural; none of these translations reflect that fact.)

**Hebrews 12:26-28**, whose author is commenting on this passage from **Haggai**,

- 26 Whose [the One Who warned Israel on earth] voice shook the earth then,  
     but then now has proclaimed, saying,  
 Still one time I, I will shake not only the earth,  
     but rather also the heaven!
- 27 Now then the “still one time” signifies (the) change of the things being shaken,  
     as having been done;  
     so that the things not being shaken may remain.

(continued...)

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<sup>9</sup>(...continued)  
28 Therefore, receiving an unshakeable kingdom,  
let us have grace,  
through which we may serve the God pleasingly,  
with reverence and awe!

(The author of the **Book of Hebrews** means by “unshakeable kingdom” the followers of Jesus Christ. But as Christian history has shown, that kingdom has repeatedly been shaken to its core, just as much as were the former kingdoms. What do you think?)

**Psalm 46:6,**

God (is) in her (His city's) midst,  
she will not be moved / caused to totter;  
God will help her at (the) turn of morning / when morning dawns.  
(This could not be truthfully said of the physical City of Jerusalem or City of David—which was certainly “caused to totter” (not to say “be destroyed”!) first by the Babylonians and later by the Romans!)

See also **Psalm 87** with its universal claim that all the nations and peoples, including Israel's hated enemies, have all been born in Zion, and are its citizens. That can only be said of a “spiritual Zion,” a “heavenly Jerusalem,” not of the literal Mount Zion, the ancient City of David!

We have entitled **Psalm 87** “Zion, the Mother City of All Humanity”:

1 Its foundation—in mountains of set-apartness--  
(That is, not mountains of stone, but mountains of holiness!)

2 YHWH loves Zion's gates,  
more than all Jacob's dwelling-places.

3 Honored / glorious things were spoken concerning you,  
City of the God! Selah

4 I will remember / mention Rahab / Egypt and Babylon as those knowing Me;  
look—Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia / Cush--  
these were born there!  
(What a statement! Israel's worst enemies—Egypt, Babylon, Philistia—and the far-off Ethiopians—not enemies, but siblings, like Israel, born in Zion, the City of God!)

5 And to Zion it will be said, a man and a man (probably meaning all humanity) was born in it;  
and He, (the) Most High will establish her!

6 YHWH will count / record in writing / recording peoples,  
This one was born there! Selah

7 And those singing like those dancing (will say:)  
All my springs (are) in you!

The fact that such passages as this view Zion as a universal, “spiritual” City, does not mean that this was Isaiah's view. But it does show that this is one biblical view of Zion, and we think that Isaiah's depicting Zion as being higher than the hills and mountains, and all nations flowing to it, show that he too held such a view. What do you think?

mountains,<sup>10</sup>  
and it will be lifted up from (the) hills,<sup>11, 3</sup>  
and all the nations<sup>12, 4</sup> will flow<sup>13</sup> to<sup>14</sup> it.<sup>15, 5</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Kaiser translates by “on the summit of the mountains.” Slotki translates by “as the top,” and comments that it means “in respect of religious, moral and political eminence.” (P. 10)

Translations of the phrase **בְּרֵאשִׁית הַהָרִים** include additionally “on the chief of the mountains,” “as the chief of the mountains,” “the chief, the choicest mountain,” “as the highest of the mountains,” “in the top of the mountains,” “above the mountains,” “as chief among the mountains,” “will rise higher than the mountains,” and ἐπὶ ἄκρω τῶν ὀρέων, “upon topmost of the mountains.”

Gray comments that “Whatever translation (may) be correct, the entire meaning is hardly that mountain will be piled upon mountain and Mount Zion on the top of all, though this interpretation appears in Rabbinic literature: ‘The Holy One will bring Sinai and Tabor and Carmel, and build the Sanctuary on the top of them’ (**Pesikta Rabbi Kahana**, 144b)...

“On the other hand, it is unlikely that it is merely metaphorical...But as Messianic expectation looked forward to various transformations in the physical world (**Isaiah 40:4; 41:18-19; Ezekiel 47:1ff.; Joel 4:18<sup>Heb</sup> / 3:18<sup>Eng</sup>; Zechariah 14**), so here (Messianic expectation looked) to the elevation of Mount Zion to such a height that it should overtop all mountains instead of being, as in the actual world, overtopped by other mountains of Palestine (**Psalms 68:15-16**) and even by the neighboring mountains; the Mount of Olives, for example, is nearly 300 feet higher.” (P. 45)

<sup>11</sup>The physical mountain on which YHWH’s house / temple was built in the City of David is tiny in reality, little more than a small hill. But in Isaiah’s vision YHWH’s house sits on top of the mountains--raised up above the hills, firmly established, **נִכְוֵן**, in its exalted location. See our end-note 3 for information concerning sacred mountains in world religions.

Motyer comments that “Mountains were widely held to be the homes of the Gods. The exaltation of *the mountain of the Lord’s temple / house*,’ the mountain where He lives, typifies therefore a supernatural triumph of the Lord over all Gods.” (P. 54)

Perhaps—but nothing is said in the text about triumph over other Gods—just that His house / temple is lifted up above the hills to the top of the mountains—moved from its physical location in the City of David to a position of universal importance, and enlarged so greatly that all nations can enter into it.

<sup>12</sup>It is a universal vision—all the nations are involved. For mentions of “all the nations” in the **Book of Isaiah**, see our end-note 4, where it becomes clear that Isaiah includes all the nations in YHWH’s great festal drinking-banquet, celebrating His swallowing up of death for all peoples and nations! Not only does Isaiah depict the nations flowing to the exalted Zion, City of God; he also teaches that they will share at His richly laden table, where death is overcome and all tears are wiped away! It is a universalist vision, quickly denied, or explained away by those wanting to depict YHWH

(continued...)



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<sup>12</sup>(...continued)

as the Creator and Warden of “Hell,” where a large majority of humanity (His children) burn in endless agony forever and ever.

<sup>13</sup>The verb here, **וַיִּנְהָרְוּ**, is “and they will flow / stream (to it).” The noun **נְהָר** is “stream,” or “river.”

Oswalt notes that “The nations will not merely come; they will pour out in a river toward Zion.” (P. 112) And in Isaiah’s vision, the stream of nations is flowing up-hill, against the law of gravity!

For this future phrase, **וַיִּנְהָרְוּ**, “and they will flow / stream,” see:

**Jeremiah 31:12**, In the good times coming, when Jacob has been redeemed:

And they (the people of Jacob) will come,  
and they will shout with joy on Zion’s height;  
and they will flow / stream to YHWH’s goodness,  
over grain, and over new wine,  
and over (olive) oil, and over young of flock and herd;  
and their innermost-being will be like a well-watered garden,  
and they will not again faint!  
(Here the “streaming” involves only the people of Jacob, not all the nations.)

**Jeremiah 51:44**,

And I will visit (with punishment) Bel in Babylon;  
and I will bring forth from his mouth what he has swallowed.  
And nations will not flow / stream to him [Bel] again;  
also Babylon’s wall fell.

(Just as Babylon has once been the central city of the ancient world, in the future, YHWH, according to Isaiah, predicts the exalted Zion will one day have all the nations and many peoples flowing to it, to learn from YHWH!)

<sup>14</sup>Here, Isaiah uses the prepositional phrase **אֵלָיו**, “to it,” where the parallel statement in **Micah 4:1** uses the prepositional phrase **עָלָיו**, “upon it.” We take this to be an indication of how prepositions in Hebrew were beginning to lose their distinctive meaning, and **אֵל** and **עַל** were used interchangeably.

<sup>15</sup>Gray comments that “All nations will come streaming...to this conspicuous and immovable mountain—to Zion and to Yahweh, no more to Babylon and to Bel [see **Jeremiah 51:44** quoted in footnote 13]...The advent of the nations frequently occurs in late prophecies.” (P. 45)

But obviously, this Zion is not the ancient City of David. It is a Zion raised up above the hills and to the top of mountains, a Zion large enough to accommodate all nations and many peoples!  
(continued...)

2:3 וְהָלְכוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים  
וְאָמְרוּ לְכוּ  
וְנַעֲלֶה אֶל־הַר־יְהוָה  
אֶל־בַּיִת אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב  
וְיִרְנוּ מִדְּרָכָיו  
וְנִלְכֶה בְּאַרְחֹתָיו  
כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה  
וְדַבַּר־יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַם:

And many peoples<sup>16</sup> will go,  
and they will say, Come!  
And we will go up<sup>17</sup> to YHWH's mountain,<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>(...continued)

See our end-note 5 for the many biblical passages relating to this theme of the nations coming to Zion.

<sup>16</sup>Whereas in the preceding verse it is “all the nations,” here it is only “many peoples,” possibly a less than universal depiction. But it can also be understood simply as saying that when all the nations come to this exalted Zion, many peoples will be involved.

<sup>17</sup>Alexander comments that “The word *ascend* [our ‘go up’] is not used in reference to an alleged Jewish notion that the Holy Land was physically higher than all other countries, nor simply to the natural site of Jerusalem, nor even to its moral elevation as the seat of the true religion, but to the new elevation and conspicuous position just ascribed to it.” (P. 98)

While it is true that in the **Hebrew Bible** those going to the physical City of Jerusalem are described as “going up,” here it is a City of Jerusalem / Zion that has been raised up much higher than the physical Jerusalem—to the top of the mountains!

<sup>18</sup>Kaiser translates by “Come, let us make pilgrimage to the mountain of Yahweh.” Motyer comments that “The peoples come voluntarily, notwithstanding the supernatural magnetism stressed by **verse 2**. Their coming transcends nationalism: they acknowledge the God of a single nation, *the God of Jacob*, as the God of all nations.” (P. 54)

to (the) God of Jacob's house / temple!<sup>19</sup>  
And He will teach us<sup>20</sup> some of / from His ways,<sup>21</sup>  
and we will walk in His paths!<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>It is not a depiction of YHWH forcing, or enabling their coming to His house / temple; Isaiah sees the nations / peoples of earth making the decision to go up to YHWH's mountain, encouraging one another to make the journey.

<sup>20</sup>The Hebrew phrase here is וַיִּרְנֵנוּ, "and He will teach us" (hiphil imperfect). The verb יָרָה in the hiphil means (according to **Brown-Driver-Briggs**):

1. throw or cast;
2. shoot (arrows);
3. throw water, rain;
4. point out, show;
5. direct, teach, instruct, especially of the authoritative direction given by priests on matters of ceremonial observance.

It is, we believe, from this hiphil verb that the noun תּוֹרָה has been formed, meaning "teaching," "guidance," or "law."

Motyer comments that "Zion is the source of a 'teaching' (*law*; compare **1:10**) which is nothing less than the *word of the Lord*, veritable Divine revelation." (P. 54)

<sup>21</sup>Oswalt notes that while there are those who translate by "some of His ways" (considering the *min* a "partitive *min*," it is better to take the *min* as pointing to the source of the teaching." (P. 112)

Either translation is possible, as Alexander observes, meaning "either partitively, 'some of His ways'...or as denoting the subject of instruction, 'concerning His ways.'" (P. 98)

He comments that "the emphasis upon the temple as the source of truth contradicts any suggestion that Isaiah rejected everything related to cult." (P. 112)

We agree. Instead of saying that the Zion temple is corrupt, and therefore must come to an end, Isaiah says that though the present worship there is stained and defiled, a much better future awaits it. Though having fallen in the present, in the future it will be supernaturally exalted above the hills to the top of the mountains, and it will become the source of teaching for all the nations.

<sup>22</sup>In Bible-belt religion the claim is often made that there is "only one way," "only one true path in religion." It is disconcerting to such a claim to hear Isaiah speaking of YHWH's "ways" and "paths." But the truth is that biblical religion points to many "ways," all of which have to do with patterns of conduct and worship and ethics and relationships, etc., etc. And sometimes the differences are great—contrast the teaching of **Ecclesiastes** or **Job** with that of **Proverbs**, or the teaching of **Leviticus** with that of **Amos**, or **Hosea**, or Jesus.

(continued...)

Because from Zion<sup>23</sup> **torah** / law / teaching / guidance<sup>24</sup> will go forth,

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<sup>22</sup>(...continued)

What do you think? Do you hold that God has only one way, one identical path, for the entire human race? We believe that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, the life—but it is not a creedal statement—it is the way, the truth, the life of ministry, of love, of compassion, of stooping to serve those most in need, of bearing a cross that leads to sacrificial death, a way that can take many shapes and sizes, adapting itself to the changing needs and circumstances of the world.

The pathway shown to Israel in the **Torah** of Moses (with its demand for male circumcision, kosher foods, exclusion of foreigners, etc. etc.), and the pathway shown by Christ to His followers in, for example, the “Sermon on the Mount,” are quite different—but both are ways, we believe, that lead to God—but they are quite different!

The reason for the nations’ coming to Zion is to learn and practice the ways which Yahweh will teach them. It is tempting to go beyond what Isaiah says, and hold that he means the **Torah** of Moses (with its 613 commandments), or the “Apostle’s Creed,” or some more developed Christian creed such as the Nicene Creed, or the Chalcedonian Creed, or the Athanasian Creed, or the many creeds of Protestant Christianity.

But Isaiah names nothing like this. It is a matter of the nations coming to YHWH God, and learning from Him—learning that both can and has taken many shapes, as is seen in the oftentimes differing biblical documents [contrast **Ezra-Nehemiah** with **Isaiah 40-66!**], and in the experience of the nations that have come to the God of Israel to learn from Him. We would like to say it means loving God and neighbor, and walking humbly with God. But Isaiah simply says the nations will learn from YHWH to follow in His “ways.”

Gray says that Isaiah means “The nations are to feel the moral attraction of the Hebrew or Jewish religion.” (P. 46) But Isaiah doesn’t say this. What do you think “the ways of YHWH” means?

<sup>23</sup>Ortlund comments on the phrase “out of Zion”: “Out of Zion alone; the Gentiles will abandon all other religions for the true God.” (P. 1243)

But while the text depicts all the nations and peoples coming to Zion to learn from YHWH, it says nothing concerning their “abandoning all other religions.”

Again, we observe that such statements, adding the word “alone” to the biblical statement, are in danger of “putting God in a box,” saying that God can only act in the way described in Isaiah’s vision—the mistake that Job’s adversaries made in the **Book of Job**, saying that God could only act in terms of their traditional law of retribution, with no exceptions. But YHWH reveals Himself in **Job 38-41** as the God Who is free to act in any way, or at any time, or in any place He chooses, and is not bound by human dogmatic theologies, just as Job has claimed. He is the God of the wild jungles with their animals and with their law of survival of the fittest, which is His law just as much as is the law of Moses, or the laws of agriculture which YHWH teaches the farmer (**Isaiah 28:26**)!

(continued...)

and YHWH's word from Jerusalem!<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>(...continued)

Has YHWH's **Torah** / teaching been poured out from Zion / Jerusalem as **Isaiah** and the **Book of Acts** affirm? Yes, indeed. But when we go beyond that, to say that this is the only way or time or place that YHWH's teaching has been or can be poured out, or that this is the only place where YHWH's teaching can occur, we are in fact "putting God in our dogmatic box."

The fact of religious experience is that the teaching of God, and His Spirit, will not be confined to our dogmatic limitations, but will continually act in human history in marvelous, life-transforming ways, as the **Hebrew Bible** shows has happened in the past. See, for example:

the story of Abram and Melchizedek in **Genesis 14**, in which Abram acknowledges the Canaanite Priest and King, paying him a tithe, and adopting his religious language;  
the story of Balaam in **Numbers 22-24**, where YHWH speaks through the non-Jewish Balaam in the plains of Moab;  
the stories in the **Book of Judges** of the Spirit's coming upon Israel's Judges (**3:10**, Othniel; **6:34**, Gideon; **11:29**, Jephthah; **13:25**, **14:6**, **19**, **15:14**, Samson), powerfully enabling them;  
the story in **1 Samuel 10:9-13**, of the Spirit rushing upon Saul, enabling him to prophesy / speak for God;  
Isaiah's predictions concerning YHWH's "servant," upon whom He will pour His Spirit, and who becomes a "suffering servant" (**42:1**; **61:1**);  
the story in **Acts 2** depicting the coming of the Spirit upon the followers of Jesus, enabling them to speak in other languages.

What do you think? Is there only one way, only one pattern for the Spirit's action?

We have oftentimes mentioned **Amos 9:7**, which claims that just as YHWH acted in Israel's history, bringing Israel out Egyptian bondage, so YHWH has acted in the history of the Philistines, bringing them from Caphtor, and in the history of the Arameans / Syrians, bringing them from Kir. No, YHWH is not only the God of Israel and the Christians. He is the God of all the earth, Who has worked and is working in the histories of all nations and peoples. Are you willing to affirm that? Or do you want to put God in your private box, making Him subject to your dogmatic creed?

<sup>24</sup>See footnote 16 for the verb יָרָה, "teach," from which this noun תּוֹרָה, "teaching," comes. Slotki, the Jewish scholar, states that the noun, translated "law," means "religious and moral instruction." (P. 10) We agree, but think it includes even more, including YHWH's teaching the farmer (**Isaiah 28:26**), or the warrior (**Psalms 144:1**) and other occupations of humanity. Do you?

<sup>25</sup>The parallel lines of this statement are obvious, as they say almost the same thing, but in slightly different ways. In the last two lines the noun תּוֹרָה, teaching, guidance, law, is parallel to דְּבַר־יְהוָה, "word / message of YHWH," and the location "Zion" is parallel to "Jerusalem."

(continued...)

2:4 וְשִׁפֹּט בֵּין הַגּוֹיִם  
וְהוֹכִיחַ לְעַמִּים רַבִּים  
וְכִתְּתוּ חֲרֻבוֹתֵם לְאֹתִים  
וְחִנִּיתוּתֵיהֶם לְמִזְמוֹרוֹת  
לֹא-יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל-גּוֹי חֶרֶב  
וְלֹא-יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה:

And He will judge between the nations;<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup>(...continued)

Gray comments that in **chapters 40-55**, “the missionary people [Israel as YHWH’s servant] are to carry the knowledge of Yahweh to the nations; here [Isaiah 2:4], the nations are to come to Zion to receive it (compare **Psalm 87**; **Zechariah 8:20-22**): in **chapters 40-55** Israel is the teacher; here, Yahweh Himself (compare **Psalm 94:12**:

Blessed (is) the (strong) man whom You will correct / chasten, Yah,  
and from Your teaching / guidance / law You will teach him!

“But the political subserviency of the nations to Israel, as sometimes anticipated (for example, **Isaiah 60:12**), seems as little thought of here as in **chapters 40-55**.” (P. 46)

See end-note 4 (the phrase “all the nations” in Isaiah, and end-note 5 (“Coming of the Nations to Zion / YHWH’s Care for the Nations in the **Hebrew Bible**”). Reading of all the passages referred to in these end-notes will demonstrate how Isaiah has no unified, clear picture of what the future will bring, but rather, presents enigmatic, puzzling, sometimes contradictory pictures of that future. But Isaiah is certain that one day all of the nations will be involved with Israel and its blessed future. Do you agree?

<sup>26</sup>As Watts notes, “In **Micah 4:1-2** the order of הַגּוֹיִם, ‘the nations,’ and עַמִּים, “peoples,” is reversed and כֹּל, “all” is omitted.” (P. 27)

Alexander comments that “He Who appeared in the preceding verses as the Lawgiver and Teacher of the nations, is now represented as an Arbiter or Umpire, ending their disputes by a pacific intervention, as a necessary consequence of which war ceases, the very knowledge of the art is lost, and its implements applied to other uses.” (P. 98)

Alexander’s Christian interpretation follows: “The event is suspended on a previous condition, that is, the confluence of the nations to the church [his use of this term for the Jewish church easily (continued...)]

and He will decide / reprove / rebuke<sup>27</sup> for many peoples.  
And they will beat their swords into plows,<sup>28</sup>  
and their spears into pruning knives.  
Nation will not lift up a sword against a nation,  
and they will not again learn war!<sup>29</sup>, <sup>6</sup>, <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>(...continued)

changes to that of the Christian church], which has not yet taken place; a strong inducement to diffuse the gospel, which, in the mean time, is peaceful in its spirit, tendency, and actual effect, wherever and so far as it exerts its influence without obstruction.” (**Ibid.**) See footnote 29.

<sup>27</sup>For discussion of this verb, הוֹכִיחַ, see footnote 104 on **Isaiah 1:18**, along with its end-note 16. We have said concerning **Isaiah 1:18** that YHWH is depicted as wanting to enter into dialogue or debate with His sinful people, and He invites them to enter into a mutual reproof—between Himself and the sinful people. The people can state, argue their case, and YHWH in turn will state, argue His case.

We think that YHWH is depicted by **Isaiah** as asking Judah to do exactly what Job was asking Shaddai / El / Eloah to do in the **Book of Job!** Here, it becomes obvious that this is the same dialogue / mutual reproof that YHWH wants to enter into with all nations and peoples on earth!

<sup>28</sup>Gray comments that the word translated plows / ploughshares, אֲתִיּוֹם, “is obviously the name of an agricultural implement; but precisely what, neither the etymology, which is obscure, nor the usage (**1 Samuel 13:20-21**; **Joel 4:10**; **Micah 4:3**) suffices to determine.” (P. 46) And again we remark the “visionary” nature of Isaiah’s vision, with its “enigmatic” puzzling nature.

<sup>29</sup>Slotki comments on **verse 4** that “God’s sovereignty culminates in the abolition of warfare.” (P. 10)

Ortlund comments that “Tiny Judah has been threatened by war for most of its existence. Now Isaiah predicts that, far from bringing oppression, the triumph of biblical faith will result in a peace the world has never known, when all nations *shall beat their swords into plowshares*. The description of the Messiah’s reign in **11:1-10** echoes many of these themes, and **11:4** takes up the words *judge* and *decide disputes*, attributing the activity to the Messiah, in order to show that God will exercise this rule through His Messiah...

“Some Christian interpreters take this to describe the effect on the nations as their citizens and leaders submit to the rule of Christ; others understand this to point forward to an earthly reign of Christ in the millennium [see **Revelation 20:1-6**; there, at the end of the thousand years, satanic evil breaks out again]...Still others see it as a prediction of Christ’s reign in the new heavens and new earth [of **Revelation 21-22**].

“In any case, people of all ages have taken these words to express their longing for freedom from war, when the nations seek to follow the ‘ways’ of ‘the God of Jacob’ (**Isaiah 2:3**) and when no  
(continued...)

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<sup>29</sup>(...continued)

mere human authority but the Lord Jesus shall judge between the nations.” (P. 1244)

All of this is, of course, a Christian’s understanding of Isaiah’s words here in **chapter 2**, which contain no mention of the Messiah or His rule, or “the triumph of biblical faith.”

Isaiah’s vision is a beautiful expression of the human longing for peace in the place of the fighting and wars that have plagued human history. But as history has shown, that longing, and Isaiah’s visionary prediction, have failed to be fulfilled in either Jewish or Christian history, over the course of some 2700 years. Jews have lived throughout their history under the constant threat of persecution and the sword; Palestinians insist that the modern Nation of Israel has wielded a mighty and unjust sword against them. And, we must confess, all too often that sword has been wielded by Christian believers (we need mention only the medieval “crusades,” in which Christians marched across Europe, burning Jewish synagogues and murdering Jews), who themselves have divided into warring factions resulting in long-lasting religious wars.

Jesus the Messiah, Who blessed the peacemakers, instead of finding peace was Himself put to death in a judicial murder, as He dared to fight with orthodox Judaism to open the temple and membership in the people of God to all people, quoting **Isaiah 57:7**—see **Mark 11:17**; **Matthew 21:13** and **Luke 19:46**. His followers, likewise, have fared little better, suffering persecution during the first three centuries of Christianity, as they spread their faith throughout the Roman Empire by peaceful means.

Having grown into the dominant religion by the time of Constantine, who reigned from 306 to 337 C.E., Christianity was made the official state religion of the Roman Empire by the emperor, who demanded that they unify and form creedal statements of their beliefs. When that happened, and Christian bishops were given the power of the sword, they were not slow to wield that power, putting to death those who disagreed with their creedal statements—specifically, the “Monophysite” Christians in Syria, Israel, and Egypt—something totally contrary to the teaching of their Messiah and the opposite of Isaiah’s vision.

In centuries to follow, the self-styled “Christian nations” have constantly engaged in warfare, and all too often the pope in Rome has been instrumental in leading some of those wars—specifically the crusades and the Spanish inquisition.

Jesus the Messiah, risen from the dead, has brought great peace to individuals who have opened their hearts to His presence, turning them from warriors into lovers, from slave-owners to world evangelists, from greedy materialists and pleasure-seekers, to loving, suffering servants. But genuine, lasting peace among the nations, such as envisioned by Isaiah has not come.

This peace which Isaiah envisions as coming “in future times,” or “at the end of days” is still at the heart of both Jewish and Christian longing—but it continually escapes our grasp, being pushed out into a distant, uncertain future, in a promised millennium, or a “first” or “second coming” of the Messiah.

(continued...)



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<sup>29</sup>(...continued)

A Jewish friend once asked me, If Jesus is the Messiah, where is the peace? I was able to tell about the peace that Jesus has brought into my own life, and the lives of countless others—but peace for the nations, as Isaiah envisions, I certainly could not witness to. I have lived through the Second World War (“the war to end all wars”), followed by the Korean and Viet-Nam conflicts, the “Cold War,” and the continuing wars that have followed now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the “war on terror.”

In the twentieth century humanity joined together to form the “League of Nations,” followed by the “United Nations,” in the effort to bring that vision of peace to reality—but so far that effort has failed to achieve its goal.

Kaiser comments that “The universal world peace presupposes a universal recognition of God and subjection to His judgment. Only when this has happened can humanity think of completely destroying all weapons without endangering themselves...”

“In deliberate contrast to **verse 4b**, **Joel 3:10**<sup>Heb</sup> / **4:10**<sup>Eng</sup> says that the nations are to turn their ploughshares into swords and their pruning hooks into spears [and goes on to describe the destruction of the nations instead of their ascent to Zion—**Joel 3:17, 19**<sup>Heb</sup> / **4:17, 19**<sup>Eng</sup>]...Precisely in the light of such a prophecy, prompted by hate of the nations as a consequence of the suffering they have caused, the prophecy discussed here [in **Isaiah 2**] takes on a special significance, transcended in the **Book of Isaiah** only by **19:19-25**...as evidence of a hope that God will not act anxiously and selfishly for Himself, but will wait until He is in fact Lord of all nations.” (P. 55)

### **Isaiah 19:19-25,**

- 19 In that day  
there will be an altar to the YHWH in (the) midst of Egypt-land,  
and a pillar next to its border, for the YHWH.
- 20 And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the YHWH of Armies in Egypt-land;  
because they will cry out to YHWH from before oppressors;  
and He will send to them a deliverer / savior and one contending,  
and he will deliver (synonym) them.
- 21 And YHWH will be known to Egypt;  
and Egyptians will know YHWH in that day;  
and they will serve (with) sacrifice and offering;  
and they will make a vow to the YHWH,  
and they will keep (it).
- 22 And YHWH will strike Egyptians,  
striking and healing;  
and they will return to / as far as YHWH;  
and He will be supplicated by them,  
and He will heal them.
- 23 On that day  
there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria,  
and Assyria will come into Egypt,

(continued...)

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<sup>29</sup>(...continued)

and Egypt into Assyria;  
and Egyptians will serve Assyria.

- 24 In that day,  
Israel will be a third one to Egypt and to Assyria—  
a blessing in the earth's midst,  
25 which YHWH of Armies will bless, saying  
Blessed (is) My people Egypt,  
and product of My hands, Assyria,  
and My inheritance, Israel!

**Isaiah 2:2-4** predicts that under the teaching of YHWH, all the nations, in the words of Gray, will “refer their disputes to Him, He alone being God and King; there will be no further need for the arbitrament of war. The writer’s ideal is universal peace.” (P. 46)

What do you think? Do you share in Isaiah’s vision, as depicted here in **chapter 2:2-4**, and then later in **chapter 19:19-25**? How so? Or do you agree more with Joel’s prophecy, and the necessity to take up arms in self-defense?

Motyer comments that “In human political thinking the reduction of armaments is a hoped-for cause of peace and this is not without truth...But for Isaiah the abolition of armaments follows a Divine reordering of the world consequent upon the transcending of nationalism by the recognition of the one true God...The means of war (*beat their swords*), the practice of war (*take up sword*) and the mentality of war (*train for / learn war*) will all alike disappear.” (P. 54)

This passage in **Isaiah 2:2-4** is given in almost identical words in **Micah 4:1-3** (see footnote 6) But **Micah** continues with **verses 4-5**, which are not found in **Isaiah**:

- 4 And each man will dwell beneath his grapevine,  
and beneath his olive-tree,  
and there is no one causing fear / dread,  
because YHWH of Armies’ mouth spoke!  
5 Because all the people walk,  
each man in his God’s name;  
and we will walk  
in YHWH our God’s name,  
to long-lasting time and (to) perpetuity!

With this, Micah launches into a description of the return of a “remnant” from captivity, and the vision of a world at **peace**, without war, is shrunk down into simply a picture of the returning Israelites dwelling unafraid in a condition of peace in their homeland—with the other peoples walking in the name of their God(s), while Israel itself walks in the name of YHWH, with dominion being returned to Zion / Jerusalem. Instead of the vision’s depiction of all the nations coming to YHWH, and walking in His ways / paths, the nations walk in the paths of their Gods—while Israel walks in YHWH’s ways / paths.

(continued...)

<sup>29</sup>(...continued)

What will you make of Micah's treatment of this largely identical vision of Isaiah? Is Micah treating that vision much as Christian interpreters have treated it, making it fit his time and circumstances, just as Christians have made it fit into their own visions of a blessed future in the **Book of Revelation**?

Oswalt states that "Study of the **Micah** passage indicates that it fits more naturally there than it does in **Isaiah**. The opening conjunction in the first verse (**Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1**) makes no sense in **Isaiah** but perfectly good sense in **Micah**...It is...likely that the saying, certainly one of remarkable beauty and force...had become a common possession of the several priestly and prophetic communities within the nation and that one or both of these prophets drew it from that common heritage." (P. 115)

George Adam Smith held that **Isaiah 2:2-4** is the utopian vision of the young, naive Isaiah, who later, as he faced the reality of Judah's and Jerusalem's stubborn sinfulness, changed his view of the future from this utopian hope to a more realistic hope of the return of a remnant from captivity (see **Isaiah 4:2-6**), akin to the view of **Micah** mentioned above.

Of one thing we can be sure—it is that the **Book of Isaiah** offers many visions of hope (we count some 63 in its 66 chapters in our end-note 6!), none of which are exactly the same, and in none of which is this exact vision of **2:2-4** repeated, though some of its elements are mentioned in other Isaianic visions of hope. Reading all of these visions of hope reaffirms our conviction that the prophetic vision was in fact enigmatic and puzzling, just as **Numbers 12:6-8** and **1 Corinthians 13:9-12** tell us it is—not at all clear and exact, as so many interpreters seek to make it out to be.

Nonetheless, there can be no doubt that Isaiah lived by hope, and his enigmatic visions have imparted hope to his hearers and readers across the centuries, as has this vision in **2:2-4** of world-wide peace! What do you think?

For other occurrences of the noun , "war," in **Isaiah**, see our end-note 7.

<sup>30</sup>Watts comments on **verses 5-22** that "The end of the previous paragraph is clearly marked. **Verse 5** begins with a different address (Israel) and a different subject. The passage is complex. Documentation of Israel's sin and judgment digresses into a treatment of mankind's sin of pride, which Yahweh cannot tolerate.

"The entire section, from **verse 6** through **verse 22**, which has an arch structure, responds to the invitation to the House of Jacob in **verse 5** by identifying the fate of Jacob with that of mankind, and both with the Day of Yahweh." (P. 33) What a come-down from the idyllic vision of worldwide peace!

Gray states that **verse 5** is "a brief homiletic ['preachy'] reflection which unites the poem that precedes with that which follows, and derives its phraseology in part from the one, in part from the other...[The nations] propose to walk in Yahweh's paths: let us do the same, following the path lighted up by [YHWH's teaching / guidance / law]." (P. 48) Compare:

(continued...)

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<sup>30</sup>(...continued)

**Psalm 119:105,**

A lamp for my foot (is) your word,  
and a light for my path.

**Proverbs 6:22,**

When you walk about, she (Lady Wisdom) will guide you;  
when you sleep, she will keep watch over you;  
and you will awake—she will talk (meditatively) to you.

Motyer comments on **verse 5** that “The call to the nations ‘*Come, let us go up*’ (**verse 3**) finds an echo in *Come...let us walk*...Isaiah does not stand aloof from the call but says *us*. One with them in sin (**6:5** [Isaiah’s statement that he is a man of ‘unclean lips’]), he would have them to be one with him in aspiration [‘ambition’]. He calls them, not to ‘walk to’ but to *walk in the light of the Lord*, for already it shines around them symbolizing God’s presence...and truth.” (P. 55) See:

**Psalm 27:1,**

YHWH (is) my light and my salvation / deliverance--  
from whom shall I be afraid?  
YHWH (is) my life’s stronghold--  
from whom shall I be in dread?

**Psalm 43:3,**

Send forth Your light and Your true-faithfulness!  
They will guide me;  
they will bring me to Your set-apart mountain,  
and to Your dwelling-place.

Slotki comments on **verse 5** that it “introduces a thought suggested by the glorious future just depicted and leads on to the drab reality, the actual state of the people, described in the following verses. The prophet says in effect, ‘Seeing that we are to have such a bright future, universal peace, and the recognition of the law of our God by all the nations of the earth, let us ourselves begin here and now to *walk in the light of the Lord*. But alas! Israel is still sunk in the vices of idolatry and superstition, and for that reason God has forsaken them.’” (P. 11)

Alexander comments on **verse 5** that “From this distant prospect of the calling of the Gentiles [the passage says nothing about ‘the calling of the Gentiles,’ but rather describes the nations as coming, on their own volition, to Mount Zion and to the God of Jacob], the Prophet now reverts to his own times and countrymen, and calls upon them not to be behind the nations in the use of their distinguished advantages. If even the heathen were one day to be enlightened, surely they who were already in possession of the light ought to make use of it.” (P. 99)

(continued...)

## וּנְלַכְהָ בְּאוֹר יְהוָה:

House of Jacob,<sup>8</sup> come!<sup>31</sup>

And we will / let us walk in YHWH's light!<sup>32, 9</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>(...continued)

Notice that the word “heathen” is Alexander’s—it is not found in the text!

<sup>31</sup>Since Isaiah identifies all of Israel as the “House of Jacob,” the invitation is made to all of Israel to come to the mountain of YHWH’s house, to Zion. See our end-note 8 for occurrences of the phrase “House of Jacob” in the **Hebrew Bible**.

Watts comments that “The ark of Yahweh was brought to Jerusalem as an act of ‘all Israel.’ See **2 Samuel 6:1-5**,

- 1 And David again gathered every chosen man in Israel,  
30,000.
- 2 And David arose and went, and all the people with him from Baalej-Judah,  
to bring up from there (the) ark / chest of the God  
which was called by name, name of YHWH of Armies,  
enthroned (on) the Cherubim on top of it.
- 3 And they caused (the) ark / chest of the God to ride upon a new wagon;  
and they lifted it up from Abinadab’s house which (was) on the hill.  
And Uzzah and Achyo, Abinadab’s sons, (were) guiding the new wagon.
- 4 And they lifted it up from Abinadab’s house which (was) on the hill,  
with (the) ark / chest of the God;  
and Achyo (was) walking before the ark / chest.
- 5 And David and all Israel’s household (were) playing / singing (?) before YHWH,  
with cypress-wood instruments and with lyres / harps,  
and with guitars and with tambourines,  
and with castanets and with cymbals.

“All Israel was accustomed to go up to Jerusalem to worship. Jeroboam had to take measures to discourage it when the northern tribes withdrew from the United Monarchy (**1 Kings 12:26-33**). It is a natural assumption that the restoration of the city should make it accessible to ‘all Israel’...

“It is a sad commentary on two centuries of separation and the resulting religious infidelity that this was not to be. The separation had been politically and economically successful, as the wry ‘fulsome’ comments show. But it had also been spiritually disastrous.” (Pp. 34-35)

Here, in the invitation of **verse 5**, it is the House of Jacob, or all Israel, that is invited to walk in YHWH’s light. See our end-note 9 for this matter of “light to Israel and beyond.”

<sup>32</sup>Ortlund comments on **verse 5** that “Isaiah calls the people of God to live now in the *light* of the promised future. His exhortation applies the nations’ future rallying cry in **verse 3** to the people of God in the present.” (P. 1244)

(continued...)

<sup>32</sup>(...continued)

Oswalt similarly states, “The verse clearly harks back to the statement of the Gentiles in **verse 3**, Come, let us go up...that He may teach...and that we may walk...

“As Delitzsch commented, the prophet is attempting to use the example of the Gentiles to provoke God’s people to a holy jealousy. The emphatic position of *House of Jacob*, and its correlation with *God of Jacob* in **verse 3** supports this contention. Surely, he seems to be saying, if the Gentiles will come seeking the truth we have...if they will come to the light we hold...then we ought to walk in that light...The passage is intended to function in a motivational way, to encourage both present and future generations to leave their foolish rebellion and to embrace their calling in God.” (Pp. 118-19).

Perhaps this is the best that anyone can do, whether Jew or Christian—to make up their mind to walk in the light of Isaiah’s beautiful prediction, to do all in their power to make themselves instruments and bearers of just such a peace on earth. What do you think?

For this exhortation to walk in the light of YHWH, compare **Exodus 13:21-22**,

- 22 And YHWH is walking / going before them  
by day in the pillar of cloud,  
to lead them (on) the way;  
and by night in a pillar of fire,  
to give light for them,  
to walk / go by day and by night.
- 23 (The) pillar of the cloud did not depart by day,  
and (the) pillar of the fire by night,  
before the people.

What do you think? Do you think it possible for believing Jews and Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to walk in the light of YHWH?

I have a close Christian friend who with his wife have spent their lives in Northern Thailand, bringing good news, healing, and peace to the Thai people and neighboring tribes. My first wife and I spent our entire married life and then our retirement years in seeking to know and walk in the light of YHWH’s teaching through Jesus Christ, reaching out to black people in the racially divided South, to Hispanics in the Southwest, and to Latinos and Haitians in Dade County, Florida. We certainly think it is possible to walk in the light of YHWH, bringing peace to a troubled world.

<sup>33</sup>Kaiser entitles **2:6-22** “The Day of Yahweh,” and then quotes Bernard Duhm as saying that this poem about the Day of Yahweh is “the worst preserved poem in the whole **Book of Isaiah**.” (P. 58) Compare a similar statement by Gray, who adds that “In the main the sense is clear in spite of the state of the text...”

(continued...)

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<sup>33</sup>(...continued)

“The subject of the poem is the Day of Yahweh (**verse 12**), when Yahweh will gloriously and terribly manifest His presence (**verse 10**). Isaiah follows Amos in predicting this ‘Day,’ which was popularly expected to bring ‘light’ and national success (**Amos 5:18**), as a day of terror for Israel no less than for the rest of the world. It is not to be a day on which Israel’s foes will for ever go under and Israel emerge successful, but on which Israel with the rest of mankind will do well to seek out holes and crannies (**verses 10, 17**), if haply they may find there cover away from Yahweh. And the reason for this common doom that awaits Israel as well as the rest of the world is Israel’s abandonment of Yahweh, which has led in turn to His abandonment of them...

“Israel has grown wealthy, and has expended its wealth on equipments for war (**verse 7**) and on the manufacture of idols (**verse 8**) and in these has placed its trust...Consequently Yahweh has abandoned Israel; it is no more His people, has no longer closer ties with Him than the rest of mankind...

“The monotonous cast of the sentences: wealth, wealth, nothing but wealth and the trust in it (**verses 6-8**); overthrow, overthrow, nothing but overthrow of all else but Yahweh (**verses 12-16**).” (Pp. 49-51)

Motyer entitles **verses 6-21** “The actual Jerusalem: its religious condition.” He comments that “**Verses 6-9** speak of facets of national life which are inviting judgment, and **verses 10-21** are a poem on the nature and results of Divine judgment. (The evidence of national wealth and self-confidence possibly dates these oracles early in Isaiah’s ministry.) The charge of idolatry forms the climax to each section (**verses 8, 18-20**).” (P. 55)

Oswalt entitles **2:6-11** “Full, but empty,” and comments that “This segment shows a Judah which has exalted and adulated [shown excessive admiration or devotion to] human leadership, experiencing the complete destruction of that human greatness to the point that she is led by children and incompetents. The section seems to say that true human greatness cannot appear until God’s greatness is permitted to shine over all...

“**Verses 6-11** depict the cause of the problem (human pride and self-sufficiency) and state briefly the effect (humiliation)...**Verses 12-17** continue the statement in a figurative way with greater force...**Verses 18-22** state the effect even more strongly and close with the devastating **verse 22**, the final word on human glory. The use of recurring refrains and the interweaving of verbally different but thematically similar refrains only serve to heighten the effect...

“Why is it imperative that the people of Israel learn to walk in the light? Because God has forsaken them in their present condition and no future hope can obscure that fact...They cannot, in the expectation of some ideal future, continue to live in their sin. Rather, that expectation ought to motivate them to deal with the realities of the present. If they will not change their ways (as in fact they did not), then restoration can only come to them through humiliation and the destruction of their false hopes.” (Pp. 120-21)

(continued...)

כִּי מָלְאוּ מִקְדָּם  
וְעַנְנִים כִּפְלִשְׁתִּים  
וּבֵילְדֵי נְכָרִים יִשְׁפִּיקוּ:

Because You rejected / forsook Your people, Jacob's House;<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>(...continued)

Motyer comments on **verses 6-9** that “In a piece as rhythmic and compelling as anything he ever wrote, Isaiah opens with *abandoned* (**verse 6**) and ends with *do not forgive* (**verse 9**)—an iron band of hopelessness gripping the apostates of **verses 7-9**. He makes five contrasts between the ideal and the actual:

1. the world is drawn to Zion (**verse 2**); God's people choose to conform to the world (**verse 6**);
2. the world seeks spiritual benefit (**verse 3**); Zion heaps up material wealth (**verse 7a**);
3. the consequence of coming to Zion is world peace (**verse 4**); Zion is full of armaments (**verse 7b**);
4. the world seeks to know the true God and commits itself beforehand to obey Him (**verse 3**); God's people are busy inventing their own Gods (**verse 8**);
5. the world is received before the Lord's tribunal (**verse 4**); God's people are abandoned and denied forgiveness (**verses 6, 9**).” (P. 55)

Slotki comments on **verses 6-9** that “The prophet in despair and bitterness turns away from his people and addresses himself to God.” (P. 11)

Ortlund comments on **verses 6-8** that “Rather than the world coming to Zion to learn God's ways (**verses 2-4**), the people of God in Isaiah's day are influenced by the ways of the world—to the point of saturation.” (P. 1244)

Motyer comments that in **verse 6** there is a switch from speaking to the people (**verse 5**) to speaking to the Lord (**verse 6**). “God has abandoned...them, left them to their own resources, left them free to go their own way.” (P.55)

We say, Yes, Isaiah believes in the freedom of individuals and nations to make their decisions as to which way to walk in life. YHWH will not force obedience!

Alexander comments on **verse 6** that “The exhortation in **verse 5** implied that the Jews were not actually walking in God's light, but were alienated from Him, a fact which is now explicitly asserted and the reason of it given, that is, illicit intercourse with foreign nations, as evinced by the adoption of their superstitious practices, reliance on their martial and pecuniary [measured in money] aid, and last but not worst of all, the worship of their idols.” (P. 99)

<sup>34</sup>Compare end-note 8 on “House of Jacob,” with its many passages where “House of Jacob” and “House of Israel” are parallel, that is, treated as synonyms.

(continued...)



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<sup>34</sup>(...continued)

Translations of this first line of **verse 6** vary:

**King James**, “Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob”;

**Tanakh**, “For you have forsaken *the ways* of your people, O House of Jacob!”

**New Revised Standard**, “For you have forsaken the ways of your people, O house of Jacob.”

**New International**, “You have abandoned your people, the house of Jacob.”

**New Jerusalem**, “You have rejected your people, the House of Jacob”;

**Rahifs**, ἀνήκεν γὰρ τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Ἰσραηλ, “For He abandoned His people, the House of the Israel.” (We are reading ἀνήκεν as being from the verb ἀνίημι which may be mistaken. See Watts, p. 32.)

**Watts**, “For it applies to His people, the House of Jacob.”

The question in translation of the Hebrew text is concerning the subject of the phrase כִּי נִטְשָׁתָהּ, “Because You / you forsook.” Is it talking about YHWH having forsaken the House of Jacob, or is it talking about the House of Jacob’s forsaking its people? We think it most probable that here Isaiah claims that YHWH has rejected / forsaken Jacob’s House—because of her failure to walk in YHWH’s ways.

Compare the following passages where the verb **natash** occurs, both stating that YHWH has forsaken His people, and promising that He will not forsake His people:

**Judges 6:13**, where Gideon claims, YHWH had forsaken Israel and left them in the hands of Midian;

**1 Samuel 12:22**, where Samuel tells the people YHWH will not forsake His people, for His great name’s sake;

**1 Kings 8:57**, Solomon’s prayer that YHWH will not leave or forsake His people, Israel;

**2 Kings 21:14**, where YHWH vows that He will forsake the remnant of His heritage, and give them into the hands of their enemies, because of Manasseh’s sins;

**Jeremiah 7:29b**,

כִּי מֵאֵס יְהוָה וַיִּטֵּשׁ

אֶת־דֹּר עֲבָרָתוֹ

because YHWH rejected and forsook,  
a generation of His wrath!

**Jeremiah 12:7**, where YHWH tells Jeremiah, whose family members have forsaken him, that He has experienced the same thing with His people, causing Him to forsake them:

(continued...)

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<sup>34</sup>(...continued)

עֲזַבְתִּי אֶת־בֵּיתִי  
נִשְׁשַׁתִּי אֶת־נַחְלָתִי  
נָתַתִּי אֶת־יְרֵדוֹת נַפְשִׁי  
בְּכַף אִיבֵיהָ:

I left My household,  
I forsook My inheritance;  
I gave My innermost-being's beloved  
into (the) hand of her enemies!

**Jeremiah 23:33**, where Jeremiah says the burden / message of YHWH is that YHWH will forsake the people of Judah; **23:39**, similar;

**Psalm 27:9**,

אֶל־תַּסְתֵּר פָּנֶיךָ מִמּוֹנֵי  
אֶל־תִּטְּבֵן עַבְדְּךָ  
עֲזַרְתִּי הֵייתָ אֶל־תִּטְּשֵׁנִי  
וְאֶל־תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵי:

Do not hide Your face / presence from me!  
Do not thrust your slave away in anger!  
You have been my Help--do not forsake me!  
And do not abandon me, O God of my salvation / deliverance!

**Psalm 94:14**,

כִּי לֹא־יִטַּשׁ יְהוָה עַמּוֹ  
וְנִחַלְתּוֹ לֹא יַעֲזֹב:

Because YHWH will not forsake His people,  
and His inheritance he will not abandon!

A major question in interpretation is concerning the meaning of the phrase “the house of Jacob.” As Gray points out, the phrase is ambiguous, and therefore “it must remain uncertain whether Isaiah is here depicting the doom of the Northern Kingdom (as in **9:7ff.**; **17:1-9**), or of the Southern Kingdom, or of both together. In either case the prevalence of wealth and the easy confidence in the more than sufficiency of the military resources of the kingdom point to a very early period in Isaiah’s career—say before the Assyrian campaign of 738 B.C.—as the probable if not certain date of the poem.” (P. 51)

(continued...)

because they were filled from (the) east—<sup>35</sup>

both fortune-tellers / interpreters of omens<sup>36</sup> like the Philistines--<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>(...continued)

As Isaiah has shown in **chapter 1**, Jacob's / Israel's / Judah's religion is not at all what YHWH wants; YHWH wants to enter into dialogue / mutual reproof with His people, and if they will consent, He will fully forgive and cleanse them. But if they refuse, they cannot any longer be His people and share in the wondrous future He intends for them. And the sad fact is that the House of Jacob has so far refused the Divine invitation—and therefore YHWH has forsaken / rejected them.

And we ask, If YHWH indeed forsook His ancient people, can He not, and will He not, forsake their modern counterparts—synagogue and church—if we act like His ancient people, worshipping the modern idols of Power / Possessions / Pleasure?

<sup>35</sup>This second line of **verse 6** is given varying translations:

**King James**, “because they be replenished from the east”;

**Tanakh**, “For they are full of *practices* from the East”;

**New Revised Standard**, “Indeed they are full of diviners from the east”;

**New International**, “They are full of superstitions from the East”;

**New Jerusalem**, “for it has long been full of sorcerers (like the Philistines)”;

**Rahfs**, ὅτι ἐνεπλήσθη ὡς τὸ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, “because it was filled like that from (the) beginning.”

**Watts**, “But they are full from the east.”

Watts notes that “An object appears to be lacking for מְלֵאִי, ‘they were full.’ ‘Full’ of what?” (P. 33) These other translations supply varying answers—replenishment, practices, diviners, superstitions, sorcerers. We say, fortune-tellers / interpreters of omens, agreements / deals with foreigners. What do you say?

If an Isaiah were to arise in our midst in 21<sup>st</sup> century America, what would he say we are filled with?

Oswalt comments that “The contrast between **verse 3** and **verse 6** is noteworthy. There the nations have come to Jerusalem to learn God's ways. Here Jacob is full of the Gentiles' ways. There God is exalted and peace holds sway. Here mankind is exalted and terror holds sway...The prophet is saying that Israel has borrowed the pagan ways from east to west.” (P. 122) However, the word “pagan” is, like the word “heathen,” not found in the text.

Slotki holds that the word “east” has reference to Syria and Babylonia, the lands of magic and witchcraft.” (P. 11) We think the reference may be much larger than only these two nations.

<sup>36</sup>The plural noun עֲנַיִם means “sooth-sayers,” “those who interpret signs,” “those practicing (continued...)”

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<sup>36</sup>(...continued)

divination,” “the art or practice that seeks to foresee or foretell future events or discover hidden knowledge usually by the interpretation of omens or by the aid of supernatural powers.”

<sup>37</sup>For the Philistine practice of divination, see the strange story of **1 Samuel 6**, where the Philistines call to their priests and diviners (here, קִסְמִים, a synonym of עֲנָנִים) asking what they should do with YHWH’s chest / ark which had been moved from one Philistine city to another, for a total of seven months. Their advice was to not return the chest / ark empty, but to include with it a guilt-offering, consisting of five golden tumors (YHWH had afflicted the Philistines with tumors—see chapter **5:6-12**) and five golden mice (perhaps as symbolic for the cause of their plague), and to place the chest / ark on a cart along with the golden tumors and golden mice, to be pulled by two cows—which quickly head directly to Israelite territory.

We take this story to be typical for the kind of magic practiced in divination, to influence the Divine powers and ward off evil. The story reminds us of some of the religious practices in Haiti and Cuba, and now common in Miami, Florida.

Gray comments that “We have no other indication that the Philistines were pre-eminent in divination. That the Philistines consulted oracles (**2 Kings 1:2**) and resorted to magic practices (**1 Samuel 6:2**) merely shows that they formed no exception to the general habits of the ancient world. On the other hand, the Philistines were great traders, and Gaza was one of the great markets of the ancient world.” (P. 53)

In the **Hebrew Bible**, YHWH warns His people against the use of divination—see especially **Deuteronomy 18:9-14** and **Leviticus 19:26b**. Instead of diviners, the Israelites were urged to listen to the voice of the prophets whom YHWH raised up in their midst—see **Deuteronomy 18:15-22**. For the practice of divination, see:

**Judges 9:37**, where mention is made of an אֵלֹן מְעוֹנָנִים, “oak of diviners”—evidently a tree considered to be sacred, beneath which diviners practiced their art;

**Micah 5:11**, in the day when YHWH cleanses the land of Israel by means of the remnant, Micah depicts YHWH as saying,

And I will cut off sorceries from your hand,  
and you (singular) will have no diviners.

**Isaiah 57:3**,

And you (plural)--draw near here,  
children of a [palm-reading] spiritualist / diviner,  
you descendant of an adulterer--  
and she prostituted (herself)!

(continued...)

and with children of foreigners<sup>38</sup> they strike (hands / make agreements).<sup>39</sup>, <sup>10</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>(...continued)

**2 Kings 21:6**, in a description of the sins of Manasseh, the following are included:

and he caused his son to cross over in the fire,  
and diviner / one watching clouds,  
and diviner (synonym) / one watching the movement of snakes,  
and many of those communicating with the dead / familiar spirits—  
to do that which was evil in YHWH's eyes,  
to provoke (Him).

See our commentary on **Deuteronomy 18:15-22**, for an extended treatment of the various words related to “divination.”

<sup>38</sup>We are reminded of the teaching of **Ezra-Nehemiah** that the children in Israel with foreign mothers should be rejected from Israel, along with their mothers.

Isaiah's language here seems to be in line with that teaching, as he condemns the striking of hands / or making of agreements with the children of foreigners. If this is correct, it is quite different from the teaching of **Isaiah 40-66**, especially **chapter 57**, which calls upon the Israelites who have returned to their homeland to be open to foreigners—not to reject them.

Of course, here “striking of hands” with the children of foreigners may be referring to financial or business or religious matters— something quite different from the matter of rejecting the children of non-Israelite mothers from the religion of Israel.

<sup>39</sup>The last two lines of **verse 6** are given varying translations:

**King James**, “and *are* soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers.”

**Tanakh**, “And of soothsaying like the Philistines; They abound in customs of the aliens.”

**New Revised Standard**, “and of soothsayers like the Philistines, and they clasp hands with foreigners.”

**New International**, “they practice divination like the Philistines and clasp hands with pagans.”

**New Jerusalem**, “of sorcerers like the Philistines, and is overrun with foreigners.”

**Rahfs**, ἡ χώρα αὐτῶν κληδονισμῶν ὡς ἡ τῶν ἀλλοφύλων καὶ τέκνα πολλὰ ἀλλόφυλα ἐγενήθη αὐτοῖς, “the country of theirs with divinations / observance of signs, like the one of the foreigners, and many foreign children was born (sic) to them.”

For occurrences in the **Hebrew Bible** of the verb **פָּדַשׁ / פָּדַס**, here translated “slap (hands),” see our end-note 10, where we conclude that the clapping or slapping of hands is a symbolic gesture, with various possible meanings, from a sign of frustration and anger, to a sign of agreement, to a sign of shame and humiliation, to a sign of frustration, to a sign of on-coming destruction, to a symbol of embarrassment, to an expression of pride and obstinacy, or to an expression of mockery.

(continued...)

<sup>39</sup>(...continued)

Slotki holds that here it means “associate with.” (P. 11)

Motyer states that this “unique expression” perhaps means “come to agreement with.” (P. 56) Alexander holds that the verb means “‘they abound,’ as in Syriac...” and adds that “the [Greek translation] and the Targum apply the clause to alliances by marriage with the heathen.” (P. 100)

Here, we understand Isaiah to be criticizing Jerusalem / Judah for entering into agreements with their neighbors, accepting their practices as their own, even though those practices are forbidden by their own **torah**, authoritative teaching.

Oswalt comments that “As the text stands, *with the children of foreigners they clap hands* seems to refer to the making of alliances with foreigners that involved at least tacit recognition of the foreign Gods...God called the Hebrews to commit their security to Him in trust and to give their attention to justice and righteousness. This was the dilemma Israel faced throughout her history. Listen to God or listen to the nations? At this point, the prophet says, they have listened to the nations.” (Pp. 122-23)

What do you think the text means? Is this not another example of the “enigmatic / puzzling” nature of the prophetic word?

<sup>40</sup>Motyer comments on **verses 7-8** that “The ascending scale of condemnation (wealth, armaments, idolatry) is enhanced by the repetition *is full of* and by the fact that **verse 8b** unexpectedly does not repeat *there is no end*, used twice in **verse 7**.”

He adds that “The **Bible** has no animus against wealth (treasures) as such. All depends on how it is acquired (**3:14**), how it is used (**5:8**) and whether it is seen as an alternative security to trusting the Lord.” (P. 56) Yes...but the **Bible** is filled with warnings concerning the dangers of wealth, which is probably our most prevalent modern form of idolatry in America!

Gray comments that “Judah (or Israel) has become a busy commercial people thronged with foreign traders: hence flows wealth, which is expended on munitions of war and the manufacture of handiwork to which, instead of Yahweh, the people pay worship...”

“For the association of the presence of foreigners with a wealth-producing commerce, compare **Isaiah 23** (see especially **verse 17**) and **Ezekiel 27**...”

“G. A. Smith [states] ‘the Hebrew prophets from Amos onwards bear witness to an extraordinary increase of trade, and to the tempers which grow with it...The old agricultural economy is disturbed; farmers give place on their ancestral lands to a new class of rich men, who can only have been created by trade...The sins of trade: covetousness, false weights, and the oppression of debtors and of the poor, are frequently castigated (**Amos 2:6; 4:1; 8:4ff., Hosea 12:7; Isaiah 3:5, 15; 5:23; Micah 2 and 3**.’” (P. 53)

(continued...)

וְאֵין קֶצֶה לְאַצְרֹתָיו  
וְתַמְלֵא אֶרְצוֹ סוּסִים  
וְאֵין קֶצֶה לְמִרְכָּבָתָיו:

And his land<sup>41</sup> was filled (with) silver and gold,  
and there is no end to his treasures;<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>(...continued)

Alexander comments on **verse 7** that “The second proof of undue intercourse with heathen nations, which the Prophet mentions, is the influx of foreign money, and of foreign troops, with which he represents the land as filled.” (P. 100)

But the text does not say anything about “foreign troops.” It states, “and his land was filled with horses, and there is no end to his chariots.”

<sup>41</sup>Oswalt translates by “Their land,” noting that the Hebrew reads “his,” and that this is “probably in reference to Jacob.” (P. 119) We think the text is depicting, with over-statement, the condition of Judah, or perhaps Judah and Israel (“Jacob’s household”) that is calling for Divine visitation in punishment.

Alexander states that the phrase “and his land” refers to “the singular people in **verse 6**.” (P. 100) The Hebrew word for “people” is **עַם**, which is masculine singular.

Slotki comments that “Throughout **verses 7-8** the Hebrew singular ‘his,’ referring to the people collectively, is rendered by the plural [in translations].” (P. 11) We agree.

<sup>42</sup>Kaiser observes that there is “an amazing parallel” to the first two lines of **verse 7** in **Nahum 2:10** [which is spoken concerning Nineveh, not Judah]:

Plunder silver! Plunder gold!

And there is no end to the preparation / supply of wealth,  
from all (the) vessels of delight!

Are we to think that Judah and Israel in the time of Isaiah rivaled Assyria’s wealth? We think Isaiah is “over-stating” the situation. What do you think?

Kaiser comments that “International contacts and riches lead to idolatry—this association can hardly be intended to be no more than a comment on history; it will also have in mind the dangers and perils of the time in which it was made.” (P. 60)

Slotki comments that “In the reign of Uzziah and Jotham the people enjoyed great prosperity by reason of increased trade and the control of the Red Sea shipping.” (P. 11) Yes, but was it enough to justify Isaiah’s language here in **verse 7**?

and his land was filled with horses,<sup>43, 11</sup>  
and there is no end to his chariots.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>For mention of horses in **Isaiah**, see our end-note 11, where it becomes clear from the passages involved that the armies of Egypt and Assyria were known for their use of horses in warfare. We see no specific evidence that Judah abounded in horses in the time of Isaiah, other than this passage, but are reminded of the statements concerning horses and chariots in the army of King Solomon (**1 Kings 4:26, 28; 10:26-29 2 Chronicles 1:14-17; 9:24-28**).

Can it be that Isaiah is describing Israel and Judah in the days of Uzziah in Judah and Jeroboam II in Northern Israel, characterizing their wealth as rivaling that of Solomon? We think this is possible—but we also think that Isaiah is using hyperbole, exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.

If it was in fact the case that Judah and Israel were “filled with horses,” with “no end to the chariots,” why the desire of Judah’s leaders to make an alliance with Egypt with its horses and chariots? And if Isaiah’s statements here are to be taken literally, the Rabshakeh’s challenge in **Isaiah 38:6** would not have been made.

Alexander comments that “The horses and chariots of the **Old Testament** are horses and chariots of war. The common riding animals were mules and asses, the latter of which, as contrasted with the horse, are emblematic of peace (**Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:7**). But on the supposition that the verse has reference to undue dependence upon foreign powers, the money and the armies of the latter would be naturally named together. Thus understood, this verse affords no proof that the prophecy belongs to the prosperous reign of Uzziah or Jotham, since it merely represents the land as flooded with foreign gold and foreign troops, a description rather applicable to the reign of Ahaz.” (P. 101)

What do you think? Do you think this passage enables its being dated?

<sup>44</sup>“Chariots” are mentioned in **Isaiah** here, where the chariots are said to fill “his land,” and then in two other places:

**Isaiah 22:18**, where Isaiah gives YHWH’s message to Shebna the royal steward:

Wrapping up He will wrap you up, a wrapping,  
like the ball (thrown) into a land of wide borders.  
There you shall die,  
and there your chariots of your honor.  
(You) shame (to) your master’s house!  
(Here, chariots are the possession of an individual Israelite official in the time of Isaiah.)

**Isaiah 66:15**,

Because look—YHWH will come with the fire,  
and like a storm-wind, His chariots,

(continued...)



2:8 וְתִמְלֵא אֶרְצוֹ אֱלִילִים  
 לְמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו יִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ  
 לְאִשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֲצַבְעֹתָיו:

And his land is filled (with) Nothing-Gods!<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup>(...continued)  
 to return with rage His anger,  
 and His rebuke in flames of fire!  
 (Here the chariots belong to YHWH's army.)

How are we to understand **verse 7**? In **verse 6** it is stated that Judah / Jerusalem has “clapped / slapped / struck” the hand of children of foreigners, that is, in the plural. But now in **verse 7** the third person singular is used, “he” and “him.”

We take Isaiah’s use of the third person singular pronouns to mean Judah. Others translate with plural pronouns. **King James, Tanakh, New Revised Standard, New International** and **Rahlf’s** have the plural in **verse 7**, “their land,” etc. **New Jerusalem** is an exception—it translates by the singular: “The country is full of silver and gold and treasures unlimited, the country is full of horses, its chariots are unlimited...”

We take Isaiah to mean that Judah has become wealthy as well as militarily powerful in terms of horses and chariots. If plural pronouns are correct, we suspect that they would be intended for Judah and Israel, i.e., “Jacob’s household.”

Gray comments on **verse 7** that it is “clearly enough a description and tacit condemnation of the multiplication of material resources (*gold, silver, and stores*) and equipment of war (*horses, chariots*) which had been the result of the long and successful reign of Jeroboam II in the North and of Uzziah in the South. Isaiah in common with other prophetic writers condemns these things because they blind men to worthy and spiritual ideals, which are summed up for him in Yahweh the Holy One of Israel.” (P. 54)

<sup>45</sup>Alexander comments on **verse 8** that “The third and greatest evil flowing from this intercourse with foreign nations was idolatry itself, which was usually introduced under the cloak of mere political alliances.” (P. 101) See, for example, **2 Kings 16:10-11**:

- 10 And the King Ahaz went to meet Tiglath-Pileser King of Assyria (in) Dumascus (sic);  
 and he saw the altar which (was) in Damascus.  
 And the King Ahaz sent to Uriah the priest,  
 a likeness of the altar and its pattern according to all its work / making.
- 11 And Uriah the priest built the altar,  
 according to all that the King Ahaz sent from Damascus—

(continued...)

They worship (the) work / product of his hands,  
that which his fingers made!<sup>46, 12</sup>

2:9<sup>47</sup> וַיִּשַׁח אֲדָמָם

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<sup>45</sup>(...continued)

so Uriah the priest did,  
until the King Ahaz's coming from Damascus.

The noun here, אֱלִילִים, “worthless Gods,” “idols,” seems to involve a play on the noun אֱלֹהִים, “God.” See **verse 18**. Slotki says the noun is literally “non-entities.” (P. 12)

Kaiser comments that “The characterization of the ‘no-things’ as the work of men’s hands is a traditional description, common in the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic traditions [meaning the **Book of Deuteronomy** and the “Deuteronomistic History,” **Joshua, Judges, 1** and **2 Samuel, 1** and **2 Kings**] and meant as an ‘enlightened comment.’ It presupposes a simple identification of the image with the God and is therefore at best applicable only to popular superstition. In their idols people worship their own creations instead of their Creator.” (P. 60)

Motyer comments that “While the pagan idolater doubtless saw his idol as expressive of unseen spiritual forces, to Isaiah (and the **Old Testament** in general) there is nothing behind the idol. The material artefact is all there is (**41:21-29; 44:6-20**). The irony is savage: people, unable to face life unaided, seek help in earthly resources and human ingenuity (compare **41:5-7**). The repetition of *hands* and *fingers*, focuses attention on the absurdity: the human creating the Divine!” (P. 56)

Gray states that “It is possible that אֱלִילִים was originally a respectable word for Gods...and that it was the irony of the prophets that associated it with the adjective אֱלִיל, ‘worthless,’ or perchance the negative אֵל...so here, his land is full, not of strong ones, but of noughts or good-for-nothings.” (Pp. 54-55)

As Alexander says, “the terms used to describe [idolatry] are contemptuous in a high degree.” (P. 101)

Slotki states that the phrase *their land also is full* is “a parallel to the opening words of the previous verse describing cause and effect: prosperity, idolatry.” (P. 12)

<sup>46</sup>We take the last two lines in **verse 8** to mean that the people (plural) worship the Gods that their country has made, with human hands and fingers. With reference to this, the Greek translation of the **Hebrew Bible** uses the adjective χειροποίητος, “hand-made.” For all of the Greek passages where this phrase appears, see our end-note 12.

<sup>47</sup>Oswalt comments on **verses 9-11** that “Isaiah has said that Israel is full of the world’s best wisdom: it is through wealth, power, and control of one’s destiny that human beings become great. But in fact that will not be so. They will be humbled and brought low (**verse 9**). Their eyes will be  
(continued...)

וַיִּשְׁפַּל-אִישׁ  
וְאֶל-תְּשׂוּאָה לָהֶם:

And a human being was cast down / humbled,  
and a man was abased,<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>(...continued)

cast down in shame, their former eminence will be nothing (**verse 11**). They will hide in the rocks and crannies (**verse 10**; compare **verses 19-21**; **Revelation 6:15-17**)...The God from Whom their self-worship has alienated them will appear, and there will be no more cause to glory in human greatness than there would be to praise a flashlight in broad daylight.” (Pp. 123-24)

Slotki agrees, stating that “Evil practices result in the degradation of human dignity.” (P. 12)

Watts comments on **verse 9** that “Israel’s lifestyle has become indistinguishable from that of humanity in general. *Mankind* becomes the theme that will continue to the end of the chapter. The term evokes thoughts and images from **Genesis 1-11**. Israel is judged to have relived the experiences of the ‘sons of Adam’ and thus to share the same degradation, humiliation, and eventual judgment.” (P. 35)

Motyer comments on **verse 9** that “**Verses 6-8** contain things on which nations pride themselves: broad-minded tolerance (**verse 6**), financial reserves (**verse 7a**), military potential (**verse 7b**), religious interest (**verse 8**)...”

“These are not matters for pride, says Isaiah, but things which have *brought low and humbled* all alike...When human beings depart from the Lord—no matter what they depart to—they progressively lose their true humanity. Their dignity, the image of God, is humiliated. This...is the inevitable outcome. Only in the Lord does humankind remain human.” (P. 56)

Do you agree with Motyer? We hold that whenever the **Genesis** story of creation is taken seriously, the resulting view of humanity is greatly exalted. Humanity, including male and female, is the creation of the one Creator, and they bear the Divine image and likeness. They are called to fill the earth and subdue it—having dominion over it and all its creatures (**Genesis 1:28**)! In our opinion, no other world-view gives such a grand and challenging view of humanity!

<sup>48</sup>**King James** translates by “And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself,” but there is no justification for this translation. Oswalt claims that the Greek translation supports this, but we think that is not correct.

**Rahifs** has καὶ ἔκυψεν ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἐταπεινώθη ἀνὴρ, “And a man bowed down and a man (synonym) was humiliated.”

We understand the first two lines of **verse 9** to mean that when a country makes hand-made Gods and worships them, it has a devastating effect on the people of that country. Human beings  
(continued...)

and you shall not forgive them / bring them up!<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>(...continued)

are humbled and abased. But when human beings, male and female, are seen as having been made in the image of God, and having been called to rule over the inhabited earth, as **Genesis 1:26-28** depicts, they have a great dignity and purpose in life, serving the God in Whose image they have been made.

When the highest power is conceived to be a stone, or wood, or a precious metal idol, there is no inherent dignity or purpose for the worshiper. Of course, if the religious leaders of a nation with hand-made idols instruct their people that the idols are only symbols of the one God Who has created all of them (as my Hindu doctor friends have told me is the case), many of the biblical criticisms of idolatry are nullified, and the biblical teaching concerning one God can be easily assimilated.

But this passage in **Isaiah** is stating that the people of Judah / Israel have become like their neighbors—instead of worshiping the one God, YHWH, they have made riches and military power the objects in which they trust, rather than YHWH. They may criticize and condemn their neighbors as “idolaters,” but they themselves are worse—having been taught about YHWH, and claiming loyalty to Him, they are in fact worshiping their own idols—silver and gold, and military power!

Kaiser comments that “The result of this internal alienation of the people had been its apostasy from Yahweh, and a consequence of this apostasy was abandonment to its enemies, naturally resulting in the profound humiliation of all those who had previously been proud of their riches and their idols.” (P. 60)

How do you explain all of this?

Gray states that **verse 9** is describing the consequences of **verse 8**, and that “though actually pertaining to the future, are described as though they had already ensued.” (P. 59)

<sup>49</sup>Translations of the phrase אַל-תִּשָּׂא לָהֶם generally agree on “Do not forgive them,” but **New Jerusalem** has “do not raise them again!,” and **Rahlfs** has οὐ μὴ ἀνήσω αὐτούς, “I will not raise them up.” The entire phrase is omitted by the Qumran manuscript 1QIs<sup>a</sup>.

Watts states that while “this has sometimes been understood as forgiveness...the context points more to the meaning ‘Do not allow them to go up in the pilgrimage [that is, of **verses 2-4**]!’ Instead they are to prepare for the cataclysmic events to come.” (P. 35)

We think this is a rather strange view—to equate “Do not lift up for them” with “Do not allow them to go up in pilgrimage”!

Motyer states that “Isaiah is not commanding the Lord not to forgive but saying that forgiveness is unthinkable: ‘and for sure You will not forgive them.’” (P. 56) But can the phrase אַל-תִּשָּׂא לָהֶם, “You shall not forgive to them” mean “forgiveness is unthinkable”? We think Motyer is seeking to avoid what the text actually says.

(continued...)

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<sup>49</sup>(...continued)

The reason for these varying translations and conclusions lies in the ambiguity of the Hebrew verb נָשָׂא, which can mean “lift up,” or “bear,” with many differing nuances. See **Brown-Driver-Briggs**, and the article by Freedman, Willoughby, Fabry, and Ringgren on this root in **Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament X**, pp. 24-44, which opens with this statement concerning its fundamental meaning:

“The root נָשָׂא, ‘to lift high, carry, take,’ is a common Semitic root referring to the physical movement of raising, lifting up, and carrying, along with every conceivable association. This wide semantic scope is attested throughout Semitic literature. In addition to the verbal root, we also find substantives, which form idiomatic expressions in specific contexts. The main emphasis, both in the physical and in the emotional and spiritual sense, resides in the notion of carrying or bearing, be it punishment, shame, or something similar...

“In the **Old Testament** this notion has been expanded to include the principle of forgiveness, and forgiveness is itself associated with the idea of lifting away or taking away guilt, sin, and punishment. Since the expression for forgiveness is frequently semantically the same as ‘bearing the burden of punishment,’ forgiveness is frequently understood as ‘to bear, carry away, settle, etc.’” (Pp. 24-25)

We understand Isaiah, exasperated with Israel’s practical idolatry, as crying out to YHWH, “O YHWH, don’t forgive them!” And we agree with Ortlund, who comments that “Isaiah has given up on his generation.” (P. 1244)

Oswalt states that this harsh statement “seems to express the prophet’s deep despair over his people’s condition. He seems almost afraid that God might relent and, in violation of His Own justice, forget their heinous sins. As such, this phrase exposes the problem of sin. It cannot be simply forgotten, it must be punished; otherwise, the whole chain of cause and effect upon which the world is built would be broken.” (P. 124)

But Oswalt is arguing like the three friends of Job, who hold insistently that God has to conform to their doctrine of retribution. They held Oswalt’s view that there is a “chain of cause and effect upon which the world is built,” but Job denied that this was true in his case, and YHWH approved of Job’s view—not theirs. God is not bound to human dogmas, but is free to forgive, or refuse to forgive as He chooses. He is not bound by our theological systems, such as that of exact retribution—or any so-called “chain of cause and effect”—so the **Book of Job** teaches.

The mysterious marvel of God is that He chooses to forgive, in ways that upset our rigid convictions. See, for example, His forgiveness of the adulterer, liar, and murderer, King David, and His forgiveness of Manasseh, perhaps the worst king of Judah. It is a matter of unmerited grace, of free forgiveness—the kind of grace and forgiveness that are so powerfully demonstrated in the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, and that are expressed in biblical passages such as **Psalms 51** and **103**, and **Isaiah 1:18!**

(continued...)

<sup>49</sup>(...continued)

Perhaps Isaiah has given up on his generation—but Isaiah’s God, YHWH, has not given up, and through Isaiah He continues to plead with Judah and Jerusalem to enter into dialogue and mutual reproof with Him. And when He sends Northern Israel into Assyrian captivity, and Judah into Babylonian captivity, He does not give up, even though rejecting, even though punishing, but keeps on keeping on, urging, inviting, calling to His people to return to Him, to accept His cleansing and forgiveness (**Isaiah 1:18**), something that we have come to entitle “The Song of Isaiah,” since we hear its voice echoing again and again throughout the **Book of Isaiah**. What do you think?

If His people continue to turn away, and refuse His forgiveness, then Judah and Jerusalem can expect to suffer the consequences of their sins and of their idolatry. It means that the “Day of YHWH” will be soon coming, and so in **verse 10** Isaiah tells the people to find hiding-places in a vain attempt to escape the coming of that day. But even with the coming of that day, there will still be hope, as the **Book of Isaiah** will go on to show.

<sup>50</sup>Motyer comments on **verses 10-21** that “The Lord has but to reveal His glory (**verse 10**) and human arrogance is humbled (**verse 11**), the whole world which human pride has infected is devastated (**verses 12-17**), idols are exposed as useless (**verses 18-19**) and people are left defenseless (**verses 20-21**). Thus Isaiah continues the theme of Divine judgment in a closely-structured poem...

“There are two main sections (**verses 10-17**, **verses 18-21**) and four subsections (**verses 10-11**, **12-17**, **18-19**, **20-21**). The first two subsections end with the refrain *the Lord alone will be exalted in that day* (**verses 11**, **17**); the second two with *when He rises to shake the earth* (**verses 19**, **21**). The first and third begin with the ‘enter the rock’ theme and the second and fourth with a reference to the Lord’s day (**verses 12**, **20**). The initial *from dread of the Lord* (**verse 10**) reappearing in **verse 19**, forms an inclusion [‘book-end’] at **verse 21**. In the pairs of subsections, the first in each case states a fact and the second how that fact will be expressed.” (Pp. 56-57) A closely-structured poem indeed!

Alexander comments on **verse 10** that “Instead of simply predicting that their sinful course should be interrupted by a terrible manifestation of God’s presence, the Prophet views Him as already come or near at hand, and addressing the people as an individual, or singling out one of their number, exhorts him to take refuge under ground or in the rocks, an advice peculiarly significant in Palestine, a country full of caves, often used, if not originally made, for this very purpose.” (P. 102) See:

**Judges 6:2**, which describes conditions in the time of Gideon:

And Midian’s hand was strong upon Israel,  
From before Midian Israel’s children made for themselves  
the strongholds / caves which (were) in the mountains,  
and the caves and the strongholds (‘Masadas’).

**1 Samuel 13:6**,

(continued...)

וְהִטְמִין בְּעֹפָר  
מִפְּנֵי פֶחַד יְהוָה  
וּמִהֲדַר גְּאֹנֹו:

Enter into the rock,  
and be hidden in the dust,<sup>51</sup>  
from before YHWH's dread,  
and from His exaltation's splendor!<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup>(...continued)

And a man (meaning the people) of Israel saw (plural verb) that he (they) had an adversary  
(the Philistines),  
because the people was hard-pressed  
and the people hid themselves in the caves and in the brambles,  
and in the rocks and in the burial chambers and in the cisterns.

**1 Samuel 14:11b**, when Jonathan and his armor-bearer show themselves to the Philistines,

And (the) Philistines said,  
Look—Hebrews coming from the holes  
where they hid themselves!

<sup>51</sup>Motyer comments that “Earthly resource was their boast (**verses 6-8**) and now in the day of judgment they have only earth to turn to; the natural in the face of the supernatural.” (P. 57)

<sup>52</sup>**Rahlf's** interpolates at the end of **verse 10** the phrase ὅταν ἀναστῆ θραύσαι τὴν γῆν, “when He should arise to break the earth in pieces.”

There is a remarkable similarity to **verse 10** in **verses 19-21**:

- 19 And they will enter into caves of rocks,  
and into holes of dust  
from before YHWH's dread,  
and from His exaltation's splendor,  
when He arises to cause the earth to tremble.
- 20 On that day, the human being will throw away  
his silver Nothings-Gods,  
and his golden Nothings-Gods,  
which they made for him to worship,  
to the digger-moles,  
and to the bats,

(continued...)

2:11<sup>53</sup> עֵינֵי גְבוּהוֹת אָדָם שְׁפִיל

<sup>52</sup>(...continued)

21 To enter into holes of the rocks,  
and into clefts of the cliffs,  
from before YHWH's dread,  
and from His speldor's exaltation,  
when He arises to frighten the earth.

Gray comments that "When Yahweh marches forth on His day, the earth quakes (**Judges 5:4-5**), or He comes in the thunder-storm. If from human enemies men run for safety to the caves (**1 Samuel 13:6**), how much more before this Foe!" (P. 55)

13:6, וְאִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל רָאוּ כִּי צָרָלוּ  
כִּי נִגַּשׁ הָעָם  
וַיִּתְחַבְּאוּ הָעָם בַּמְעָרוֹת וּבַחֲוֹתִים  
וּבְסֻלְעִים וּבְצֻרֹתַיִם וּבַבְּרוֹתַיִם

And a man of Israel—they saw--that trouble was his,  
because the people was hard-pressed.  
And the people hid themselves in the caves and in the briars,  
and in the crags / cliffs and in the burial chambers and in the cisterns.

Compare **Hosea 10:8**,

And Aven's / Iniquity's high places will be destroyed,  
Israel's sin!  
Thorn(s) and thistle(s) will grow up over their altars-of-sacrifice!  
And they will say to (the) mountains, Cover us!,  
and to the hills, Fall upon us!

<sup>53</sup>Watts comments on **verses 11-17** that "The entire passage relates to its context in terms that contrast the genuine and correct exaltation of Yahweh with the temporary and contemptible self-exaltation of humanity. It is a theme reflected in the building of the Tower of Babel (**Genesis 11**) and is a recurrent theme in **Isaiah**. It speaks of the general day of humiliation for mankind within which Israel's special sin (**verses 6-9**) will be punished. Israel has not only sinned against covenant but also participated in humanity's attempt at self-exaltation against God. So one writes here of *humanity* and *men*." (P. 35) See

**Amos 5:18-20**,

18 Woe!—to those who are longing for YHWH's day!  
What kind of day of YHWH will this be for you?  
It is darkness, and not light!

(continued...)



וְשֵׁחַ רֵימִים אֲנָשִׁים

וְנִשְׁגַּב יְהוֹנָה לְבָדָוּ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא:

(The) eyes of haughtiness of a human being was brought low,<sup>54</sup>  
and (the) height of men / people was cast down.

And YHWH alone will be exalted on that day!<sup>55</sup>

2:12<sup>56</sup> כִּי יוֹם לִיהוָה צְבָאוֹת

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<sup>53</sup>(...continued)

It is like a person (who) runs away from before the lion,  
and the bear meets him!

And he comes into the house, and lays his hand upon the wall,  
and the snake bites him!

20 Is not YHWH's day darkness, and not light?  
And gloomy, and no brightness to it?

Motyer comments that "Privilege of birth, said Amos, only made judgment the more certain (**Amos 3:1-2**). Isaiah would agree and will presently declare the conditions on which a 'remnant' will be saved' (**8:9-22; 10:16-23**)." (P. 57)

Alexander comments on **verse 11** that "As the Prophet, in the preceding verse, views the terror of [YHWH] as approaching, so here he views it as already past, and describes the effect which it has wrought." (P. 102)

<sup>54</sup>Where our Hebrew text reads the singular verb שָׁפַל, "he became low," 1QIs<sup>a</sup> corrects the spelling to read תִּשְׁפַּלְנָה, 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine plural, "they (i.e., eyes) became low."

Slotki comments that "The Hebrew verb is in the perfect tense. The prophet is so sure of the result that he describes it as an event that had already taken place." (P. 12)

<sup>55</sup>The combination of past tense verbs with a future verb probably reflects the belief that YHWH's "day" is an eternal day, that comes again and again in human history. See end-note 13.

<sup>56</sup>Oswalt comments on **verses 12-17** that "This strophe expands on the theme of **verses 9-11** in a poetic way...The contrast with **verses 1-4** is very striking. There as an act of grace [where is anything said about an 'act of grace'?] God promises to lift Jerusalem to the highest place from which Israel will teach the nations God's ways [but does the text state that Israel will do such teaching? It only says that the nations and peoples will learn from YHWH]. Here, having learned the ways of the nations and having tried to use those means (wealth, power, and idolatry) to exalt themselves, the Hebrews, along with everything else which exalts itself, are hammered to the ground." (Pp. 125-26))

Watts comments on **verses 12-16** that "The words 'high,' 'raised,' 'lifted up,' and 'exalted' describe Divine characteristics which humanity has tried to appropriate to itself. This is mankind's (continued...)

עַל כָּל-גִּיּוֹת וְרָם  
וְעַל כָּל-נִשְׂא  
וְשִׁפְלִים:

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<sup>56</sup>(...continued)

persistent and pervasive sin, the attempt to be like God (**Genesis 3:5**), which has prevented the achievement of a genuine humanity and led to repeated conflict with God.

“The figures that follow illustrate the superlative of Israelite experience from the cedars of Lebanon, the oaks of Bashan, to the ships of Tarshish. The giant trees were wonders for the Palestinian who knew only small and warped trees on the hills. The ships were symbols of wonder for the Israelites who feared the seas.

“But also included are figures of things nearer home: *mountains and hills, towers and walls*. These were symbols of pride and power in Canaan...The term *ships of Tarshish* referred to the strong commercial ships which were used for the longest routes, flagships of the fleets.” (Pp. 35-36)

Kaiser comments that in **verses 12b-16**, “in ten couplets the poet describes the annihilation of everything that can impress man by its size...**Verse 12b** gives a general picture which is then evoked in more specific terms in **verses 13-16**: the coming Day of Yahweh will affect all earthly pride and all earthly things...the mighty cedars of Lebanon...the oaks of Bashan...even the mountains and hills...Whatever promises people sure refuge, high towers and fortified walls is torn down. And of course the trading ships with their precious cargo returning from distant parts, are not spared... Where human beings have to deal directly with God, their pride and their self-assurance collapse. It is only after this collapse that God reveals Himself in His solitary splendor.” (Pp. 61-62)

Gray states that “**Verse 12** states the general theme of the strophe [**verses 12-17**]: Yahweh on His day will lay low every lofty object, that His Own unique exaltation may appear (**verse 17**); then in detail the prophet pictures the overwhelming and irresistible might of Yahweh, affecting first Lebanon (**10;14; 14:8** etc.) and Bashan (**33:9**), laying low the great and strong trees that cover them (**verse 13**) and the hills themselves (**verse 14**), and then the creations of man’s pride and confidence –(**verse 14**), and then the creations of man’s pride and confidence—on land, his citadels and walled cities (**verse 15**), and on sea, his ships (**verse 16**)...

“In **verses 15-16**, Isaiah may have specially in mind, though not exclusively, the towers and fortifications which Uzziah built and the new sea trade which resulted from Uzziah’s capture of Elath on the Red Sea (**2 Kings 14:22**).” (P. 55)

Alexander states that “The general threatening of humiliation is now applied specifically to a variety of lofty objects in which the people might be supposed to delight and trust, **verses 12-16**.” (P. 103)

Because YHWH of Armies has a day,<sup>57, 13</sup>  
against every proud<sup>58</sup> and self-exalting (person),

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<sup>57</sup>Isaiah affirms that YHWH of Armies “has a day,” and we are reminded of the prominent motif in the **Hebrew Bible** of the יְהוָה יוֹם, “Day of YHWH.” See our end-note 13 for the many passages which use this phrase, along with related passages, for the biblical teaching that YHWH, the Savior God of love, is at the same time the Judge Whose wrath continually administers punishment on sin and sinners.

Oswalt comments that “The day of the Lord is a prominent theme in the prophets...It appears that the phrase must have been used popularly to denote a time when God would vindicate His people and bless their endeavors. But the prophets’ word was that the day of the Lord would be a time of destruction and terror, and only after that time could blessing come...They needed to disabuse the Israelites of the idea that merely because they were called by God’s name they deserved His favor. Surely blessing did result from election but only if that election was confirmed in humble and righteous living.” (P. 126)

<sup>58</sup>The adjective גָּבַהּ, **ge)eh** “proud,” occurs some 8 times in the **Hebrew Bible**:

**Isaiah 2:12**, here,

Because YHWH of Armies has a day,,  
against every proud and self-exalting (person),  
and against everything lifted up--  
and it will be brought low.

**Jeremiah 48:29**,

We heard of Moab’s exaltation,  
exceeding pride;  
his height and his exaltation,  
and his majesty / pride (synonym),  
and haughtiness of his heart.

**Psalms 94:2**,

Be lifted up, Judge of the earth!  
Return recompense upon proud people!

**Psalms 140:6**,

Proud people hid a trap for me,  
and (with) cords they spread a net at (the) side of (my) track / way;  
they set snares for me! Selah

(continued...)

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<sup>58</sup>(...continued)

**Job 40:11-12**, where YHWH challenges Job:

- 11 Scatter overflowings of your anger!  
And see every proud person,  
and humble him!
- 12 See every proud person;  
humble him (synonym)!
- And cast down wicked people beneath them!

**Proverbs 15:25**,

(The) house of proud people YHWH will tear away;  
and He will establish a widow's boundary.

**Proverbs 16:19**,

Better to be lowly of spirit with humble poor people,  
than to divide plunder with proud people.

D. Kellerman, in an article on the root **גָּאָה**, **ga)ah** in **Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament II**, pp. 344-50, states that in Hebrew this root “has a wide range of meaning. From the idea of the majesty of God it develops into the justified pride of a man, or the glory of an object, and then into arrogant pride or hubris [excessive pride or self-confidence; arrogance, conceit, haughtiness].” (P. 350)

There is little wonder that theologians have described pride as one of the “seven deadly sins”! From **Wikipedia** (1/15/2018) we quote:

“The seven deadly sins, also known as the capital vices or cardinal sins, is a grouping and classification of vices within Christian teachings. Behaviors or habits are classified under this category if they directly give birth to other immoralities. According to the standard list, they are pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath and sloth, which are also contrary to the seven virtues. These sins are often thought to be abuses or excessive versions of one's natural faculties or passions (for example, gluttony abuses one's desire to eat).

“This classification originated with the desert fathers, especially Evagrius Ponticus, who identified seven or eight evil thoughts or spirits that one needed to overcome. Evagrius' pupil John Cassian, with his book **The Institutes**, brought the classification to Europe, where it became fundamental to Catholic confessional practices as evident in penitential manuals, sermons like ‘The Parson's Tale’ from Chaucer's **Canterbury Tales**, and artworks like Dante's Purgatory (where the penitents of Mount Purgatory are depicted as being grouped and penanced according to the worst capital sin they committed)...

“The Catholic Church used the doctrine of the deadly sins in order to help people curb their inclination towards evil before dire consequences and misdeeds could occur; the leader-teachers  
(continued...)

and against everything lifted up--<sup>59</sup>

and it will be brought low.<sup>60</sup>

2:13<sup>61</sup> וְעַל כָּל-אֲרָזֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן

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<sup>58</sup>(...continued)

especially focused on pride (which is thought to be the sin that severs the soul from Grace, and the one that is representative and the very essence of all evil) and greed, both of which are seen as inherently sinful and as underlying all other sins. To inspire people to focus on the seven deadly sins, the vices are discussed in treatises, and depicted in paintings and sculpture decorations on Catholic churches. Peter Brueghel the Elder's prints of the Seven Deadly Sins are extremely numerous. Other works, both religious and non-religious, show the continuity of this practice in the culture and everyday life of the modern era.”

Ortlund notes that in **2:12-16** “Ten times Isaiah asserts God’s settled opposition to all human pride.” (P. 1345)

<sup>59</sup>The qal active participle **רָם**, **ram**, means “lifting up,” “exalting.” It is from the root **רָם**, **rum**., “be high.” See the article on this root by Firmage / Milgrom / Dahmen in **Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament XIII**, pp. 402-12, from which we quote:

“The qal of **rum** appears primarily in poetic texts...In descriptive contexts the qal can appear with a great variety of objects: stars (**Job 22:12**), mountains (**Deuteronomy 12:2**), hills (**Ezekiel 6:13**), trees (**Isaiah 2:13**), persons (**Deuteronomy 1:28**), etc.

“It is used to qualify God as great, exalted, and mighty, ruling over the nations (**Psalms 99:2; 113:4**)...The exalted God dwells in the heavens; God’s **kabodh** [weight / honor] fills the earth...God, Who is high and lofty...dwells in the heights...but also with the battered...and oppressed...” (P. 404)

But here, where it is used in a negative sense, it refers to human beings who are lifting up, exalting themselves, pretending to be like God, to be much greater, exalted, and mightier than they truly are.

**Rahlf**s interpolates the phrase “and hanging high in the air” at this point in the text.

<sup>60</sup>According to Isaiah, the “Day of YHWH” is a day in history when human pride is brought down. He says, “Watch out, you proud people—because your day is coming!” See our footnote 13 for the numerous passages where this phrase, “Day of YHWH” or simply “Day” occurs.

<sup>61</sup>Motyer comments on **verses 13-17** that “Throughout, ‘for all’ should be read ‘against all / every.’” (P. 57)

Alexander states that in **verse 13**, “to convey the idea of lofty and imposing objects, the Prophet makes use, not of symbols, but of specimens, selected from among the things of this class most familiar to his readers, beginning with the two noblest species of forest trees...*the cedars of*

(continued...)

הַרְמִים וְהַנְּשֵׂאִים

וְעַל כָּל-אֲלוֹנֵי הַבְּשָׁן:

And against all (the) cedars of the Lebanon,  
the tall ones, and the ones lifted up,  
and against all (the) oaks of the Bashan;

2:14 וְעַל כָּל-הַהָרִים הַרְמִים

וְעַל כָּל-הַגְּבוּעוֹת הַנְּשֵׂאוֹת:

and against all the mountains, the high ones,  
and against all the hills, the ones lifted up;<sup>62</sup>

2:15 וְעַל כָּל-מִגְדָּל גְּבוּהַ

וְעַל כָּל-חֹמֶה בְּצוּרָה:

and against every high<sup>63</sup> tower,  
and against every inaccessible wall;<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>(...continued)

*Lebanon* (or the ‘White Mountain,’ the chain dividing Palestine from Syria)...and *the oaks of Bashan* (...a mountainous district, east of Jordan, famous of old for its pastures and oak forests).” (P. 103)

<sup>62</sup>In **verse 14**, the symbolism changes from the tree to the high mountains and hills, again with reference to proud people.

Alexander comments that “The mention of Lebanon and Bashan in **verse 13** now leads to that of mountains in general, as lofty objects in themselves.” (P. 103)

<sup>63</sup>Where our Hebrew text spells גְּבוּהַ, a large number of Hebrew manuscripts and editions of the **Hebrew Bible** spell with a dagesh in the final ה, גְּבוּהָ, the normal spelling.

<sup>64</sup>In **verse 15**, the symbolism again changes from the trees and the mountains to prominent human structures—high towers and inaccessible walls, again with reference to proud people.

The feminine adjective בְּצוּרָה, “cut off, made inaccessible,” and as Gray comments, comes to mean “fortified, impregnable.” (P. 55) Compare:

**Jeremiah 15:20**, where YHWH says to Jeremiah, if he will truly speak His word,

(continued...)

וְעַל כָּל-אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ 2:16<sup>65</sup>

וְעַל כָּל-שִׂכִּיּוֹת הַחֲמָדָה:

and against all (the) ships of Tarshish,<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>(...continued)

And I will give / make you to this people for a bronze wall, inaccessible;  
and they will fight against you,  
and they will not be able (to defeat) you;  
because I (will be) with you to save you and to deliver you--  
a saying of YHWH!

**Deuteronomy 28:52**, because of Israel's disobedience, YHWH threatens:

And he will press hard on you, on all your gates,  
until your high walls and the (inaccessible) fortifications fall down,  
in which you are trusting in all your land,  
And he will press hard on you, on all your gates, in all your land  
Which YHWH your God gave to you.

<sup>65</sup>Alexander comments that in **verse 16**, “the Prophet now concludes his catalogue of lofty and conspicuous objects by adding, first, as a specific item, maritime vessels of the largest class, and then a general expression, summing up the whole in one descriptive phrase, as things attractive and imposing to the eye.” (P. 104)

<sup>66</sup>What is meant by “ships of Tarshish” has puzzled students of the **Bible**.

**Rahfs** has “ship of (the) sea.”

See the article on תַּרְשִׁישׁ by E. Lipinski in **Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament**, XV, pp. 790-93. He states that “It is generally accepted that תַּרְשִׁישׁ denotes a precious or semi-precious stone in 7 **Old Testament** passages. The term does not occur in the other Semitic languages...

“As is shown by an inscription of Esarhaddon as well as **Psalms 72:10** and **Jonah 1:3**, [the toponym, name of a place] Tarshish is a site at the extreme western end of the Mediterranean...At Joppa Jonah boards a ship bound for Tarshish to evade his mission to Nineveh, fleeing as far as possible in the opposite direction...

“The expression ‘Tarshish ships’...should therefore refer to ships bound for Spain...No places are mentioned in conjunction with Solomon's Tarshish ships (**1 Kings 10:22 / 2 Chronicles 9:21**), but since they appear together with the fleet of Hiram [of Phoenicia], we should probably think in terms of Mediterranean destinations. One may assume that the expression gradually took on the sense of ‘long-distance ships’...

(continued...)

and against all sailing-vessels of delight!<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>(...continued)

“In **Isaiah 2:16** the Tarshish ships, especially beautiful and impressive, are the embodiment of human hubris [extreme pride or self-confidence].” (Pp. 791-93)

Gray states that “ships of Tarshish” are “ships fit to make the longest voyages, large ships, consequently ships with lofty masts.” (P. 56)

Motyer comments that “Such ships represent humankind triumphant over environmental forces, creating great commercial empires (compare **Ezekiel 38:2-5**).” (P. 57)

<sup>67</sup>In **verse 16**, the symbolism once again changes from the trees and mountains and prominent buildings to some of the most impressive human works in the time of Isaiah—the large ocean-going merchant ships, and apparently, beautifully designed sailing vessels—also with symbolic reference to proud people.

Watts notes that the Hebrew word here, שְׂכִיֹּת, “has traditionally been derived from שֹׁכֵה, and understood as an ‘art object.’ The context calls for a parallel to אֲנִיֹּת, ‘ships.’ [Rahlfs’ Greek translation] had trouble with both תַּרְשִׁישׁ, ‘Tarshish,’ which it translates θαλάσσης, ‘sea,’ and with שְׂכִיֹּת, which it translates θέαν πλοίων, ‘Goddess of ships.’” (P. 33)

Kaiser translates by “ships with luxury goods.”

Slotki translates by “imagery,” and states that “Some moderns explain the noun as referring to the images on the prows of ships (so the Greek translation); the Jewish commentators understood it as mosaic work on ornamented pavements.” (P. 14)

Gray comments that “the analogy of **verses 13-15** suggests that the phrase should describe something closely resembling, or intimately connected with, large ships.” (P. 56)

Oswalt states that “It seems extraordinary that many commentators have difficulty seeing anything but a literal reference here [**verses 12-16**]...Clearly, what God opposes is human arrogance and pride. It is these which the prophet is attacking (**verses 9, 11, 17, 19-22**)...There is thus every reason to see the passage as figurative (although not allegorical, where each element must represent one specific thing). The prophet has chosen a number of items that visually represent the spiritual condition of Israel...All that is great and impressive is knocked down. So it will be with human pride on the day when the Lord acts. As surely as the wind uproots the trees and knocks down the ships, as surely as the earthquake moves the mountains and cracks the walls, so will the terror of the Lord remove all human pomp and pretension.” (Pp. 126-27)

We say Yes...but the Day of YHWH is not just a day out in the distant future when such “knocking down” will occur. It is a day that has come again and again in history, in the past, in the

(continued...)



וְשַׁח גְּבוּהוֹת הָאָדָם 2:17<sup>68</sup>

וְשָׁפַל רֹגְם אַנְשִׁים

וְנִשְׁגַּב יְהוָה לְבַדּוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא:

And the human being's haughtiness will be brought low,  
and (the) height of men / people will be abased.<sup>69</sup>

And YHWH alone will be exalted in that day.

וְהָאֱלִילִים כָּלִיל יַחְלֹף: 2:18<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>(...continued)

present, and in the future. Pride has led, and does lead, and will always lead, to being knocked down!

<sup>68</sup>Alexander comments on **verse 17** that “This verse, by repeating the terms of **verse 11**, brings us back from details to the general proposition which they were designed to illustrate.” (P. 105)

<sup>69</sup>Motyer comments that “*Arrogance* and *pride* (גְּבוּהוֹת; רֹגְם [our ‘haughtiness’ and ‘height’]) are both words expressing ‘height’ and point to all the ways in which people think of themselves more highly than they ought to think (**Romans 12:3**).” (P.58)

<sup>70</sup>Oswalt entitles **verses 18-22** “Reduced to the caves.” He comments that “This final strophe states in the most forceful way the effect of human attempts at self-aggrandizement. Although the author still expresses himself in figures, these figures are even more explicit than those of **verses 12-17**...

“The idols by means of which they sought to deify themselves will be cast aside and their precious metals left to the bats and the moles, the unclean to the unclean. Human beings who sought to sit on the throne of God will scurry for shelter in the crannies and crevices of the rocks when God, the only God, appears. Before Him who could believe that human beings were of any account at all?” (P. 127)

Watts comments on **verses 18-21** that “The day of terror will lead to the end of idols which have proved useless in preventing danger...

“The passage blends the motifs of Yahweh’s day with those of judgment on pride and on idols. The Day of Yahweh motif occurs in the **Old Testament** from the time of Amos (**5:18**) when he speaks of a day which is already well known throughout the period of **Old Testament** writing. It is a day on which Yahweh acts in a special way. He intervenes in the course of history...

“The idea is much more varied and flexible [than simply ‘the last judgment’ or ‘end of the world’]. **Jeremiah 46:10** speaks of ‘a day of vengeance’ against Egypt. **Ezekiel 30:1-9** prophesies (continued...)”

And the Nothing-Gods<sup>71</sup> will pass away completely!<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>(...continued)

a day of judgment against the nations. But in **Ezekiel 7** it is a day of judgment against Israel. In **Zephaniah** the day brings judgment on Israel and the nations...

“Milgrom notes that judgment on man’s pride and grab for power runs like a scarlet thread through Isaiah’s prophesies. Compare **3:16; 13:11b; 14:11-14; 25:11b-12; 26:5; 28:1, 3...**” (P. 36)

But this is overstatement—the thread does not continue to the end of the **Book of Isaiah**.

Kaiser comments that with the end of the idols, “Only one thing is left for men, to creep into caves in the rocks and clefts in the cliffs, so that they are not destroyed by the majesty of the presence of God...The poet draws no distinction between sinners and the righteous.” (P. 62)

Motyer states that in **verses 18-19** “The poem moves to its climax. First is the fact of the triumph of the Lord over the *idols* (אֱלִילִים) the ‘no-Gods’ (**verse 8**).” (P. 58)

<sup>71</sup>The plural noun אֱלִילִים looks very similar to the plural noun with a singular meaning, אֱלֹהִים, “God.” And just as the name אֱלֹהִים, which used of Israel’s God, is almost always followed by a singular verb, so here in this passage אֱלִילִים is also followed by a singular verb. But אֱלִילִים has exactly the opposite meaning from אֱלֹהִים—it means “feeble, poor, weak ones,” and is used as a description of idols. The Greek translation (**Rahlfs**) has τὰ χειροποίητα, “the handmades.” See end-note 12 for the biblical description of “hand-made Gods.”

<sup>72</sup>Where our Hebrew text reads the singular יִחַלֵּף, “it will pass away,” the Qumran manuscript 1QIs<sup>a</sup> along with the ancient versions change to the more correct plural יִחַלְּפוּ, “they will pass away.”

Oswalt states that “The Masoretic Text has lost the plural ending on this verb through haplography [the act of writing once what should have been written twice].” (P. 127) See footnote 71.

The “nothing Gods” offer no future to their adherents; they are as transient as are human beings!

Oswalt comments on **verse 18** that “When God appears all the attempts to deify parts of creation are seen for what they are—foolishness.” (P. 128)

Gray states that **verse 18** “forms an excellent antithetical parallel to the third line of **verse 17**, “And YHWH alone will be exalted in that day.” (P. 56) Compare:

**Psalms 102:27-28**<sup>Heb</sup> / **26-27**<sup>Eng</sup>

(continued...)

וּבְאוּ בְּמַעְרוֹת צְרִים 2:19<sup>73</sup>

וּבְמַחְלוֹת עֵפֶר

מִפְּנֵי פַחַד יְהוָה

וּמִהֲרַר גְּאוֹנוֹ

בְּקוֹמוֹ לְעֵרֵץ הָאָרֶץ:

And they<sup>74</sup> will enter into caves in (the) rocks,

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<sup>72</sup>(...continued)

27/26 They will perish, and You will stand / remain;  
and all of them like the garment, will wear out—  
like the clothing, You will change them,  
and they will change.

28/28 And You (are) He—  
and Your years will not be finished!

<sup>73</sup>Oswalt comments on **verses 19-21** that “The ultimate in humiliation is depicted here. Human beings become troglodytes [cave-dwellers]. Their ravenous ambition to be God has robbed them even of the dignity which could have been rightfully theirs. Had they submitted to God in recognition of His greatness and His right to rule in their lives...then they would have been His friends (**Psalm 25:14**), little less than God Himself in dominion over creation (**Psalm 8:6-9**<sup>Heb</sup> **5-8**<sup>Eng</sup>). But having refused the fear of the Lord, they now know terror of Him (פַּחַד, **pachadh**), for He now comes as their Enemy and they have no defense (**Isaiah 1:24**)...

“Here is the paradox of faith: to attempt to exalt myself is to become nothing, adrift in a meaningless universe, in dread over nameless horrors which threaten me; to submit to the exalted Lord is to know myself picked up, declared His child, and made vice-regent of the universe, my Father’s home.” (P. 128)

Alexander comments that **verse 19** “differs from **verse 10** only by substituting a direct prediction for a warning or exhortation, and by adding the design of God’s terrible appearance.” (P. 105)

<sup>74</sup>For the Hebrew text, the plural verb here, וּבְאוּ, “and they will come,” is evidently meant to be said concerning the אֱלִילִים, the “nothing Gods.” English translations often have simply “and they,” without making this connection. Others interpolate the subject “people” (**English Standard Version** and **New International**). But if **verse 18** has stated that the nothing Gods have “utterly passed away,” or “will pass away completely,” it makes sense to understand the “they” as applying to people, not to the nothing Gods.

and into holes (in the) dust,<sup>75</sup>  
from before YHWH's dread,  
and from His exaltation's splendor,  
when He arises to terrify the earth.<sup>76</sup>

2:20<sup>77</sup> בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִשְׁלִיךְ הָאָדָם  
אֶת אֱלֹהֵי כֶסֶף  
וְאֶת אֱלֹהֵי זָהָב  
אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ-לוֹ לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת  
לְחַפְר־פְּרוֹת  
וּלְעֵטְלָפִים:

On that day, the human being will throw away  
his silver Nothing-Gods,  
and his golden Nothing-Gods,

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<sup>75</sup>Motyer comments that “*Caves and holes* represents both the natural and the man-made; people will flee to wherever there seems to be a possibility of shelter.” (P. 58)

<sup>76</sup>The God of Isaiah, YHWH, is the God Who acts. His power is seen / experienced in the trembling of the earth when it quakes (we can add, in the hurricanes, the tornadoes, the tsunamis, etc.); but the “Nothing-Gods” (the “hand-mades”) do nothing, as Isaiah will go on to show in great detail in **40:18-20; 41:7, 21-29; 44:9-20; 46:1-7; 47:8-15; 57:1-13**.

All the Nothing-Gods can do, says Isaiah, or the people who have served them, is to run and hide in caves in the rocks and in the ground, trembling before YHWH's mighty power.

Watts calls attention to the assonance, similarity in sound of the two Hebrew words at the close of this verse, לְעֵרֵץ הָאָרֶץ, **la(arots ha)arets**, “to terrify the earth.” (P. 33)

<sup>77</sup>Motyer comments on **verses 20-21** that they depict “Further ignominy for the no-Gods as their erstwhile devotees renounce them, recognizing their uselessness.” (P. 58)

Alexander states that **verse 20** is “an amplification of **verse 18**, explaining how the idols were to disappear, that is by being thrown away in haste, terror, shame, and desperate contempt, by those who had worshiped them and trusted in them, as a means of facilitating their escape from the avenging presence of [YHWH].” (P. 106)

which they made<sup>78</sup> for himself / themselves<sup>79</sup> to worship,  
to the digger-moles,<sup>80</sup>  
and to the bats,<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Our Hebrew text reads the plural verb, עָשׂוּ, “they made,” while the subject is the singular הָאָדָם, “the human,” evidently taking the subject as meaning “humanity,” “the human beings.”

<sup>79</sup>The Hebrew phrase, אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ-לוֹ, is literally “which they made for him(self),” with the masculine singular pronominal suffix. It probably refers to “humanity,” and English translations commonly have “which they made for themselves.”

<sup>80</sup>Where our Hebrew text reads two words, לַחֲפָרִים-פְּרוֹת, a few Hebrew manuscripts read it as one word, לַחֲפָרִים-פְּרוֹת. The Qumran manuscript 1QIs<sup>a</sup> changes from feminine plural to masculine plural, לַחֲפָרִים-פְּרוֹת. **Rahlf**s has τοῖς ματαίοις, “to the vanities”; Jerome transliterates “pharpharoth”; and the Latin Vulgate has *talpas*.

**Brown-Driver-Briggs** says the strange word means “moles (as diggers).” Kaiser translates by “shrews” [small animals that look like a mouse, with a long, pointed nose]. Again, we think such language is enigmatic, puzzling, and translators are not sure how to translate.

<sup>81</sup>The noun עֲטֹלֵף means “bat,” and is in the plural here at the end of **verse 20**. If we are correct in our translation of these two nouns in **verse 20** as “digger-moles,” and “bats,” it means that where the Nothing-Gods (or the people who have served them) have gone to hide, in the dust / ground, they will be surrounded by the “digger-moles,” which inhabit the ground; and in the rocky caves, they will be surrounded by the “bats,” which inhabit such caves.

See on the Internet, “Images of Bats in Israel,” where a multitude of pictures of bats are shown (including baseball bats, and prominent “daughters”—*bath* in Hebrew).

Bats are very numerous in Palestine / Israel, living in caves, caverns, ruins and abandoned buildings. (See Gray, p. 56, and numerous articles on “Bats in Israel” on the Internet.)

Kaiser states that “The animals mentioned here, especially the bat...were thought to be unclean, and therefore were looked on with repugnance (compare **Leviticus 11:19; Deuteronomy 14:18**)...”

“In an attempt to hide as quickly as possible from the consuming majesty of Yahweh at His appearance, seeking the caves and clefts in the rock, people will throw away the idols before whom they have hitherto prostrated themselves, valuable because of the precious metal of which they are made, into the darkness in which unclean animals have their lair, and thus desecrate them.” (P. 63)

(continued...)

לְבוֹא בְּנִקְרוֹת הַצְּרִים 2:21<sup>82</sup>

וּבְסַעְפֵי הַסְּלָעִים

מִפְּנֵי פֶחַד יְהוָה

וּמִהֲדָר גְּאוֹנוֹ

בְּקוֹמוֹ לְעֵרֵץ הָאָרֶץ:

to enter into holes of the rocks,  
and into clefts of the cliffs,  
from before YHWH's dread,  
and from His splendor's exaltation,  
when He arises to frighten the earth.<sup>83</sup>

חֲדָלוּ לָכֶם מִן־הָאֱלֹהִים 2:22<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>(...continued)

Oswalt comments that “This verse demonstrates again the prophet’s skill in irony and sarcasm, for in the structure of the verse *idols of silver and idols of gold* (using אֱלִילִים ‘worthless ones’), comes at the end of the first stich, whereas *moles* and *bats* come at the end of the second. Thus the effect is to juxtapose the supposed preciousness of the idols with the squeamishness felt toward the small, unclean rodents. Mighty Gods? Hardly. The same people who made the idols *for themselves to worship* (a telling phrase) now fling them away to their true domain. The God Who alone is worthy of worship has appeared.” (P. 128)

Gray comments that “Men perceiving the uselessness of the idols will throw them away...to animals that house in the darkness of caves and holes.” (P. 56)

<sup>82</sup>Alexander comments on **verse 21** that “Continuing the sentence, he declares the end for which they should throw away their idols, namely, to save themselves, casting them off as worthless encumbrances in order the more quickly to take refuge in the rocks...The final recurrence of the same *refrain* which closed **verses 11** and **17**, marks the conclusion of the choral or strophical arrangement at this verse, the next beginning a new context.” (P. 107)

<sup>83</sup>See footnote 76.

<sup>84</sup>**Verse 22** is lacking in **Rahlfs**. English translations vary:

**King James**, “Cease ye from man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?”

(continued...)

אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁמָה בְּאַפּוֹ

כִּי־בַמָּה נִחְשָׁב הוּא:

Cease for yourselves<sup>85</sup> from (thinking too highly of) the human-being,<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>(...continued)

**Tanakh**, “Oh, cease to glorify man, Who has only a breath in his nostrils! For by what does he merit esteem?”

**New Revised Standard**, “Turn away from mortals, who have only breath in their nostrils, for of what account are they?”

**New International**, “Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?”

**New Jerusalem**, “Have no more to do with humankind, which has only the breath in its nostrils. How much is this worth?”

Oswalt comments on **verse 22** that “This verse makes it plain that the passage has not been talking chiefly about idolatry. It does not say ‘be done with idols.’ Rather, it says *Be done with man...* The tendency of human beings to make ourselves the center of all things and to explain all things in terms of ourselves is the problem...

“Is there any cause to glory in humanity? None whatever. For we are mortal, as transitory as a sigh, as impermanent as a breath (**Psalm 90:3-8**)...

“In a biting and abrupt way (similar to **verse 9c** in its imperative mood), [**verse 22**] sums up the import of all that has been said. That mortal human beings should attempt to exalt themselves over God is ludicrous; such actions are the perfect evidence that those who do them are not worthy of being taken into account...

“That thought leads directly into the next segment, **chapter 3**, where the folly of dependence upon human leaders is explored more specifically. Thus **verse 22**, in a very effective way, sums up the general statement of **2:6-21** and moves into the specific and concrete statement of **3:1-4:1**.” (Pp. 128-29)

Motyer comments that “The positive call for commitment to the Lord (**verse 5**) is balanced by its negative counterpart to cease relying on *man* and what he can do...It is not man, however, that has to be faced but God; and not man’s future but the day of the Lord. Against this neither man nor his Gods have any substance. Therefore they should *stop trusting in man*.” (P. 58)

Alexander comments on **verse 22** that “Having predicted that the people would soon lose their confidence in idols, he now shows the folly of transferring that confidence to human patrons, by a general statement of man’s weakness and mortality, explained and amplified in the following chapter.” (P. 107)

<sup>85</sup>Watts insists that the plural “you” in **verse 22** “refers back to the speakers of **verse 5**, commanding them to respect the ban Yahweh has placed on His people, the House of Jacob, which  
(continued...)

whose breath (is) in his nose!<sup>87</sup>  
Because with what (is) he thought (to be)?<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>(...continued)  
prevents them from joining the peoples ascending the temple mount” (P. 34), thus tying the passage, **verses 5-22** together.

<sup>86</sup>Ortlund comments on **verse 22** that “Matching the exhortation of **verse 5**, Isaiah urges a realistic assessment of the weakness of human power and pride.” (P. 1243)

<sup>87</sup>Gray comments that “The breath being given by God, man lives; but being withdrawn, he dies.” (P. 57) See:

**Genesis 2:7,**

And YHWH God shaped the human being,  
dust from the ground;  
and He breathed into his nostrils life’s breath;  
and the human being became a live animal.

**Genesis 7:22,**

All that (had) breath of spirit / Spirit of lives in its nostril(s),  
from all that (was) on dry ground died.

**Job 27:3,** where Job says,

Because everything still,  
my breath in me,  
and Eloah’s breath in my nostrils,

**Psalms 104:29,**

You hide Your face; they are terrified;  
You gather their spirit—they perish,  
and to their dust they return.

<sup>88</sup>A human being, no matter how powerful or how great of reputation, is only a breath away from dying—his breath is “in his nose,” and when it is no longer there, he is gone. Therefore, Isaiah asks, what will you compare a human-being to? Is he not more like the Nothing-Gods, that quickly perish, than to YHWH Who never dies?

Motyer states that the question “*Of what account is he?*” is “not questioning intrinsic human worth but asking what value man has as an object of trust. He has neither an independent right to live nor a sure stake in life. But the gift of breath implies a Giver and points to the wisdom of trusting, rather, the One Who is the Source of life.” (Pp. 58-59) Yes!

(continued...)



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<sup>88</sup>(...continued)

Alexander states that “The interrogation forcibly implies that man’s protection cannot be relied upon.” He adds that “Some of the early Jews maliciously applied this verse to Christ.” (P. 107)

Watts explains the entirety of **verses 5-22** by stating, “A speaker presumes that the announcement of Zion’s future destiny means that Israel is now free. But this is set straight. Israel’s guilt has been proved. The jailer is instructed not to release her but that all should hide from Yahweh’s awesome appearance.

“Israel’s materialism and paganism have caused her to lose her elect and privileged status. She reverts to the status of depraved humanity, exhibiting the characteristics of pride and arrogance that condemned the builders of Babel’s tower (**Genesis 11**)...The passage is a statement of the main theme of the **Book of Isaiah** (compare **65:1-16**). It shows how and why traditional Israel does not and will not participate in God’s new city...The promised ‘land’ has been ‘filled’ with things that are not acceptable to Yahweh. Commerce leads to an influx of fortune-tellers and idols that would degrade any part of mankind. It is certainly intolerable for the people of God.

“**Verse 7** echoes the description of Solomon’s wealth (**1 Kings 10:19-29**), while **verse 8** summarizes consequences like those in **1 Kings 11:4-10**. The dehumanizing effect of the conditions of new wealth and the relation of greed and idolatry are nowhere stated more eloquently.

“Israel’s position astride the major trade routes gave her a very advantageous position for trade and commerce. It also brought her contact with the cultures, religions, and cults of the entire Near East...

“The passage puts the judgment of God’s people into a perspective of world judgment. It is a reminder that belief in Yahweh’s universal sovereignty necessarily implies that it must be revealed and justified. Wisdom’s teaching concerning the need for humanity is cast within a judgment frame that is truly prophetic. But the teaching is the same. Yahweh is Lord and He is unique. He alone is Ruler with the right and status of ruling. Every attempt to displace Him or to appropriate His prerogatives is treason and will not be tolerated.” (Pp. 36-37)

1. **Occurrences of the Phrase בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים,**  
**“At End of the Days” in the Hebrew Bible**

**Genesis 49:1,**

And Jacob called to his sons, and he said,  
Be gathered—and I will declare to you  
that which will happen to you  
at (the) end of the days / in the future, etc.:

(The predictions of Jacob that follow in **chapter 49** have to do with future happenings in the lives of his sons and their descendants, especially as they go into the promised land, and receive their separate portions of the land. We take the phrase to mean simply “out in the future,” and think that it is obvious here that Jacob’s vision is of the “Sons of Israel’s” future in Canaan-land, and has nothing to do with “the final end of the world,” or “the end of time,” although it may well be intended as describing conditions when Messiah, the Anointed King of the future comes.)

**Numbers 24:14,**

And now, look at me—going to my people.  
Come, I will testify to you (singular) that which this people will do to your people  
at (the) end of the days, in the future, etc.

(Balaam is going to tell Balaq what Israel will do to the Moabites in the future. In his speeches, Balaam refers to the coming of a great King over Israel, but he says nothing concerning “the final end of the world” or “the end of time.”)

**Deuteronomy 4:30,**

In your distress,  
and all these words will find you (singular),  
at end of the days / in the future, etc.  
and you will return to YHWH your God  
and you will hear His voice.

(The phrase here evidently means “in (the) later days,” i.e., in the distant future—when Israel has learned through suffering and captivity to obey YHWH, and will experience a vibrant future with YHWH’s blessing, just as this passage goes on to state.)

**Deuteronomy 31:29,**

Because I knew (that) after my death,  
that you people will certainly spoil (everything),  
and you will turn aside from the way which I commanded you,  
and the evil will meet you at (the) end of the days / in the future, etc.,  
because you will do the evil in YHWH’s eyes,  
to provoke Him with (the) work of your hands!

(Moses predicts that in future time, Israel will turn away from YHWH. This is of course, not by any means the end of Israel’s story, as if this were the final act in history, but rather has to do

with such experiences as Israel's captivity by the Assyrians and Judah / Jerusalem's captivity by the Babylonians)

**Isaiah 2:2,**

And it will happen in (the) future / latter part / end of the days,  
(the) mountain of YHWH's house / temple (will be) established on top / at head of the mountains,  
and it will be lifted up from (the) hills,  
and all the nations will flow to it / Him.  
(Isaiah's vision is of a blessed future time, when YHWH's temple will be exalted, and all the nations will stream to it. It is not a matter of the "end of the world," or of "the end of time," but rather a vision of "the good times coming," when Israel will be blessed, and peace will come to all the world, as the nations flow to YHWH's exalted house / temple.)

**Jeremiah 23:20,**

YHWH's anger will not turn back until His doing it,  
and until He has fulfilled His hearts plans.  
In (the) end of the days / later times, etc.  
you (plural) will understand by it understanding (תִּתְּבוֹנְנוּ בְּהַ בְּיָנָה).  
(What YHWH is doing at the present is mysterious and not understood by the Israelites; but a future time is coming which they will gain understanding of YHWH's plans.) **Jeremiah 30:24**, same;

**Jeremiah 48:47a,**

And I will return Moab's captivity,  
in (the) last of the days—  
a saying of YHWH... **Jeremiah 49:39**, same, except for Elam;  
(YHWH predicts a blessed future for both Moab and Elam, following their destruction; compare the predictions concerning the prostitute City Jerusalem and her sister-prostitute Cities, Samaria and Sodom, in **Ezekiel 16:53-55**.)

**Ezekiel 38:16,**

And you (Gog) will go up against My people Israel,  
like the cloud, to cover the land,  
in (the) end of the days / future time, etc. it will happen.  
And I will bring you against My land,  
in order for knowledge of Me (by) the nations,  
when I am set-apart by you in their eyes—  
in (the) end of the days it will be, Gog!  
(YHWH depicts a future time when He will gain honor through Gog's utter defeat when it rises up to destroy the Israelites who have returned from Babylonian captivity. The nations will come to know YHWH through His mighty acts on Israel's behalf.)

**Daniel 10:14,**

And I came to cause you to understand  
what will happen to your people  
in (the) end of the days / future, later time, etc.;

because (there is) still a vision for the days.  
(The mysterious figure appearing to Daniel has come to give him understanding of what will happen in the future, most probably having to do with the future divisions of the Greek Kingdom of Alexander the Great.)

**Hosea 3:5,**

Afterwards Israel's children will return,  
and they will seek YHWH their God,  
and David their King;  
and they will fear / reverence YHWH,  
and His goodness,  
in (the) end of the days / later time / future, etc.

(After a long period without royalty or worship, Israel's sons will return to YHWH and David their king, in future times.)

**Micah 4:1,** (almost identical to **Isaiah 2:2**). See the next end-note.

2.

**Micah 4:1-5,**

- 1 And it will happen at end of the days / in the future, etc.  
(the) mountain of YHWH's house / temple will be on (the) head / top of the mountains;  
and it will be lifted up from (the) hills,  
and peoples will stream to / upon it.
- 2 And many nations will go, and they will say,  
Come, and we will go up to YHWH's mountain,  
and to (the) house / temple of Jacob's God.  
And He will teach us from / some of His ways,  
and we will walk in His paths.  
Because from Zion will go forth **torah** / teaching,  
and YHWH's word from Jerusalem.
- 3 And He will judge between many peoples,  
and He will give reproof to strong nations far away.  
And they will beat their swords into plows,  
and their spears into pruning knives.  
Nation will not lift up sword against nation,  
and they will no longer learn war.
- 4 And they will dwell, a man beneath his grapevine,  
and beneath his fig-tree,  
and there is none causing fear.  
Because YHWH of Armies' mouth spoke!
- 5 Because all the peoples will walk, each in his God's name,  
and we will walk in YHWH our God's name,  
to long-lasting time and (to) perpetuity!

These additional two verses in **Micah, verses 4-5**, depict the individual's security in that predicted time of peace, **verse 4**, and a statement of Israel's exclusiveness in loyalty to YHWH, **verse 5**, which is, in fact, a denial of the prediction's statement that all nations and peoples will walk in YHWH's paths.

Kaiser comments that "**Micah 4:5** culminates in the contrast between the Gentile way of life governed by polytheism and the eternal obedience of Israel, whereas in the light of the criticism of the people of God in **chapter 1, Isaiah 2:5** calls for a like behavior from the House of Jacob." (P. 50)

It is important to observe that **Micah 4:1-5** follows **3:9-12** which depicts the earthly Zion / Jerusalem as having been built with blood and iniquity, and that predicts Zion's being plowed as a field, and Jerusalem's becoming a heap of ruins. Thus the Zion of 4:1-5 is differentiated from the earthly Zion of Isaiah's / Micah's day.

### 3. Sacred Mountains in World Religions

“Sacred mountains are central to certain religions and are the subjects of many legends. For many, the most symbolic aspect of a mountain is the peak because it is believed that it is closest to heaven or other celestial bodies. Many religions have some sacred mountains--that either are holy (like Mount Olympus in Greek mythology) or are related to famous events (like Mount Sinai in Judaism and descendant religions). In some cases, the sacred mountain is purely mythical, like the Hara Berezaiti in Zoroastrianism. Volcanoes, such as Mount Etna in Italy, were also considered sacred. Mount Kailash is believed to be the abode of the Hindu deity Shiva. Mount Etna was believed to have been the home of Vulcan, the Roman God of fire.

“The ancient Inca displayed a connection with death and their mountains. It is well known by scholars that the Inca sensed a deep reservoir of spirituality along the mountain range. Situating their villages in the mountains, they felt these places acted as portal to the Gods. Ritual child sacrifices called Capachochas were conducted annually, where the most precious gift that could be given (innocent, blemishless, perfect human life) would be sacrificed to the Gods. Tremendous effort would be taken as the sacrificial victims would be paraded alive throughout the cities, with multiple festivals and feasts taking place. The final destination would be the tops of some of the highest mountains near their villages, leaving these sacrifices to freeze in the snow. These would take place during great times of distress, during times of famine, violent periods of war, and even during times of political shift. This connection with the mountain as a sacred space is paramount. There would be no other place that would be sufficient or acceptable enough for the Gods to accept these gifts. It is neither a surprise nor a coincidence that their honored dead were placed on the highest peaks of the mountains to express the shared connection between the sacred mountain, the Gods, and the dead.

“Various cultures around the world maintain the importance of mountain worship and sacredness.

“One example is the Taranaki peoples of New Zealand. The Taranaki center their whole life around the sacred mountain, the Mount Taranaki. It is no wonder that they shared the same name, as they shared their livelihood from its streams. The rivers that flowed down its steep terrain fed the plants, animals, and gave the tribe all they needed for life. The Taranaki tribe places this mountain into a context of a love story, spelling out the history of their creation in a battle over love, defeat, and a happy ending where this Taranaki Mountain found love with a neighboring volcano. This narrative plays out in the lives of the tribesmen where the mountain is their love, their life force. Life is given from the megalith [the ‘great stone’], and when life is taken away, the people are ultimately returned to the mountain...

“In Korea, people have maintained ancient ways of worshiping mountain spirits. While they are not in fact worshiping the land itself, the Gods associated with this worship are united to the land. These spirits are female entities to whom people pay tribute while passing by the mountains, asking for good luck and protection. People also travel to these mountains to ask for fertility. While people generally hold to these female deities for protection or to perpetuate life, one of their most important functions is to protect the dead. The ponhyangsansin is a guardian spirit that is protecting an important clan grave site in the village. Each mountain Goddess has an equally interesting story that is tied to their accounts of war against Japan, and the historical legacy of their emperors. Each spirit learned difficult lessons and experienced some sort of hardship. These legacies in the mountains serve as a kind of monument to the history of Korea. While many of the accounts may be true, their

details and accuracy are shrouded by time and ritual. While the inaugurations of new ponhyang san sin are not being conducted, fallen important clansmen and leaders are strategically placed in the mountains in order for these strong, heroine-like spirits to fiercely guard their graves. The history of Korea is in turn protecting its own future.

“In Japan, Mount Koya-san is the home to one of the holiest Buddhist monastery complexes in the country. It was founded by a saint, Kukai, who is also known as Kobo Dashi and is regarded as a famous wandering mystic; his teachings are famous throughout Japan and he is credited with being an important figure in shaping early Japanese culture. Buddhists believe that Kobo Dashi is not dead, but will instead awake and assist in bringing enlightenment to all people, alongside the Buddha and other bodhisattvas [beings that compassionately refrain from entering nirvana in order to save others]. It is believed that he was shown the sacred place to build the monastery by a forest God; this site is now the location of a large cemetery that is flanked by 120 esoteric Buddhist temples. Approximately a million pilgrims visit Mount Koya-san a year; these pilgrims have included both royals and commoners who wish to pay their respects to Kobo Dashi. Mount Fuji is another sacred mountain in Japan. Several Shinto temples flank its base, all to pay homage to the mountain. The common belief is that Fujiyama is the incarnation of the earth spirit itself. The Fuki-ko sect maintains that the mountain is a holy being, and the home to the Goddess Sengen-sama. Annual fire festivals are held here in her honor. Fujiyama is also the site of pilgrimages; reportedly 40,000 people climb up to its summit every year.

“Tibet's Mount Kailash is a sacred place to five religions: Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, Bon Po (a native Tibetan religion prior to Buddhism), and Ayyavazhi religions. According to some Hindu tradition, Kailash is the home of the deity Shiva. In Hindu religion, Mount Kailash also plays an important role in Rama's journey in the ancient Sanskrit epic, Ramayana. Buddhists hold that Kailash is the home of Samvara, a guardian deity, and a representation of Buddha. Buddhists believe that Mount Kailash has supernatural powers that are able to clean the sins of a lifetime of any person. Followers of Jainism believe that Kailash is the site where the founder of Jainism reached enlightenment. Bon Po teaches that Kailash is the home of a wind Goddess.

“Mount Meru is a cosmic mountain which is described to be one of the highest points on Earth and is the center of all creation. In the Hindu religion, it is believed that Meru is home to the God Brahma, who is believed to be the father of the human race and all the demigods produced afterward. Indian cosmology believes that the sun, moon, and stars all revolve around Mount Meru. Folklore suggests the mountain rose up from the ground piercing the heavens giving it the moniker ‘navel of the universe.’

“The Navajo possess a strong belief system in regards to the natural-supernatural world and have a belief that objects have a supernatural quality. For example, the Navajo consider mountains to be sacred. There are four peaks, which are believed to have supernatural aspects. The mountains each represent a borderline of the original Navajo tribal land. The mountain ranges include Mount Taylor, the San Francisco Peaks, Blanca Peak, and Hesperus Peak located in the La Plata Mountains. Each mountain/peak is representative of a color, direction, and correlates with a cultural light phenomenon dealing with the cosmic scheme of the rising and of the setting sun. Directionally, the mountains are described in a clockwise motion following the movement of the sun beginning with the eastern mountain of Blanca Peak. Blanca Peak is associated with the color white and the "Dawn Man" referring to the rising of the sun. Next in the south is Mt. Taylor, which is associated with the color blue and the "Horizontal Blue Man" referring to the daytime. In the west is the San Francisco Peaks, which is representative of the color yellow and the 'Horizontal Yellow

Woman' and is associated with the setting of the sun. And finally in the north is the Hesperus Peak of the La Plata Mountains which is given the color black and belongs to the light phenomenon of the 'Darkness Woman' representing the nighttime." **Wikipedia**, 3/31/2014



4. **Mentions of כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם, “All the Nations,” in the Book of Isaiah**

**Isaiah 2:2,**

And it will happen in (the) future / latter part / end of the days,  
(the) mountain of YHWH’s house / temple (will be) established on top / at head of  
the mountains,  
and it will be lifted up from (the) hills,  
and all the nations will flow to it / Him.

**Isaiah 14:18,**

All the kings of the nations, all of them  
lie gloriously in death, each in his house / burial-vault.

**Isaiah 14:26,**

This—the counsel which was counseled upon all the earth,  
and this—the hand, the one stretched out over all the nations.

**Isaiah 25:6-7,**

- 6 And YHWH of Armies will make for all the peoples,  
on this mountain,  
a drinking-banquet of fatness,  
a drinking-banquet of aged / matured wine—  
fatness full of marrow,  
(and) refined wines.
- 7 And He will swallow up on this mountain  
the appearances of the shroud  
that shrouds over all the peoples,  
and the mourning-veil  
that is woven over all the nations.  
(What a universal hope—a drinking-banquet for all peoples, with the death-shroud removed  
from all the nations, because YHWH has swallowed up death forever!)

**Isaiah 29:7-8,**

- 7 And it will be like the dream, a vision (of the) night--  
a crowd of all the nations,  
those fighting against Ariel,  
and all those fighting her and her stronghold,  
and the ones constraining her.
- 8 And it will be just like when the hungry one dreams,  
and look—he is eating.  
And he awakes, and his innermost-being / appetite is empty.  
And just like the one thirsty dreams,  
and look—he is drinking.

And he awakes, and look—(he is) weary, and his innermost-being / appetite is  
longing (for water).  
In this way it will be (for the) crowd of all the nations,  
the ones fighting against Mount Zion!

**Isaiah 34:2,**

Because wrath belongs to YHWH against all the nations,  
and rage against all their army.  
He devoted them to destruction,  
He gave them for the slaughter.

**Isaiah 40:17,**

All the nations (are) like nothing before Him;  
they were considered by Him  
less than a ceasing and formlessness!

**Isaiah 43:9,**

All the nations were gathered together,  
and peoples were assembled.  
Who among them will declare this,  
and cause first / former things to be heard?  
Let them give witnesses, and let them be justified;  
and they will hear, and they will speak true-faithfulness!

**Isaiah 52:10,**

YHWH made bare His set-apart arm,  
to (the) eyes of all the nations;  
and all ends of (the) earth will see  
our God's salvation / deliverance!

**Isaiah 61:11,**

Because like the earth brings forth its growth,  
and like a garden causes to sprout what is sown in it,  
in this way my Lord YHWH will cause right-relationship to sprout,  
and praise before all the nations!

**Isaiah 66:18,**

And I...their deeds and their thoughts...  
she / it (feminine) is coming to gather all the nations and the tongues;  
and they will see My glorious radiance

**Isaiah 66:19-20,**

- 19 And I will place among them a sign;  
and I will send from them survivors to the nations  
Tarshish, Pul and Lud, drawers of (the) bow,  
Tubhal and Greece, the Islands that are far off,  
who did not hear My report,  
and did not see My glorious radiance;  
and they will declare My glorious radiance  
among the nations.
- 20 And they will bring all your brothers from all the nations,  
the gift to the YHWH,  
on the horses and in the chariot(s)  
and on the litters and on the mules and on the dromedary camels,  
to My set-apart mountain, Jerusalem  
—said YHWH—  
just as Israel's children will bring the gift(s) in a clean vessel  
(to the) house of YHWH.

5. **Coming of the Nations to Zion / YHWH's Care for the Nations  
in the Hebrew Bible**

**Genesis 12:3**, where YHWH makes a promise to Abram concerning all families of earth:

And I will bless those blessing you;  
and the one making you contemptible, I will curse;  
and all families of the ground will be blessed through you.

**1 Kings 8:41-43** where Solomon prays that YHWH will hear, not only listen to Israel's prayers, but also to those of non-Israelites:

41 And also to the foreigner,  
who is not from Your people Israel;  
and he will come from a land far away,  
because of Your name.  
42 Because they will hear Your great name,  
and Your strong hand,  
and Your stretched-out arm;  
and he will come, and he will pray to this house / temple.  
43 You, will You hear (in) the heavens, foundation of Your dwelling,  
and will You act according to all that the foreigner will call to You,  
so that they will know, all peoples of the earth, Your name—  
to tremble in awe before You, like Your people Israel,  
and to know that Your name is called over this house which I built?  
(This is a literal coming of individuals to the physical temple in the City of David.)

**Isaiah 2:2-4**,

2 And it will happen in (the) future / latter part / end of the days,,  
(the) mountain of YHWH's house / temple (will be) established firmly on top of the  
mountains,  
and it will be lifted up from (the) hills,,  
and all the nations, will flow to it.,  
3 And many peoples will go,  
and they will say, Come!  
And we will go up to YHWH's mountain,  
to (the) God of Jacob's house / temple!  
And He will teach us some of / from His ways,  
and we will walk in His paths!  
Because from Zion **torah** / law / teaching / guidance will go forth,  
and YHWH's word from Jerusalem!  
4 And He will judge between the nations;  
and He will decide / reprove / rebuke for many peoples.  
And they will beat their swords into plows,  
and their spears into pruning knives.  
Nation will not lift up a sword against a nation,  
and they will not again learn war! **Micah 4:1-3** (same)

(Elements in **Isaiah 2:2-4** and **Micah 4:1-3** can be understood literally, but obviously the Zion of these two passages is not the temple of Solomon in the City of David, but rather, an exalted City of Zion, raised up and enlarged to the extent that it can accommodate all nations and many peoples.)

**Isaiah 19:19-25,**

- 19 In that day there will be an altar to the YHWH  
in (the) midst of Egypt-land,  
and a pillar next to its border,  
for the YHWH.
- 20 And it will be for a sign and for a witness  
to the YHWH of Armies in Egypt-land;  
because they will cry out to YHWH from before oppressors;  
and He will send to them a deliverer / savior and one contending,  
and he will deliver (synonym) them.
- 21 And YHWH will be known to Egypt;  
and Egyptians will know YHWH in that day;  
and they will serve (with) sacrifice and offering;  
and they will make a vow to the YHWH,  
and they will keep (it).
- 22 And YHWH will strike Egyptians,  
striking and healing;  
and they will return to YHWH;  
and He will be supplicated by them,  
and He will heal them.
- 23 On that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria,  
and Assyria will come into Egypt,  
and Egypt into Assyria;  
and Egyptians will serve Assyria.
- 24 In that day, Israel will be a third one to Egypt and to Assyria—  
a blessing in the earth's midst,
- 25 which YHWH of Armies will bless, saying  
Blessed (is) My people Egypt,  
and product of My hands, Assyria,  
and My inheritance, Israel!

(This is an amazing prediction, which places Israel after Egypt and Assyria, as “third” rather than “first,” i.e., as the “tail” rather than the “head.” See **Deuteronomy 28:13, 44**. YHWH through His prophet Isaiah, depicts Egypt and Assyria as YHWH’s people just as is Israel!)

**Isaiah 25:6-9,**

- 6 And YHWH of Armies will make for all the peoples,  
on this mountain,  
a drinking-banquet of fatness,  
a drinking-banquet of aged / matured wine—  
fatness full of marrow,  
(and) refined wines.

7 And He will swallow up on this mountain  
the appearances of the shroud  
that shrouds over all the peoples,  
and the mourning-veil  
that is woven over all the nations.

8 He swallowed up the death for long-lasting time.  
And my Lord YHWH will wipe out tear(s)  
from upon all faces.  
And He will remove His people's reproach  
from upon all the earth,  
because YHWH said (it)!

9 And he will say on that day,  
look--this is our God!  
We waited for Him,  
and He saved / delivered us!  
This (is) YHWH--we waited for Him.  
We will rejoice,  
and we will be glad in His salvation!

(What a universal hope--a drinking-banquet for all peoples on Mount Zion, with the death-shroud removed from all the nations, because YHWH has swallowed up death forever! It makes no mention of the peoples or nations becoming Jewish / Christian! Gray states that "We have here one of the most catholic passages in the entire **Old Testament**, and one of the tenderest presentations of Yahweh...The writer...extended to the nations of the world all that is tenderest in the Hebrew thought of Yahweh's relation to Israel...There is no justification in the text for the narrow turn given to the thought in the Aramaic Targum and by Kimchi, and, more elaborately in recent times [Gray wrote in 1912], by Graetz...

"The Targum paraphrases **verse 6**, 'Yahweh of Hosts will make for all the peoples in this mountain a meal; and though they suppose it is an honor, it will be a shame for them, and great plagues, plagues from which they will be unable to escape, plagues whereby they will come to their end.' Graetz translated **verse 8** as saying 'And death shall swallow them (that is, the nations) up for ever.'" (Pp. 429-31)

#### Isaiah 42:1-4,

1 Look--My servant!  
I will support him;  
My chosen one--  
My innermost-being was pleased.  
I placed My Spirit upon him.  
Justice for the nations he will bring forth!

2 He will not cry out,  
and he will not lift up (his voice),  
and he will not cause his voice to be heard in the street.

3 A crushed reed he will not break,  
and a dim(ly burning) flax-wick he will not extinguish.  
For / by true-faithfulness he will bring forth justice!

4 He will not grow dim,  
and he will not crush,

until he places justice in the earth;  
and for his teaching coastlands wait.

(Here YHWH's servant Israel goes to the nations, to meet their needs, rather than the nations coming to Jerusalem / Mount Zion, for Israel's advantage, as in some of the passages that follow, such as **Isaiah 60**.)

**Isaiah 45:14,**

In this way YHWH spoke:

Products of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia,  
and Sabians, men of size, unto you will cross over,  
and they will belong to you;  
they will come behind you;  
with weapons they will cross over.

And they will bow down to you,  
they will make intercession, (saying)

Surely God is with you,  
and there is no other besides God.

(The "Sabians" are people of southern Arabia, i.e., Yemen, related to the Ethiopians. This is, we think, a depiction of foreigners being converted to the God of Israel.)

**Isaiah 45:22-23,**

22 Turn to Me, and be saved, all earth's ends!  
Because I (am) God, and there is not another!

23 By Myself I have sworn;  
righteousness has gone forth from My mouth,  
a Word--and it will not return--  
that to Me every knee will bend;  
every tongue will swear!"

(YHWH invites all humanity to come to Him, with no mention of Jerusalem / Mount Zion. And YHWH is depicted as predicting universal worship of Himself!)

**Isaiah 49:5-6,**

5 And now, YHWH spoke--  
(the) One forming me from (the) womb for a servant to Him,  
to turn back Jacob to Himself,  
and Israel will be gathered to Him.

And I will be honored in YHWH's eyes;  
and My God was my strength--

6 And He said, It was too trifling for you to be for Me  
a servant to raise up Jacob's tribes,  
and to return those preserved of Israel;  
and I will give you (singular) for a light of nations,  
to be My deliverance / salvation as far as the earth's end!

(YHWH's servant raises up Jacob's tribes, but also is given to be a light of nations, bringing YHWH's deliverance / salvation to the end(s) of the earth--with no mention of the nations

coming to Mount Zion / Jerusalem. Israel is not depicted as the “master,” but as the “servant.” And we are reminded of the teaching attributed to Jesus concerning becoming great through serving others, **Matthew 23:11; Luke 22:26.**)

**Isaiah 51:4-5,**

- 4 Pay attention to Me, My people!  
And My people (synonym), give ear to Me!  
Because teaching / *torah* will go forth from Me,  
and My justice for a light of peoples,  
I will cause to rest (upon them)!
- 5 My righteousness (is) near;  
My salvation / deliverance went forth.  
And My arm will judge peoples!  
For Me coastlands wait,  
and for My arm they hope.

**Isaiah 56:1-8,**

- 1 In this way YHWH spoke:  
Maintain justice,  
and practice right-relationship(s)!  
Because My salvation is near to come,  
and My rightly-related deeds to be revealed!
- 2 How blessed a man  
(who) will practice this,  
and a son of humanity  
(who) will lay strong hold on it--  
observing a Rest-day  
avoiding profaning it,  
and restraining his hand  
avoiding doing anything evil.
- 3 And the foreigner's child, the one joined to YHWH,  
shall not speak, saying,  
YHWH will certainly separate me from His people!  
And the eunuch / castrated man will not say,  
Look—I (am) a dried up tree!
- 4 Because in this way YHWH spoke:  
to the castrated men who observe My Rest-days,  
and who choose that in which I took pleasure,  
and who take strong hold of My covenant--
- 5 and I will give to them in My house, and within My walls  
a hand / memorial and the name,  
better than sons and daughters--  
a long-lasting name I will give to him,  
which will not be cut off.
- 6 And the foreigner's children,  
who have joined (themselves) to YHWH,



to serve Him,  
     and to love YHWH's name,  
 to belong to Him as slaves / servants,<sup>i</sup>  
     everyone who observes a Rest-day,  
 not profaning it,  
     and who are takes strong hold on My covenant--  
 7 and I will bring them to (the) mountain of My set-apartness;  
     and I will cause them to rejoice in My house of prayer;  
 their offerings and their sacrifices (will be) acceptable upon My altar--  
     because My house will be called A house of prayer for all the peoples!  
 8 (It is) a saying of my Lord YHWH--  
     He Who gathers Israel's outcasts:  
 I will again gather to (Israel),  
     to His gathered ones!

(Compare the story of Ruth, the Moabitess, excluded from Israel because of her nationality, but who nevertheless became a worshiper of her mother-in-law's God, YHWH, and was welcomed into the people of Israel, to become an ancestress of King David.

Isaiah speaks for YHWH in words that directly contradict both the teaching of **Deuteronomy 23:1-6** and the demand of **Ezra-Nehemiah** for the exclusion of the children of foreigners. The last line is the the statement attributed to Jesus when He cleansed the temple—see **Mark 11:17**; **Matthew 21:13** and **Luke 19:46**.

Jesus' ministry was devoted to reaching out not only to Israel, but also to all peoples, regardless of their nationality, with God's love, acceptance, healing, and forgiveness. This is a far cry from the exclusivism that is taught in **Deuteronomy 23:1-6**, where men with damaged genitals are excluded from the assembly of YHWH, just as were people of foreign origin. This is the legislation that lies behind the statements made in **Isaiah 56:3**, and that is depicted in this passage as being contrary to YHWH's desire.

And we wonder, as we sense the conflict between **Deuteronomy 23** and **Isaiah 56**, can this be one of the laws that is in mind at **Ezekiel 20:25**, where YHWH declares:

And also I, I gave to them statutes (that were) not good,  
     and judgments—they will not live by them!

What should we make of this? Should **Bible** students dare to say that some of the laws given by YHWH to Israel were “not good” as Ezekiel does? Should we be willing to say that Israel, let alone non-Jews, should not, or could not live by them? What statutes do you think YHWH means? What judgments? Walther Eichrodt holds that the “not good” commandment being referred to is that of **Exodus 22:28**, “the first-born of all your sons you shall give to Me,” which they have taken as a justification for the sacrificial offering of their sons by fire in the Valley of Hinnom—not paying attention to the further commandment in **Exodus 34:19-20**, which states that the sons of humans were to be redeemed, and not offered in sacrifice (see his commentary on **Ezekiel**, pp. 270-72). We think it may just as well be referring to the legislation in **Deuteronomy 23**. Can we not with certainty say that according to **Isaiah 56**, those commandments excluding the physically deformed and the children of foreigners from

YHWH's house of prayer were "not good"? What do you think? What do you think Jesus thought about those commandments? Obviously, he refused to follow them, and instead reached out to all people with his grace, healing and forgiveness!)

**Isaiah 60:1-22,**

- 1 Arise! Become light!  
Because your light came,  
And YHWH's glory arose over you (feminine singular)!
- 2 Because look--  
the darkness covers earth,  
and a heavy cloud (covers) peoples.  
And upon you YHWH arises,  
and His glory will be seen over you!
- 3 And nations will walk / come to your light,  
and kings to (the) brightness of your dawning.
- 4 Lift up your eyes and see all around--  
all of them were gathered;  
they were coming to you--  
your sons from afar will come,  
and your daughters upon a hip will be supported.
- 5 Then you (feminine singular) will see and you will shine;  
and your heart will fear / be in awe and expand,  
because (the) abundance of the sea will be turned over to you;  
wealth of nations will come to you!
- 6 A multitude of camels will cover you,  
young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all of them from Sheba will come.  
Gold and frankincense they will carry,  
and praises of YHWH they will announce as good news.
- 7 Every flock of Qedar--they will be gathered to you;  
rams of Nebayoth will serve You.  
They will go up acceptably on My altar,  
and (the) temple of My beauty I will beautify.
- 8 Who (are) these--like the cloud they fly,  
and like the doves to their windows?
- 9 Because for Me coast-lands wait,  
and the ships of Tarshish at the first,  
to bring your children from afar,  
their silver and their gold with them,  
for YHWH your God's name,  
and for Israel's Set-apart One,  
because He beautified you!
- 10 And children of foreignness will build your walls,  
and their kings will serve you.  
Because in My wrath I struck you;  
and in My favor, I had compassion on you!
- 11 And your gates will be open continually,  
by day and night they will not be closed--

(in order) to bring to you (the) wealth of nations;  
and their kings driven / led in procession.

12 Because the nation and the kingdom  
that will not serve you will perish;  
and the nations will be utterly dried up!

13 The Lebanon's glory will come to you,  
cypress, elm and box-tree together,  
to beautify a place of My Set-apartness,  
and a place for My feet I will make glorious.

14 And they will come to you bowing down  
(the) sons / children of those humbling you;  
and they will worship upon soles of their feet / barefoot,  
all those spurning you.  
And they will call to you, City of YHWH,  
Zion, of Israel's Set-apart One!

15 Instead of your being forsaken and hated,  
and there is no one passing through—  
and I will place you for long-lasting exaltation / majesty,  
a rejoicing, generation and generation!

16 And you will nurse / suck (the) milk of nations,  
and (the) breast of kings you will nurse / suck.  
And you will know that I (am) YHWH your Savior,  
and your Redeemer / Next-of-Kin,  
Mighty One of Jacob!

17 Instead of the bronze, I will bring gold;  
and instead of the iron, I will bring silver;  
and instead of the wood, bronze;  
and instead of the stones, iron.  
And I will place / make your visitors / overseers peace,  
and your taskmasters right-relationship!

18 Violence will no longer be heard in your land,  
ruin and brokenness in your borders.  
And you will call salvation / deliverance your walls,  
and your gates praise.

19 The sun will no longer be for you for light by day;  
and for brightness, the moon will not shine for you.  
And YHWH will be for you for long-lasting light,  
and your God for your beauty!

20 Your sun will not set any more,  
and your moon will not be gathered.  
Because YHWH will be for you for long-lasting light  
and (the) days of your mourning will be completed.

21 And your people, all of them, (will be) righteous;  
for long-lasting time they will inherit earth—  
a sprout of My planting,  
a work of My hands,  
to make itself beautiful

22 The least one will become to the thousand(s);  
and the little / insignificant one to a mighty nation.

I (am) YHWH;

in its time, I will hasten it!

(Here, similarly to **Isaiah 2:2-4**, the nations are depicted as coming to Zion. But it is hardly the City of David, with its physical walls. Rather it is a City with salvation for walls, and with praise for gates. It is a City without sun or moon, but with only YHWH as its source of light. It is apparently a depiction of the return of scattered exiles from all across the ancient world, being brought back to Israel by non-Jewish nations and peoples.

But Jewish nationalism has crept into this description, depicting the nations as Israel's servants, and the nation of Israel being enriched by the wealth of nations. There is none of this in **Isaiah 2:2-4**.)

### **Isaiah 66.18-23**

- 18 And I...their deeds and their thoughts...  
she / it (feminine) is coming to gather all the nations and the tongues;  
and they will see My glorious radiance.
- 19 And I will place among them a sign;  
and I will send from them survivors to the nations  
Tarshish, Pul and Lud, drawers of (the) bow,  
Tubhal and Greece, the Islands that are far off,  
who did not hear My report,  
and did not see My glorious radiance;  
and they will declare My glorious radiance  
among the nations.
- 20 And they will bring all your brothers from all the nations,  
the gift to the YHWH,  
on the horses and in the chariot(s)  
and on the litters and on the mules and on the dromedary camels,  
to My set-apart mountain, Jerusalem  
—said YHWH—  
just as Israel's children will bring the gift(s) in a clean vessel  
(to the) house of YHWH.
- 21 And also from them I will take (some) for the priests, for the Levites,  
said YHWH.
- 22 Because just as the heavens, the new ones,  
and the earth, the new one, which I am making  
—are standing before Me  
—a saying of YHWH—  
so your descendant(s) will stand, and your name.
- 23 And it will happen as often as a month (comes) in its month,  
a Rest-day in its Rest-day,  
all flesh will come to worship before Me—  
said YHWH.

(Here is a depiction of universal worship of YHWH, including sabbath-day observance. The passage is obviously describing the return of exiles to the Jerusalem, but it is the Jerusalem of the new heavens and new earth; and it is a Jerusalem large enough to accommodate “all flesh,” something no literal City of Jerusalem could possibly do. And the worship in that new

Jerusalem is depicted as very different from that of the old Jerusalem—those bringing the exiles back from dispersion will become priests!)

**Jeremiah 3:17**, when Israel returns to YHWH,

At that time, they will call Jerusalem YHWH's throne;  
and all the nations will be gathered to it,  
to YHWH's name, to Jerusalem,  
and they will not again walk after the evil stubbornness of their heart!

**Ezekiel 47:21-23**, where this spokesperson / priest states,

- 21 And you shall divide this land for yourselves  
to / for the tribes of Israel.
- 22 And it will happen, you will allot it as an inheritance for yourselves  
and for the temporary residents temporarily residing among you,  
who have fathered sons among you.  
And they will be to you like a native-born among the people of Israel;  
with you (plural) they will be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.
- 23 And it will happen, In whatever tribe the temporary resident resides,  
there you will give him his inheritance!  
A saying of my Lord YHWH.

(That is, foreigners in Israel's midst must be treated legally, with respect to ownership of land, the same as native-born Jews!)

**Zechariah 2:15**, which states that when YHWH dwells in Israel's midst,

And many nations will join themselves to YHWH in that day;  
and they will be to Me for a people;  
and I will dwell in your midst,  
and you will know that YHWH or Armies sent me to you.  
(Here "many nations" are depicted as equally the people of YHWH, without any subservience to the Jews.)

**Zechariah 8:20-23**,

- 20 In this way YHWH of Armies spoke:  
Again, when peoples shall come,  
and residents of many cities,
- 21 and (inhabitants) of one (city) will go to (the inhabitants of) one / another (city),  
saying, let us go, going, to entreat YHWH's face,  
and to seek YHWH of Armies!  
I also will go (with them)!
- 22 And many people will come, and mighty nations,  
to seek YHWH of Armies in Jerusalem,  
and to entreat YHWH's face.

23 In this way YHWH of Armies spoke:  
In those days,  
when ten men will take hold--  
from all tongues of the nations--  
and they will take hold of the extremity of a man, a Jew, saying,  
We will go with you (plural),  
because we heard that God (is) with you (plural).

### **Zechariah 14:16-19**

16 And it will happen--everyone remaining from all the nations,  
the ones coming against Jerusalem--  
and they will go up, year by year,  
to worship King YHWH of Armies  
and to go on the festival-observing of the pilgrim festival of the booths.  
17 And it will happen, whoever will not go up from the land's tribes to Jerusalem,  
to worship King YHWH of Armies,  
and the rain will not be upon them!  
18 And if Egypt's clan will not go up,  
and it did not come--  
and will not the plague / pestilence be upon them,  
with which YHWH struck the nations,  
which will not go up to the festival-observing of the festival of the booths?  
19 This will be the sin of Egypt,  
and the sin of all the nations  
which will not go up to the festival--  
observing of the festival of the booths.  
(In Zechariah's vision, the nations that come to YHWH must observe Israel's festival  
of the booths.)

### **Haggai 2:6-9,**

6 Because in this way YHWH of Armies spoke:  
Again, it is one little (time),  
and I am shaking / about to shake the heavens and the earth,  
and the sea, and the dry ground!  
7 And will cause all the nations to shake,  
and they will come (to the) desire of all the nations,  
and I will fill this house / temple (with) glory--  
said YHWH of Armies!  
(The second line of **verse 7** is given varying translations:  
**King James**, "And the precious things of all the nations shall come *here*";  
**Tanakh**, "so that the treasure of all nations shall come";  
**New Revised Standard**, "so that the treasure of all nations shall come";  
**New International**, "and the desired of all nations will come";  
**New Jerusalem**, "and the treasures of all the nations will flow in."  
In fact, the noun is singular, and the verb is plural; none of these translations reflect that fact.)

- 8 The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine--  
a saying of YHWH of Armies.
- 9 The glory of this house / temple will be great,  
the last (house / temple) more than the first (house / temple),  
said YHWH of Armies,  
and in this place I will give peace,  
a saying of YHWH of Armies.

**Psalm 47,**

1<sup>Heb</sup> / Title<sup>Eng</sup> For the Director, for Qorach's sons, a melody:

- 2/1 All the peoples--let them clap (their) hands!  
Let them shout to God with a voice of ringing praise!
- 3/2 Because YHWH--Most High, Awe-Inspiring--  
great King over all the earth!
- 4/3 He subdues peoples beneath us,  
and populations beneath our feet!
- 5/4 He chooses our inheritance for us;  
Jacob's proud [possession],  
because he loves [us]! Selah
- 6/5 God has been exalted with a shout!  
YHWH, with a ram's-horn blast!
- 7/6 Make melody [to] God, make melody!  
Make melody to our King, make melody!
- 8/7 Because God is King [over] all the earth--  
make melody [with a] song of wisdom!
- 9/8 God has reigned over [the] nations!  
God has sat down upon His set-apart throne!
- 10/9 Nobles of [the] peoples have been gathered;  
a people of the God of Abraham;  
Because earth's armed warriors belong to God--  
he is exalted over all!
- (Here all the nations are invited to worship YHWH, the universal King; but YHWH is depicted as having placed the nations under Israel's feet!)

**Psalm 65:2-3,**

- 2 To / for You, silence (is) a song of praise  
God in Zion;  
and to You a vow shall be fulfilled--
- 3 One listening to / hearing a song of praise;  
to You all flesh will come!  
(God in Zion hears the silence / song of praise of all flesh!)

**Psalm 86:9,**

All nations which You made will come,  
and they will worship before You, my Lord;

and they will honor Your name.

**Psalm 87**, Zion, the Mother City of All Humanity (see footnote 9)

**Daniel 7:13-14**,

- 13 I was seeing in visions of the night;  
and look—with clouds of the heavens,  
like a son of man he was coming,  
and he came to One Old of the Days;  
and he was brought near before Him.
- 14 And to him was given dominion, and honor and royalty / a kingdom;  
and all the peoples, the tribes and the tongues paid reverence to him.  
His dominion—a long-time dominion, which will not pass aay,  
and his kingdom, which will not be destroyed.

(It is a vision of the future, one which is understood by Christians as Messianic, and as having been fulfilled by the coming of Jesus, the Son of Man. In the **New Testament**, for quotations of these verses, see **Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; Revelation 1:7**; also compare **Matthew 25:31; 28:18** and **Luke 1:33; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47**, Jesus' "great commission" to His disciples, commanding them to go into "all the nations" proclaiming the good news of salvation.)

**Revelation 7:9-10**,

- 9 After these things I saw, and look--  
a great crowd, which no one was able to number it,  
out of every nation, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues--  
having stood before the throne and before the Little Lamb,  
having been dressed in white robes,  
and palm-branches in their hands.
- 10 And they cry out with a great voice, saying,  
The deliverance (belongs) to our God,  
to the One sitting upon the throne,  
and to the Little Lamb!



## 6. 63 Visions / Promises of Hope in the Book of Isaiah

- (1) **Isaiah 2:2-4**--YHWH's house / temple will be exalted, with all nations flowing to it, and no more war!
- (2) **Isaiah 4:2-6**--YHWH's "branch" (Messiah) will come; Israel's remnant will be cleansed, with YHWH leading them, just as He was with Israel in the exodus from Egypt.
- (3) **Isaiah 9:1-6<sup>Heb</sup> / 9:2-7<sup>Eng</sup>**--a great light will shine, the nation will be multiplied, the oppressor will be shattered, a child / son will be born to reign on David's throne--the Messianic Prince of Peace. Even though the vision speaks of this as an accomplished fact, its final words project the vision into the future.
- (4) **Isaiah 10:21-27**, YHWH will destroy Assyria, and Jacob's remnant will return. The **Book of Isaiah** shows repeatedly that destructive judgment is coming upon Israel because of her failures. But it also holds that YHWH's anger will end, and YHWH will fight for Israel, in a way reminiscent of Israel's exodus from Egypt--removing Israel's burden of captivity.
- (5) **Isaiah 11:1-12:6**--Even though the Davidic kings will be cut down, one of their line will arise, filled with the Spirit of YHWH, who will restore justice to Israel, especially to the poor, using force to destroy wickedness. With his rule will come peace, even among the formerly fierce animals; and YHWH's mountain (Zion / Jerusalem) will be filled with peace. The nations will learn of YHWH, and will come seeking this great Messiah, Who will unite Israel under his leadership, and fight against Israel's enemies. The original vision, with its depiction of universal peace without the need for weapons, is here modified--peace will come through armed victory over the forces of evil.
- (6) **Isaiah 25:1-10**--This vision of hope depicts YHWH as giving a great drinking-banquet / feast for all peoples, swallowing up death forever, removing all tears from the eyes of mourners, and becoming a resting--place for all of earth's poor people, while destroying their enemies. Scholars who say there is no thought or promise of immortality in the **Hebrew Bible** need to reconsider their view in the light of this statement. The swallowing up of death is depicted as already having happened, as well as happening in the future.
- (7) **Isaiah 26:19**--There will be joyful resurrection of the dead!
- (8) **Isaiah 27:1-6**--YHWH will kill the mythical symbol of evil, Leviathan, and with YHWH's presence, Jacob / Israel will fill the world with fruit!
- (9) **Isaiah 27:12-13**--YHWH will gather Israel's people from their dispersion, to worship YHWH in their homeland!
- (10) **Isaiah 28:5-6**--YHWH will restore justice and armed might to the remnant of His people!
- (11) **Isaiah 29:17-19**--the deaf will hear, the blind will see, the humble poor will rejoice in YHWH!
- (12) **Isaiah 29:22-24**--Jacob's children will revere Israel's God, ceasing going astray and murmuring!

- (13) **Isaiah 30:18-21**—YHWH will be present with His people, hearing their cry, guiding their footsteps!
- (14) **Isaiah 30:23-26**—YHWH will grant prosperity to His people, as He heals them!
- (15) **Isaiah 31:4-5**--YHWH will defend Zion / Jerusalem!
- (16) **Isaiah 32:1-4**--Rulers will bring righteousness and justice, and individuals will serve others in their need, as all people learn and understand!
- (17) **Isaiah 32:14-18**—the Spirit will be poured out, transforming the desert into a garden, bringing justice and righteousness, enabling peace and security!
- (18) **Isaiah 33:5-6**--YHWH's treasury will be to fill Zion with justice and righteousness, salvation and wisdom, and most of all, reverence for YHWH!
- (19) **Isaiah 33:14b-24**—righteousness and justice will enable the people to dwell securely with YHWH in Zion / Jerusalem, with YHWH as King, forgiving iniquity!
- (20) **Isaiah 35:1-10**—Nature will be transformed, with the desert becoming a garden, and YHWH's glorious splendor will be seen, as he saves His people, with the blind seeing and the deaf hearing. The road back to Zion will be a safe and joyous way to a Zion, filled with joy!
- (21) **Isaiah 37:30-32**—YHWH will enable a remnant of escapees from Jerusalem / Zion to gradually return to prosperity, putting down roots!
- (22) **Isaiah 40:1-5**--A forgiven and comforted people of God will see YHWH's glory as they journey (homeward) through a transformed desert!
- (23) **Isaiah 40:10-11**—YHWH is coming to reward His people, like a shepherd, carrying his lambs!
- (24) **Isaiah 40:27-31**—Jacob's way is not hidden from YHWH—Who never grows tired, but gives renewed strength to His weary people who wait for Him!
- (25) **Isaiah 41:8-10**—Israel need not be dismayed, for she has been called to be God's servant, and He is their God, Who will certainly help them!
- (26) **Isaiah 41:17-20**—YHWH will answer the cry of the afflicted poor, seeking water, as He turns the desert into a well-watered garden-place!
- (27) **Isaiah 42:5-7**--YHWH, the Creator, has called His people to be a "light of nations," bringing freedom to prisoners in darkness! He has a future for His people!
- (28) **Isaiah 42:16**—YHWH will cause the blind to see and walk in pathways they did not know; He will never forsake them!
- (29) **Isaiah 43:1-7**--Jacob / Israel need not be afraid, because YHWH is their "Next-of-Kin" (Redeemer) Who knows them by name, and Who will be with them. No matter the dangers

they go through, He will be with them, restoring them from captivity / dispersion, because He has created them and has chosen to love them!

- (30) **Isaiah 43:18-21**—Instead of concentrating of YHWH's actions in the distant past, His people can observe Him doing a new thing, making a way for them through the desert, with plenteous water!
- (31) **Isaiah 44:1-5**, Jacob / Israel does not need to be afraid—YHWH has formed them, and He will help them, pouring out His Spirit and blessing on them. They will be like trees planted beside streams of water!
- (32) **Isaiah 44:21-23**—YHWH will be glorified in Jacob / Israel, since He has redeemed / forgiven them completely!
- (33) **Isaiah 44:26b**--YHWH says to Jerusalem, She shall be inhabited, and to Judah, Her cities will be rebuilt!
- (34) **Isaiah 44:28**--YHWH calls Cyrus the Persian His shepherd, who will command Jerusalem to be built, and a temple founded!
- (35) **Isaiah 45:14**—YHWH predicts the coming of Ethiopians and Sabeans, to belong to Israel, acknowledging Israel's God as their God!
- (36) **Isaiah 45:17**—Saved by YHWH, Israel will not be ashamed or humiliated for long-lasting time!
- (37) **Isaiah 45:22-25**—YHWH invites all earth's ends to turn to Him; He swears that to Him "every knee will bend"!
- (38) **Isaiah 46:3-4**--YHWH promises Jacob / Israel to carry them all the way through life, even to old age and white hair!
- (39) **Isaiah 46:12-13**—YHWH promises righteousness and salvation in Zion for Israel!
- (40) **Isaiah 49:6-7**--YHWH says to His servant, Israel, that He will make them "a light of nations," to bring salvation / deliverance to the earth's end!
- (41) **Isaiah 49:8-23**—YHWH has answered Israel's deepest needs—accepting, saving her—and now giving Israel a mission to others, telling the prisoners to go free and return home—promising to provide for their every need. They will come from afar, from north and west. While Zion has cried out that YHWH has forsaken and forgotten her, this is impossible, for YHWH will never forget His people! He will call for the nations to share in bringing His people home, where all the destruction will be removed!
- (42) **Isaiah 49:25-26**—YHWH will save / deliver Israel's children, and eliminate her oppressors, enabling the whole world to know that YHWH is Israel's Savior / Redeemer!
- (43) **Isaiah 51:3-6**--Zion will no longer be desolated, but be made like Eden, filled with rejoicing, and becoming the means of YHWH's teaching and justice, His salvation and righteousness going

forth to far-distant peoples!

- (44) **Isaiah 51:11**—Those redeemed by YHWH will return to Zion, with a ringing-cry of joy!
- (45) **Isaiah 51:14**—Deliverance will come for the prisoner; death and hunger will no longer be his lot!
- (46) **Isaiah 52:7-10**—The good news of peace will be announced to Zion—God reigns! As YHWH returns to Zion, redeeming Jerusalem, all the nations of earth will see the Divine salvation!
- (47) **Isaiah 53:10-12**—The outcome of YHWH’s servant’s self-giving is that he will live in spite of having been crushed; and YHWH’s purpose / pleasure will prosper in his hand, as he bears the guilt and sin of many!
- (48) **Isaiah 54:1-3**—The supposedly barren woman (Israel) will be the mother of many children, causing Israel to be enlarged, possessing nations!
- (49) **Isaiah 54:7-8**—Even though YHWH has forsaken Israel for a small moment, with great compassions and steadfast-love He, their Redeemer, will gather Israel together!
- (50) **Isaiah 54:10-13**—Poor Israel, storm-driven and comfortless, will be loved and rebuilt with far more beauty than ever before; and all her children will be learners of YHWH, with great peace / prosperity!
- (51) **Isaiah 55:3-5**—YHWH has a mission for His people—to call into being a nation they have not known before, who will run to join Israel!
- (52) **Isaiah 55:12-13**—A future of gladness and peace awaits Israel in the future!
- (53) **Isaiah 56:6-8**—Children of foreigners (“outcasts,” rejected by **Ezra-Nehemiah**) who join themselves to YHWH will be welcomed into YHWH’s “house of prayer for all the peoples”!
- (54) **Isaiah 57:14-19**—YHWH, the exalted One, dwells with the crushed and lowly, and heals those turning away from Him—bringing peace to those who are far away as well as to those who are near!
- (55) **Isaiah 58:8-14**—If Israel wants light, healing, righteousness, and YHWH’s presence—her people must quit binding others down, quit condemning, quit the harsh speech—and instead, they must feed the hungry, care for the oppressed, take time to worship, and find delight in YHWH—and if they do, light will arise in the darkness! It is YHWH’s promise!
- (56) **Isaiah 59:15b-21**, Join with YHWH in seeking justice for all! YHWH will lead to victory in the struggle!
- (57) **Isaiah 60:1-22**—Those hearing are called to become light! When they do, the nations will come to their light—and unbelievable transformations will occur. YHWH will be present with them, and the nations of earth will be blessed, as well as blessing Israel richly! Israel will truly become the “City of YHWH,” “Zion of the Set-apart One of Israel”! Peace and righteousness,

and salvation and praise will be present in that City, and God's light will shine there! YHWH is bringing about the building of that City!

- (58) **Isaiah 61:4-11**—YHWH will be at work rebuilding ruins; strangers will come to work with Israel, and they will become priests, ministers of God! The land will be filled with sharing and joy, and YHWH will cause justice and righteousness and praise to sprout up before all nations!
- (59) **Isaiah 62:1-12**—Instead of Zion's / Jerusalem's being called "Forsaken," or her land being called "Devastation," she will be called "My Delight Is In Her," and her land will be called "Married"!
- (60) **Isaiah 65:8-10**, "For those who seek YHWH, a blessed future of fruitfulness is coming!"
- (61) **Isaiah 65:17-25**—YHWH is creating a new Jerusalem, filled with gladness and rejoicing—where long life abounds, with houses lived in, with plenty of food on the table; with YHWH listening to their prayers, and with no evil or destruction in His set-apart mountain!
- (62) **Isaiah 66:7-16**—Zion will give birth for YHWH to a Jerusalem filled with gladness, her people like babies played with on parents' knees. YHWH will rebuke Zion's enemies with fire and destruction!
- (63) **Isaiah 66:18-24**—YHWH's glorious radiance will be proclaimed among the nations; Israel's brothers will be brought from all the nations, as gifts to YHWH, to serve as priests—those transgressing YHWH's teaching will suffer fiery punishment!

No, there can be no doubt that Isaiah is a "Prophet of Promise"! YHWH's promises ring out throughout the writings attributed to him! Isaiah is a powerful preacher of ethics, of demanding morality, calling for righteousness and justice--Yes. But he is also a prophet who "stands on tip-toe," looking out into the future, convinced that YHWH's rich blessings await those who listen to His voice.

And we ask, Have all these promises been fulfilled, literally? Hardly. Have some of them? Yes. Have others failed? Yes, especially with regards to the Nation of Israel's peaceful future. Did Isaiah see the future clearly? Obviously not. Or is there ambiguity, puzzling elements in these promises? Yes, of course.

What did you expect? Have not these promises emerged from the visions / dreams which filled the mind of Isaiah, as he heard the Divine voice assuring him of a blessed future for his beloved nation? And if they are "visionary" in nature, containing enigmatic, puzzling features, should we expect them to be exact, accurate depictions of the future? Or, should we not see them in terms of Paul's language in **1 Corinthians 13**, as having been "seen through a mirror darkly"—that is, not exact images, but shadowy, vague, approximate, not always clear?

One thing is certain. That is, Isaiah has no doubt that YHWH has spoken, and that His word offers joyful hope. Of that we can be sure. And if there is anything we need, in a world filled with danger, surrounded by death, it is hope. Not false hope, but hope built on a solid foundation. And Isaiah's hope is not something he manufactured on his own. It is a hope rooted and grounded on his experience of seeing and hearing the Divine vision!

7. **Occurrences of the Noun מִלְחָמָה, “War,” in the Book of Isaiah**

**Isaiah 2:4,**

And He will judge between the nations;  
and He will decide / reprove / rebuke for many peoples.  
And they will beat their swords into pieces,  
and their spears into pruning knives.  
Nation will not lift up a sword to / against a nation,  
and they will not again learn war!

**Isaiah 3:2,** among those whom YHWH is removing are:

Mighty man and man of war,  
judge and spokesperson prophet,  
and one divining, and elderly person / official...

**Isaiah 3:25,** it is said of the women of Jerusalem:

Your men will fall by the sword,  
and your strength / might in the war.

**Isaiah 7:1,**

And it happened in (the) days of Achaz, son of Yotham, son of Uzziyahu, king of Judah,  
Retsin, king of Aram / Syria and Pheqach, son of Remalyahu, king of Israel,  
came up (to) Jerusalem, for the war against it;  
and it (the enemy alliance) was not able to make war (successfully) against it  
(Jerusalem).

(Isaiah may dream of a time when there is no more war, but in his life-time he experienced constant war, just as we who confess Jesus as Messiah have also experienced in our lives.)

**Isaiah 13:4,** in a vision concerning Babylon, Isaiah tells of hearing:

A voice of a crowd in the mountains—  
likeness of a great people;  
a voice of an uproar—  
kingdoms of nations gathering together!  
YHWH of Armies  
is mustering an army for war,

**Isaiah 21:15,** Isaiah says concerning a caravan in Arabia,

Because from facing swords they fled;  
from facing a sword he was forsaken;

and from facing a bent bow;  
and from facing vehemence of war.

**Isaiah 22:2**, Isaiah says concerning the “valley of vision”:

(You who are) full of noises,  
a boistrous city,  
a jubilant city (synonym)--  
your pierced (are) not pierced (by the) sword;  
and (they are) not dead men (from) war!

**Isaiah 27:4**, YHWH is depicted as saying:

Heat / rage—I have none.  
Would that I had thorn(s) of thorn-bushes for the war!  
I will march against it,  
I will set it on fire all together!

**Isaiah 28:6**, in the time of judgment on Ephraim and Jerusalem, YHWH’s gifts will include:

and for a spirit of justice,  
for the one sitting over the justice(-system),  
and for strength of those turning back war at (the) gate!

**Isaiah 30:32**, a description of what is going to happen to Assyria:

And every appointed passing of a staff,  
Which YHWH will cause to rest upon him,  
with tambourines and with stringed instrument  
and with wars (of a) swinging (arm),  
He fought against them.

**Isaiah 36:5**, Rab-Shakeh, speaking for Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, says to Hezekiah:

I said, Surely a word of lips (is) counsel and might for the war.  
Now, upon whom did you trust, that you rebelled against me?

**Isaiah 41:12**, YHWH’s people need not fear their armed enemies:

You (singular) shall seek them,  
and you will not find them—  
men of your contention.  
They will be like nothing,  
and like ceasing,  
men of your war.

**Isaiah 42:13**,

YHWH like the mighty man goes forth,  
like a man of wars he rouses zeal.  
He raises a shout, also roars;  
against His enemies He shows Himself a mighty One.

**Isaiah 42:25,**

And He poured out upon him His anger,  
and strength of war.  
And it set him on fire all around, and he didn't know (it);  
and it burned him, and he did not take (it) to heart.



8. Occurrences of the Title **בֵּית יַעֲקֹב** “House of Jacob” in the Hebrew Bible:

**Genesis 46:27,**

And Joseph; sons / children who were born to him in Egypt,  
two innermost-beings;  
all the innermost-being(s) belonging to Jacob’s house  
that came to Egypt, seventy.

**Exodus 19:3,**

And Moses went up to the God;  
and YHWH called to him from the mountain, saying:  
In this way you shall speak to Jacob’s House,  
and you shall declare to Israel’s children.  
(Here “Jacob’s House” and “Israel’s children” are parallel to each other, i.e., synonyms.)

**Isaiah 2:5-6,**

5 House of Jacob, come!  
And we will walk in YHWH’s light!  
6 Because You rejected Your people, House of Jacob;  
because they were filled from (the) east—  
both sooth-sayers like the Philistines,  
and with children of foreigners they strike (hands / agreements).

**Isaiah 8:17,**

And I will wait for the YHWH,  
the One hiding His face / appearance from Jacob’s house;  
and I will wait for Him.

**Isaiah 10:20,**

And it will happen on that day,  
a remnant of Israel will not be added again;  
and (the) house of Jacob’s escaped remnant (synonym)  
(will not) support itself upon its slayer.

**Isaiah 14:1,**

Because YHWH will have compassion for Jacob,  
and He will choose Israel again.  
And He will cause them to rest upon their land / ground,  
And the temporary resident will join them,  
and they will be attached to Jacob’s house.

**Isaiah 29:22,**

Therefore in this way YHWH spoke to Jacob's household,  
Who redeemed Abraham,  
Now Jacob will not be ashamed,  
and now his face / appearance will not grow pale.

**Isaiah 46:3,**

Listen to Me, House of Jacob,  
and (the) remnant of Israel's house,

the ones burdening from (the) womb,  
the ones carried from (the) womb (synonym):

**Isaiah 48:1,**

Hear / listen to this, House of Jacob--  
those who were called by name, Israel,  
and from Judah's waters they came forth--  
those swearing by YHWH's name,  
and by Israel's God they make memorials--  
not in true-faithfulness,  
and not in right-relationship.

**Isaiah 58:1,**

Cry out with loud voice--  
you shall not be silent!  
Like the ram's horn trumpet, raise your voice high!  
And declare to My people their rebellion,  
and to Jacob's house, their missing-of-the-mark!

**Jeremiah 2:4,**

Hear YHWH's word, House of Jacob,  
and all clans of (the) House of Israel!  
(Here, occurring in parallel, it is obvious that House of Jacob is the same as clans of the House of Israel.)

**Jeremiah 5:20,**

Declare this in (the) House of Jacob,  
and cause it to be heard in Judah, saying:

**Ezekiel 20:5,**

And you (singular) shall say to them,  
In this way my Lord YHWH spoke,  
On (the) day of My choosing Israel,  
and I lifted My hand to (the) House of Jacob's descendant(s);  
and I was made known to them in Egypt-land.  
And I lifted My hand to them, saying,  
I (am) YHWH your God!

**Amos 3:13,**

Listen, you people, and bear testimony against (the) House of Jacob!  
–It is a saying of my Lord YHWH, God of the Armies!

**Amos 9:8,**

Look—my Lord YHWH's eyes are against the kingdom that has missed-the-mark!  
And I will exterminate it from upon the face of the earth!  
Howbeit, I will not utterly exterminate the House of Jacob!  
–A saying of YHWH.

**Obadiah 1:17-18,**

17 And on Mount Zion there will be an escaped remnant,  
and it will be set-apart;  
And Jacob's House, they will inherit their possessions.  
18 And Jacob's House will be a fire,  
and Joseph's House for a flame,  
and Esau's House for stubble.  
And they will burn among them, and devour them  
and there will not be a remnant to Esau's House--  
because YHWH spoke!

**Micah 2:7,**

Is it said / asked, House of Jacob,  
Will YHWH's Spirit been shortened?  
If these (are) His works / deeds,  
will not My words do good  
with the one walking uprightly?

**Micah 3:9,**

Hear this, heads / chiefs of Jacob's House,  
and rulers of Israel's House,  
the ones abhorring justice,  
and everything that is upright, they twist / make crooked!

**Psalms 114:1-2,**

- 1 When Israel went forth from Egypt,  
Jacob's House from a stammering people,
- 2 Judah was / became for His set-apart one,  
Israel for His rule!

In the **New Testament**, see:

**Luke 1:33**, where Mary magnifies the Lord because of the Child to Whom she will give birth, saying among many other things,

And He will reign as King over the House of Jacob into the ages;  
and of His kingdom there will not be an end!

**Acts 7:46**, where Stephen is reviewing the history of Israel, and says concerning King David:

who found favor before the God,  
and asked to find a tent / dwelling for Jacob's House.

## 9. Passages in Isaiah Promising Light / Revelation to Israel, and Beyond

### Isaiah 9:1<sup>Heb</sup> / 2<sup>Eng</sup>

The people, the ones walking in the darkness  
saw a great light;  
those living in a land of death's shadow,  
light shined upon them.

### Isaiah 19:17-24<sup>Heb</sup> / 18-25<sup>Eng</sup>

- 17/18 And the land of Judah will become a reeling for Egypt;  
everyone who is caused to remember it, will fear Him,  
from before YHWH of Armies counsel / purpose,  
which He is counseling / purposing concerning it.
- 18/19 In that day  
there will be five cities in Egypt-land  
speaking Canaan's tongue,  
and swearing to the YHWH of Armies.  
The City of the Destruction it will be called to one (of them).
- 19/20 In that day  
there will be an altar to the YHWH in (the) midst of Egypt-land,  
and a pillar next to its border, for the YHWH.
- 20/21 And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the YHWH of Armies in Egypt-land;  
because they will cry out to YHWH from before oppressors;  
and He will send to them a deliverer / savior and one contending,  
and he will deliver (synonym) them.
- 21/22 And YHWH will be known to Egypt;  
and Egyptians will know YHWH in that day;  
and they will serve (with) sacrifice and offering;  
and they will make a vow to the YHWH,  
and they will keep (it).
- 22/23 And YHWH will strike Egyptians,  
striking and healing;  
and they will return as far as YHWH;  
and He will be supplicated by them,  
and He will heal them.
- 23/24 On that day  
there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria,  
and Assyria will come into Egypt,  
and Egypt into Assyria;  
and Egyptians will serve Assyria.
- 24/25 In that day,  
Israel will be a third one to Egypt and to Assyria—  
a blessing in the earth's midst,
- 25/26 which YHWH of Armies will bless, saying  
Blessed (is) My people Egypt,

and product of My hands, Assyria,  
and My inheritance, Israel!

**Isaiah 24:14-16,**

- 14 These will lift up their voice;  
they will give a ringing cry at YHWH's exaltation;  
they cried shrilly from (the) sea / west.
- 15 Therefore in the lights / east  
honor YHWH!  
In the coasts / regions of the sea  
YHWH, God of Israel's name!
- 16 From the earth's extremity we heard songs--  
beauty / honor to the rightly-related one / Rightly-Related One!  
And I said, leanness / wasting to me;  
leanness / wasting to me! Woe to me!

**Isaiah 42:10-12,**

- Sing to the YHWH a new song,  
His praise from the earth's end!  
Those going down to the sea and its fullness,  
coastlands and their inhabitants!
- 11 Let the desert and its cities lift up (their voice);  
villages (in which) Qedar lives!  
Let the inhabitants of Sela cry aloud--  
from (the) top of mountains let them cry aloud (synonym)!
- 12 Let them put glory to the YHWH,  
and His praise in the coast-lands let the declare!

**Isaiah 60:1-3,**

- Arise! Become light!  
Because your light came,  
And YHWH's glory arose over you (feminine singular)!
- 2 Because look--  
the darkness covers earth,  
and a heavy cloud (covers) peoples.  
And upon you YHWH arises,  
and His glory will be seen over you!  
And nations will walk / come to your light,  
and kings to (the) brightness of your dawning.

**Isaiah 66:18-21,**

- 18 And I...their deeds and their thoughts...  
she / it (feminine) is coming to gather all the nations and the tongues;  
and they will see My glorious radiance.

- 19 And I will place among them a sign;  
and I will send from them survivors to the nations  
Tarshish, Pul and Lud, drawers of (the) bow,  
Tubhal and Greece, the Islands that are far off,  
who did not hear My report,  
and did not see My glorious radiance;  
and they will declare My glorious radiance  
among the nations.
- 20 And they will bring all your brothers from all the nations,  
the gift to the YHWH,  
on the horses and in the chariot(s)  
and on the litters and on the mules and on the dromedary camels,  
to My set-apart mountain, Jerusalem  
—said YHWH—  
just as Israel's children will bring the gift(s) in a clean vessel  
(to the) house of YHWH.
- 21 And also from them  
I will take (some) for the priests, for the Levites,  
said YHWH.

10. Occurrences in the Hebrew Bible of the Verb שָׂפַק / סָפַק, “Slap / Clap”:

**Numbers 24:10,**

And Balaq’s anger burned against Balaam,  
and he slapped his hands,  
and Balaq said to Balaam,  
I called you to curse my enemies,  
this / these three times!  
(The slapping of Balaq’s hands is a sign of his frustration / anger with Balaam’s failure to  
curse his enemies.)

**Isaiah 2:6,**

Because You rejected Your people, Israel’s House;  
because they were filled from (the) east—  
both fortune-tellers / interpreters of omens like the Philistines,  
and with children of foreigners they clap / strike (hands).  
(We take this to mean “make agreements with,” like our modern “shake hands.”)

**Jeremiah 31:18-19,**

18 I certainly heard Ephraim bemoaning himself:  
You disciplined me and I was disciplined;  
like an untrained calf,  
He returned me, and I returned.  
Because You (are) YHWH my God!  
18 Because after my returning, I was comforted;  
and after my learning, I slapped upon (my) thigh.  
I was ashamed and also I was humiliated,  
Because I bore (the) reproach of my youth!  
(Here we take the slapping of the thigh as a sign of shame and humiliation.)

**Jeremiah 48:26,** Moab is cut off and broken, and YHWH commands:

Make him (Moab) drunk,  
because he magnified (himself) against YHWH;  
and Moab will clap / slap in his vomit,  
and he will be for laughing-stock, even he!  
(We take the clap / slap to be a sign of Moab’s frustration in its failure.)

**Ezekiel 21:17-19,** (a difficult text to translate):

17 Cry and howl, son of a human  
because it (feminine singular) happened to / against My people;  
it (is) to / against all leaders of Israel,



Those being thrown to a sword were with My people;  
 therefore clap / slap (your) thigh!  
 18 Because (it is) a testing.  
     And what if also a rod?  
 There will be no rejecting / refusing!  
     —a saying of my Lord YHWH!  
 19 And you, son of a human, prophesy!  
     And smite / clap (synonym) hand to hand,  
 And double over a sword, three (times)--  
     it is a sword those pierced,  
 a sword of the great pierced person  
     the one surrounding them!  
 (We take this clapping of hands to be a symbolic action by the prophet Ezekiel, signifying  
 on-coming destruction.)

**Job 34:26,**

(The) bottom of wicked people--  
     He slapped them,  
 in a place of those seeing...  
 (We take this to mean an embarrassing public slap.)

**Job 34:37,** where Elihu is speaking concerning Job:

Because he adds upon his missing-of-the-mark,  
     transgression;  
 among us,  
     he claps (his hands),  
 and he multiplies his words to the El.  
 (We take this clapping of hands to be an expression of Job's pride and obstinacy.)

**Lamentations 2:15,**

They clapped (their) hands over you,  
     all those passing by;  
 they hissed and shook their head  
     at (the) Daughter of Jerusalem,  
 (saying:) Is this the City which they said is  
     a perfection of beauty,  
 a rejoicing for all the earth?  
 (We take this clapping of hands to be an expression of mockery directed at the City of  
 Jerusalem, now having been destroyed by the Babylonians.)

Obviously, the clapping or slapping of hands is a symbolic gesture, with various possible  
 meanings, from a sign of frustration and anger, to a sign of agreement, to a sign of shame and  
 humiliation, to a sign of frustration, to a sign of on-coming destruction, to a symbol of embaras-  
 sment, to an expression of pride and obstinacy, or to an expression of mockery.

11. **Mention of Horses in the Book of Isaiah**

**Isaiah 2:7,**

And his land / earth was filled (with) silver and gold,  
and there is no end to his treasures;  
and his land was filled with horses,  
and there is no end to his chariots.

**Isaiah 5:28**, the enemy to whom YHWH has whistled, calling them to punish Judah, is described:

whose arrows (are) sharp,  
and all their bows bent / strung;  
his horses' hoofs seemed like the flint,  
and his (chariot-) wheels like the whirlwind / storm!

**Isaiah 30:16,**

And you said, No—because upon horse(s) we will flee;  
for this reason you will flee,  
and (you said), Upon a swift (horse) we will ride;  
for this reason your pursuers will be swift(er)!

**Isaiah 31:1,**

Alas—those going down (to) Egypt for help;  
upon horses they are leaning,  
and they trusted in chariot(s),  
because (they are) exceedingly great,  
and upon horsemen,  
because they are strong.  
And they did not look to (the) Set-apart On of Israel,  
and to YHWH they did not seek!

**Isaiah 31:3,**

And Egypt (is) human,  
and not El / God;  
and their horses (are) flesh,  
and not Spirit;  
and YHWH will stretch out His hand,  
and one helping will stumble,  
and one helped will fall;  
and together all of them will be finished!

**Isaiah 36:8**, Rabshakeh, Sennacherib's commander, says to Hezekiah (through his representatives):

And now, make an exchange now (synonym) with my Lord, the King of Assyria;  
and I will give to you two thousand horses,  
if you are able to give for yourself horsemen upon them.

**Isaiah 43:17,**

the One bringing forth chariot and horse,  
army and mighty (men / warriors);  
together they will lie down,  
they will not arise;  
they were extinguished;  
like the flax-wick they were finished.

**Isaiah 63:13,**

(Where is the) One leading them in / through (the) ocean-depths,  
like the horse in the wilderness, they would not stumble?

**Isaiah 66:20,**

And they will bring all your brothers from all the nations,  
the gift to the YHWH,  
on the horses and in the chariot(s)  
and on the litters and on the mules and on the dromedary camels,  
to My set-apart mountain, Jerusalem  
—said YHWH—  
just as Israel's children will bring the gift(s) in a clean vessel  
(to the) house of YHWH.

In these passages, it becomes obvious that both Egypt and Assyria were known for their use of horses in warfare.

12. **Passages in the Greek Translation of the Hebrew Bible  
Using χειροποίητος, “Hand-made”**

**Leviticus 26:1,**

You (plural) shall not make for yourselves hand-mades,  
nor carved things,  
nor shall you raise up for yourselves a pillar / monument  
nor shall you place a stone marker in your land  
to worship it.

I, I am (the) Lord, the God of yours!

(The plural adjective χειροποίητα translates the Hebrew אֱלִילִים, “worthless Gods,” “idols.”)

**Leviticus 26:30,**

And I will lay waste the pillars / monuments of yours;  
and I will root out / destroy utterly the wooden hand-mades of yours;  
and I will place your dead bodies upon the dead bodies of the idols of yours;  
and My innermost-being will be angry with you people!

(The plural adjective χειροποίητα translates the Hebrew תַּמְנִיכִם, “the incense-altars of yours (plural).”)

**Isaiah 2:18,**

And the hand-mades, all (of them) they will hide / conceal.

(The plural adjective χειροποίητα translates the Hebrew אֱלִילִים, “worthless Gods,” “idols.”)

**Isaiah 10:11,**

For in the same way I did to Samaria and to its hand-mades,  
in this way I will also do to Jerusalem and to its idols!

(The plural adjective χειροποίητα translates the Hebrew אֱלִילֵיהָ “its empty, worthless things.”)

**Isaiah 16:12,**

And it will be for shaming you,  
that Moab labored upon the high places  
and she (Moab) will enter into her hand-mades in order to pray,  
and she will not be able to deliver him.

(The plural adjective χειροποίητα translates the Hebrew מִקְדָּשָׁו “his sanctuary.”)

**Isaiah 19:1,**

A vision of Egypt:

Look—Lord is seated upon a light / nimble cloud;  
and He will come into Egypt,  
and the hand-mades of Egypt will be shaken from His face / appearance;  
and their heart will be overcome within them!

(The plural adjective χειροποίητα translates the Hebrew אֱלִילִי “empty, worthless things.”)

**Isaiah 21:9**, a watchman upon a tower reports what he sees:

And look, he comes a (chariot-)driver with two (horses);  
and answering he said,  
Babylon has fallen,  
and all its glories,  
and all its hand-mades were crushed in the earth!

(The plural adjective χειροποίητα translates the Hebrew פְּסִילֵי אֱלֹהֶיהָ “idols of her Gods.”)

**Isaiah 31:7**, the time of Assyria’s fall is described:

Because in that day,  
the people will deny / renounce their hand-mades,  
the silver things and the gold things  
which their hands made.

(The plural adjective χειροποίητα translates the Hebrew אֱלִילִי “empty, worthless things.”)

**Isaiah 46:6**,

The ones gathering together gold out of a sack,  
and silver by weight  
place (them) in a scale,  
and having hired a gold-smith,  
they made hand-mades,  
and bowing, they worshiped them.

(The plural adjective χειροποίητα translates the Hebrew אֵל “a supreme God.”)

**Daniel 5:23**,

King (Belteshazzar), you made a feast for your friends,  
and you drank wine;  
and the vessels from the house / temple of the living God were brought to you,  
and you (plural) drank in / from them, you and your nobles;  
and you (plural) praised all the idols, the hand-made ones by the people,  
and you did not bless the living God.  
And your spirit (is) in His hand,  
and your kingdom, He gave to you--

and you did not bless Him,  
nor praise Him!

(The plural adjective χειροποίητα translates the Hebrew אֱלֹהֵי כֶסֶף וְזָהָב, “Gods [of silver and gold].”)

**Daniel 6:28**, Darius the Persian vows to worship the God of Daniel:

I Darius will be worshiping and serving Him  
all my days;  
for the idols, the hand-mades, cannot save,  
as the God redeemed / rescued the Daniel!  
(Again the plural adjective refers to idols; there is no Hebrew original.)

**Judith 8:18**,

Because there has not arisen in our generations,  
neither is there in the present day,  
neither a tribe, nor a family nor a people nor a city among us,  
who (plural) worship Gods, hand-made ones,  
just as it happened in the earlier / first days.  
(We have no Hebrew original.)

**Wisdom of Solomon 14:8**,

But then the hand-made one (God) is cursed,  
it and the one who made it.  
Because he indeed made (it);  
and then the corruptible thing was named a God!  
(Here the singular adjective refers to an idol; we have no Hebrew original.)

13. **Passages in the Hebrew Bible with יוֹם יְהוָה, “Day of YHWH”  
and Passages with similar use of “Day”**

**Isaiah 13:6,**

Howl (plural imperative)!

Because YHWH's day (יוֹם יְהוָה) is near!  
Like destruction from Shaddai it is coming!

**Isaiah 13:9,**

Look—YHWH's day (יוֹם יְהוָה) came / is coming--  
cruel, and fury and heat of anger--  
to make the earth / land into a waste,  
and its sins He will exterminate from it! Compare **13:13**, “the day of His fierce anger.”

**Ezekiel 13:5,**

You (plural) did not go up into the breaches (in the wall),  
and walled up a wall above / for Israel's House,  
for the standing in the war,  
on YHWH's day (בְּיוֹם יְהוָה).

**Joel 1:15,**

Alas for the day!

Because YHWH's day (יוֹם יְהוָה) (is) near,  
and like destruction from Shaddai it will come!  
(Note the similar sounds in Hebrew, **shodh mishaddai**, “destruction from Shaddai.”)

**Joel 2:1,**

Blow (plural imperative) a horn in Zion!  
And raise a shout in My set-apart mountain!  
Let all inhabitants of the land quake / tremble!  
Because YHWH's Day (יוֹם יְהוָה) came / is coming,  
because (it is) near!

**Joel 2:11,**

And YHWH gave / sounded His voice before His army,  
because exceedingly great (is) His camp;  
because mighty is the one doing His word.  
Because great (is) YHWH's day (יוֹם יְהוָה),

and exceedingly fearsome--  
and who will endure it?

**Joel 3:4<sup>Heb</sup> / 2:31<sup>Eng</sup>**

The sun will be changed to darkness,  
and the moon to blood,  
before (the) coming of YHWH's day (יִּוֹם יְהוָה),  
the great one and the fearsome one!

**Joel 4:14<sup>Heb</sup> / 3:14<sup>Eng</sup>,**

Crowds, crowds in (the) valley of the decision--  
because YHWH's day (יִּוֹם יְהוָה) (is) near,  
in (the) valley of the decision.

**Amos 5:18,**

Woe--to those who are longing for YHWH's day (יִּוֹם יְהוָה)!  
What kind of day of YHWH will this be for you?  
It is darkness, and not light!

**Amos 5:20,**

Is not YHWH's day (יִּוֹם יְהוָה) darkness, and not light?  
And gloomy, and no brightness to it?

**Obadiah 15,**

Because YHWH's day (יִּוֹם יְהוָה) (is) near,  
upon all the nations!  
Just as you did, it will be done to you--  
your dealing will return on your head!

**Zephaniah 1:7,**

Be silent from before my Lord YHWH,  
because YHWH's day (יִּוֹם יְהוָה) (is) near;  
because YHWH prepared a sacrifice,  
He set-apart His called ones / invited guests.

**Zephaniah 1:14 (twice),**

A great day of YHWH (יִּוֹם יְהוָה) (is) near,



near, and hurrying exceedingly!  
A voice (is) near, and hurrying exceedingly!  
YHWH's day (יְהוָה יוֹם) (is) bitter,  
a mighty man is roaring there!

**Malachi 3:23**<sup>Heb</sup> / **4:5**<sup>Eng</sup>,

Look—I am sending forth for you people Elijah the prophet,  
before (the) coming of YHWH's day (יְהוָה יוֹם),  
the great one and the fearsome one.

See also the following passages, where slight differences occur:

**Isaiah 2:12**,

Because YHWH of Armies has a day (לַיהוָה יוֹם, 'a day to the YHWH of Armies')  
against all pride and exaltation,  
and against everything lifted up--  
and it will be brought low.

**Isaiah 2:17** (בְּיוֹם הַהוֹיָא), "on the day, the that one", **2:20** (same); **3:7** (same); **18** (same), **4:1** (same); **5:30** (same; a day of darkness and distress); **7:18** (same), **20** (same), **21** (same), **23** (same);

**Isaiah 10:3**,

What will you do for / on the day of visitation (לְיוֹם פְּקֻדָּה),  
in the ruin that will come from far?...

**Isaiah 13:13**, where YHWH is depicted as saying:

Therefore I will make the heavens tremble,  
and the earth will be shaken out of its place,

בְּעִבְרַת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
וּבְיוֹם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ:

at the wrath of YHWH of Armies,  
in the day of His fierce anger!

**Isaiah 22:5**,

Because a day (יּוֹם) of tumult,  
and treading down,

and confusion,

belongs to the Lord of mine, YHWH of Armies (לְאֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת)...

**Isaiah 24:21,**

On that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא), YHWH will punish the host of heaven in heaven,  
and the kings of the earth on the earth!

**Isaiah 27:1,**

In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא), YHWH with His hard and great and strong sword,  
will punish Leviathan, the fleeing serpent...

**Isaiah 34:8,**

Because YHWH has a day of vengeance (יּוֹם נִקְמָה לַיהוָה),  
a year of repayment for Zion's controversy.

**Isaiah 47:9,**

These two things shall come to you  
in a moment, in one day (בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד):  
the loss of children and widowhood  
shall come upon you in full measure...

**Isaiah 63:4a, 6** where YHWH is depicted as saying,

For the day of vengeance (יּוֹם נִקְמָה) was in My heart...  
I trampled down the peoples in My anger;  
I made them drunk in My wrath,  
and I poured out their life-blood on the earth!

We note that the phrase “day of YHWH” does not occur in **chapters 40-66**.

**Jeremiah 46:10,**

And that day (הַיּוֹם הַהוּא) (is) for the Lord of mine, YHWH of Armies--  
a day of vengeance (יּוֹם נִקְמָה), for avenging Himself on His foes.  
And a sword will devour, and will be satisfied,  
and will drink fully from their blood.  
Because (there is) a sacrifice for the Lord of mine, YHWH of Armies,  
in a north land, by Euphrates River.

Ezekiel 7, throughout the entire chapter: various phrases are used, all with reference to “the day”:

- 2b קֵץ בָּא הַקֵּץ עַל־ (אַרְבַּעַת) [אַרְבַּע] כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ:  
An end! The end came / is coming upon the four corners of the land!
- 3 עַתָּה הַקֵּץ עָלֶיךָ...  
Now the end (is) upon you...
- 5 רָעָה אַחַת רָעָה הִנֵּה בָאָה  
One disaster / evil, disaster/ evil—behold, it came / is coming!
- 6 קֵץ בָּא בָּא הַקֵּץ  
הַקֵּץ אֵלֶיךָ הִנֵּה בָאָה:  
An end came / is coming; the end came / is coming;  
it has awakened to you; behold, it came / is coming!
- 7 בָּא הַעֵת  
...קָרֹב הַיּוֹם מִהוֹמָה  
...The time has come / is coming;  
the day is near--tumult...
- 10 הִנֵּה הַיּוֹם...  
הִנֵּה בָאָה  
Behold, the day!  
Behold, it came / is coming...
- 12 בָּא הַעֵת  
הַגֵּיעַ הַיּוֹם  
The time came / is coming;  
the day has arrived...

Ezekiel 30:2b-3,

- 2b הַיְלִילוּ...  
הָהָ לַיּוֹם:  
...Wail,  
Alas for the day!
- 3 כִּי־קָרֹב יוֹם  
וְקָרֹב יוֹם לַיהוָה  
יוֹם עֲנָן  
עַתָּה גּוֹיִם יִהְיֶה:  
Because a day (is) near,  
and near (is) a day for / belonging to the YHWH;

a day of cloud(s),  
a time of nations it will be!

**Zechariah 14:1,**

הִנֵּה יוֹם־בָּא לַיהוָה  
וְחֵלֶק שְׁלָלָךְ בְּקִרְבְּךָ:

Look—a day came / is coming for / belonging to the YHWH;  
and your spoil will be divided in your midst.

**Zephaniah 1:8,**

וְהָיָה בְּיוֹם זִבְחַ יְהוָה  
וּפְקַדְתִּי עַל־הַשָּׂרִים

And it will happen on a day of YHWH's sacrifice--  
and I will visit (to bring punishment) upon the princes / nobles...

**Zephaniah 2:2-3,**

2 בְּטָרִם לֵדַת חֵק  
כְּמוֹן עֵבֶר יוֹם  
בְּטָרִם לֹא־יָבֹא עֲלֵיכֶם חֲרוֹן אַף־יְהוָה  
בְּטָרִם לֹא־יָבֹא עֲלֵיכֶם יוֹם אַף־יְהוָה:

Before a decree's being born,  
like chaff a day passed over.

Before the burning anger of YHWH does not come upon you (plural),  
before YHWH's day of anger does not come upon you.

3 בִּקְשׂוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כָּל־עֲנוּי הָאָרֶץ  
אֲשֶׁר מִשְׁפָּטוֹ פָּעִלוּ  
בִּקְשׂוּ־צֶדֶק בִּקְשׂוּ עֲנוּהָ  
אוּלֵי תִסְתְּרוּ בְּיוֹם אַף־יְהוָה:

Seek (imperative plural) YHWH, all poor / afflicted people of the land / earth,  
who did His justice!

Seek righteousness, seek humility!

Perhaps you may be hidden on a day of YHWH's anger!

**Lamentations 2:21-22,**

21 שִׁכְבוּ לָאָרֶץ חוּצוֹת נְעָר וּזְקָן  
בְּתוֹלְתֵי וּבַחֲוָרֵי נִפְלוּ בַחָרֵב

הִרְגַתְּ בַיּוֹם אֶפְדָּ  
טַבַּחַתְּ לֹא חַמְלַתְּ:

They lay on the ground—(on the) streets—youth and elderly;  
my young women / virgins and my choice young men fell by the sword;  
You murdered in a day of Your anger,  
You slaughtered, You did not spare!

22 תִּקְרָא כִּיּוֹם מוֹעֵד  
מִגּוֹרֵי מִסְבִּיב  
וְלֹא הָיָה בַיּוֹם אֶפְיָהוּהָ  
פְּלִיט וְשָׂרִיד  
אֲשֶׁר-טַבַּחַתִּי וְרַבִּיתִי  
אִיבֵי כָלָם:

You call forth / summon like a festival-day  
My terrors all around,  
and there was not on a day of YHWH's anger  
an escapee and / or a survivor!  
Those whom I taught to walk, and raised,  
my enemy finished them!

But it is important to add that the word “day” is also used in the **Book of Isaiah** to describe YHWH's acts in history bringing salvation and deliverance to His people. See:

**Isaiah 4:2,**

In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) the branch of YHWH shall be glorious and beautiful,  
and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel.

**Isaiah 10:20,**

In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Israel  
will no more lean on him who struck them,  
but will lean on YHWH, the Set-apart One of Israel in truth.

**Isaiah 10:27,**

And in that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא), (Assyria's) burden will depart from your shoulder...

**Isaiah 11:10-11,**

10 In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) the root of Jesse,  
who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—

of him shall the nations inquire,  
and his resting-place shall be glorious.  
11 He will raise a signal for the nations  
and will assemble the banished of Israel,  
and gather the dispersed of Judah...

**Isaiah 12:1,**

You (singular) will say in that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא),  
I will give thanks to You, O YHWH,  
for though You were angry with me,  
Your anger turned away,  
that You might comfort me.

**Isaiah 12:4,**

And you (plural) will say in that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא),  
give thanks to the YHWH,  
call upon His name,  
make known His name among the peoples,  
proclaim that His name is exalted.

**Isaiah 17:7,**

In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) man will look to his Maker,  
and his eyes will look on the Set-apart One of Israel.

**Isaiah 19:18,**

In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) there will be five cities in the land of Egypt  
that speak the language of Canaan  
and swear allegiance to the YHWH of Armies...

**Isaiah 19:19,**

In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) there will be an altar to the YHWH  
in the midst of the land of Egypt,  
and a pillar to the YHWH at its border.

**Isaiah 19:21,**

And the YHWH will make Himself known to the Egyptians,  
and the Egyptians will know the YHWH in that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא)  
and worship with sacrifice and offering.

**Isaiah 19:23,**

In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria,  
and Assyria will come into Egypt,  
and Egypt into Assyria,  
and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.

**Isaiah 19:24,**

In that day Israel (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) will be the third with Egypt and Assyria,  
a blessing in the midst of the earth.

**Isaiah 25:9,**

It will be said on that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא),  
Behold this is our God!  
We have waited for Him--  
let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation!

**Isaiah 26:1,**

In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא), this song will be sung in the land of Judah:  
We have a strong city,  
He sets up salvation  
as walls and bulwarks!

**Isaiah 27:2,**

In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא),  
a pleasant vineyard--  
sing of it!

**Isaiah 27:12,**

In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא), from the River Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt,  
YHWH will thresh out the grain,  
and you will be gleaned one by one,  
O people of Israel!

**Isaiah 27:13,**

And in that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא),  
a great trumpet will be blown,  
and those who were lost in the land of Assyria,

and those who were driven out from the land of Egypt  
will come and worship to the YHWH  
on the holy mountain at Jerusalem!

**Isaiah 28:5-6,**

- 5 In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) YHWH of Armies will be a crown of glory,  
and a diadem of beauty,  
to the remnant of His people;  
6 and a spirit / Spirit of justice  
to him who sits in judgment;  
and strength  
to those who turn back the battle at the gate.

**Isaiah 29:18,**

In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) the deaf shall hear  
the words of a book;  
and out of their gloom and darkness  
the eyes of the blind shall see.

**Isaiah 30:23,**

...In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) your livestock will graze in large pastures...

**Isaiah 30:26,**

Moreover, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun,  
and the light of the sun will be seven-fold,  
as the light of seven days,  
in a day (בַּיּוֹם) when the YHWH binds up the brokenness of His people,  
and heals the wounds inflicted by His blow.

**Isaiah 49:8,**

In this way YHWH spoke:  
In a time of favor (בְּעֵת רְצוֹן) I have answered you;  
and in a day of salvation (בְּיּוֹם יְשׁוּעָה) I have helped you...

**Isaiah 52:6,**

...therefore in that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) they shall know that it is Who speak:  
Here am I!



Some interpreters of the **Hebrew Bible**, longing to hear a message of peace based on the love of God, turn away from passages which depict the stern judgment of YHWH coming upon sinners, especially upon Northern Israel and Judah, culminating in their devastating defeat and being carried away into Assyrian and Babylonian captivity. They want to eliminate YHWH's visitation to punish from the Bible, or at least from their biblical theologies. They are much more satisfied with the biblical teaching of God's love and forgiveness of sinners!

However, for the **Book of Isaiah**, while YHWH is depicted as Savior and Redeemer--He is also depicted as humanity's Judge, Who executes judgment on sin and sinners, including His sinful people Israel / Judah on "His Day!"

And so we say, Yes, Isaiah holds that YHWH's ultimate goal is the salvation of all humanity (**Isaiah 25:6-9**); His judgment of wrath is intended to bring humanity to repentance and salvation. But nonetheless, throughout history, His day of wrath has come in the past, and continues to come in every present. Isaiah joins his voice with other prophets to proclaim the coming of YHWH's day, His day of judgment on human sinfulness.

I was born as the United States was coming out of the First World War, and because of the harshness of the Treaty of Versailles at the close of that war, Hitler's Germany was leading the world into the Second World War--to be followed by wars in Viet-Nam and Korea, and the "Cold War--to be followed by wars in the Balkans, and Israel, and Iraq, and Syria, and Afghanistan... While we sang about love and peace in our churches, we also sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," the words of which rang true as we sent our sons and brothers into battle, far too many of them losing their lives. Today I feel that our American and world history have witnessed to the truth of YHWH's "day" of vengeance and punishment on human evil. But our history also has witnessed to the truth of YHWH's salvation and deliverance, as evil dictators have been overwhelmed, and oppressed peoples have been delivered.

Humanity, proclaims the **Book of Isaiah**, will ultimately be saved--all peoples and nations! But the salvation will come following YHWH's "day"--a day of destructive judgment upon human sinfulness that continually comes in human history.

What do you think? Can we, and should we, try to eliminate the biblical motif of YHWH's Day of Judgment?

