

Isaiah Chapter 24, Hebrew Text with Translation and Footnotes
Isaiah's Puzzling, Hope-Filled, Probing Vision of Universal Divine Victory--
The World Will Be Judged, But YHWH Will Reign In Zion Forever!¹

¹There are eighteen end-notes for **chapter 24**: (1) Occurrences of the Verb **נָבַל** “to Sink / Droop” in the Book of Isaiah; (2) Occurrences of the Noun **תִּבְלָה**, “world,” in Isaiah; (3) The Phrase **בְּרִית עוֹלָם**, “Covenant of Long-Lasting Time” in the Hebrew Bible; (4) Amos 9:7; (5) Biblical Statements Concerning YHWH’s Burning Enemies; (6) The Party’s Over—Judgment Has Come!; (7) Occurrences of the Adjectival Noun **תִּדְרוֹ** in the Hebrew Bible; (8) Passages Using the Root **גָּלָה** for Going into Exile / Captivity; (9) Isaiah 24:14-16 in the Greek Translation and the Aramaic Targum; (10) YHWH’s **גִּאּוֹן** Exaltation / Majesty in the Hebrew Bible; (11) **אֲרָצוֹת הַיָּם**, “Coasts / Regions of the Sea(s),” in the Hebrew Bible; (12) Occurrences of the Noun **צִבְיָה** Where It Means Not “Gazelle,” but “Beauty,” “Honor,” or “Ornament” in the Hebrew Bible; (13) The Phrase, **אֵי לִי**, “Woe to Me!” (or “to You, or to Us,” etc.) in the Hebrew Bible; (14) The Phrase **יוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ**, “One Inhabiting the Land / Earth,” in the Hebrew Bible; and (15) Passages in the Book of Isaiah Where the Noun **גְּמוּלָה**, “Height,” Occurs.

It will quickly become obvious in our footnotes, how uncertain the interpretation of this chapter is—how different the various interpretations, as scholars attempt to state the meaning of each verse in its context. We say that in the light of the biblical teaching concerning the nature of prophetic visions, this is what we should have expected!

Slotki states concerning **chapters 24-27** that “These four chapters form a distinct group of oracles, strongly marked by their general apocalyptic [describing the complete destruction of the world] character. They speak of God’s desolating judgment of the world, the terrors of that great day, the suppression of the power of evil in heaven and on earth, the consequent blessings upon Israel and humanity, the abolition of death forever and the wiping away of tears from all faces.” (P. 110)

Gray, entitles **chapters 24-27** “An Apocalypse of Judgment on the World, and of Yahweh’s reign and glory.” (P. 397)

Gray gives an overview of these chapters as follows: “In **chapters 1-23** we have in the forefront the particular circumstances or fates of definite and particular nations—Jewish or foreign,” while in “**chapters 24-27** the future both of judgment and of promise that awaits the world at large [but is this the case? Is not Moab singled out in these chapters, and is not Judah constantly at the fore, along with the City of Jerusalem?]. We pass from prophecy to apocalypse.

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“The contents of these chapters, very briefly described, are as follows: Yahweh is about to visit the world in judgment, and His judgment will culminate in the punishment and imprisonment, with a view to subsequent and final judgment, of the ‘host of the height’ and the kings of the earth. He will Himself become universal King and Lord, reigning gloriously from Jerusalem (**chapter 24**); and at His accession He will give a feast in Mount Zion to all the peoples of the world—the subjects of Himself as universal Lord; victorious over all enemies (**24:21**)...

“He will also destroy death and, under His rule, there will be no mourning. In particular, He will remove the reproach which His people the Jews have been suffering (**25:6-8**). Between the account of Yahweh’s accession and coronation feast is inserted (**25:1-5**) a song in which the (Jewish) community, hitherto poor and helpless, celebrates Yahweh’s victorious career, which has rescued it, and must exact homage from the ‘strong people’ and the city of ‘the awe-inspiring’ [but where in the text is the feast identified as a ‘coronation feast’? And where are the Jews mentioned? And is not this the song of an individual rather than of a community?]...

“Another song (**25:9-12**), introduced as such by an introductory formula, follows the account of the coronation feast. In this [song], those who have waited for Yahweh’s salvation now express their exultation in it. This song also contains, or is followed by a section which contains a prediction of the ignominious destruction of Moab...

“A third song, introduced by a formula directing that it is to be sung in the land of Judah, follows in **26:1-19**. This song contrasts Jerusalem [however, ‘Jerusalem’ is not mentioned in **chapters 25** or **26**], as Yahweh will then have made it, in its strength, with the ‘city (now) set on high,’ which Yahweh will then have abased. It refers to the loyalty of the Jews [but ‘the Jews’ are not mentioned by name in this chapter, nor anywhere else in the **Book of Isaiah!**] to Yahweh under the foreign dominion to which they have been subject, and it concludes with the prediction, rather than the mere hope, that the Jews who have died will come to life again as members of the community, whose center is the City which Yahweh will have made strong [Jerusalem is mentioned twice in **chapters 24-27**, at **24:23** and **27:13**]...

“At the end of this song comes a short section in which the writer exhorts his people to keep at home while the wrath of Yahweh goes forth to punish the inhabitants of the earth and the two Leviathans and ‘the dragon which is in the sea’ (**26:20-27:1**) [without doubt, the ancient Near-Eastern myths are referred to here]...

“Then follows another song in praise of Yahweh’s ‘delightful vineyard,’ which closes with, or is followed by, the statement that Israel shall flourish and ‘fill the face of the world with fruit’ (**27:2-6**). The connection of the following verses is loose, but they contain:

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- (1) the promise that Israel's iniquity will be purged by destroying (illegitimate) altars, Asherim and Chammanim (**27:9**), and
- (2) a description of the desolation of the fortified city of a people without understanding and without claim on its Maker for mercy (**27:10-11**).

"The entire section closes with a promise that the Jews within the ideal limits of the land of promise will be carefully (separated from the heathen?) and gathered together, and that the Jews of the dispersion in Egypt and Assyria will be summoned by a great trumpet and will come up to worship Yahweh in Jerusalem." (Pp. 327-28)

Would you sum up these four chapters in this way? How would you modify Gray's summation?

Motyer states that "The central theme (of **chapters 24-27**) is a city destroyed and a city established. The former is 'the ruined city' (**24:10**; compare **25:2, 12; 26:5; 27:10**) and the latter is referred to by location, e.g., Mount Zion (**24:23; 25:6-7, 10; 27:13**), or simply as a city or as Jerusalem (**24:23; 26:1** [no]; **27:13**)..."

"To understand **chapters 24-27** we must first see it as a single complex and then place it in the 'grand strategy' of **chapters 13-27**. In **2:2-4** a Zion hymn expressed a universal hope centered on the city as a magnet to the whole world. The companion truth, however, to the call to the nations ('Come, let us go up,' **2:3**) is a call to the Lord's people, 'Come, let us walk' (**2:5**). Though they lived in Zion they had already lost the Zion ideal and they too must come on pilgrimage back to the Lord. **Chapters 24-27** express this double pilgrimage on a grand scale." (P. 194)

Motyer outlines **chapters 24-27** as follows:

- A¹ The Lord's harvest from a destroyed world (24:1-13)
 - Destruction (1-12)
 - Gleanings (13)
- B¹ The song of the world remnant (24:14-16a)
 - C¹ The sinful world overthrown (24:16b-20)
 - D¹ The waiting world (24:21-23)
 - E¹ The song of the ruined city (25:1-5)
 - F MOUNT ZION (25:6-12)
 - E² The song of the strong city (26:1-6)
 - D² The waiting people of God (26:7-21)
 - C² Spiritual forces of evil overthrown (27:1)
- B² The song of the remnant of the people (27:2-6)
- A² The Lord's harvest from a destroyed people (27:7-13)
 - Destruction (7-11)
 - Gleanings (12-13) (Pp. 194-95)

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This a remarkable summary of **chapters 24-27**, indicating the unity of these four chapters, and relating the complex to the earlier chapters of **Isaiah**.

What do you think? Do you agree with Motyer's cyclical outline of the four chapters? Is his cyclical analysis true to the text? If these chapters are about the destruction of the world, how is it that in **verse 13** it is said "it will be left in the midst of the earth, in the midst of the peoples"? Doesn't that sound like the destruction is limited to one particular land, not to the entire world?

Does **24:14-16a** say anything about a "world remnant"? Doesn't it sound like universal praise, arising from all around the world, to the glory of YHWH?

Is not **24:16b-20** the lament of an individual (the author, i.e., Isaiah), who is speaking of the treachery and fall of a certain land over against the preceding universal song of praise to YHWH?

Is "the waiting world" a good summary of **24:21-23**? Is it not about the coming punishment of wicked people and kings? And does it not already announce YHWH's reign on Mount Zion?

Is **25:1-5** "the song of the ruined city"? Is it not much more a hymn of praise to YHWH by the unnamed individual for His mighty acts in history, overthrowing the wicked and delivering the poor?

We think **26:1-6** would be better named "The song of the spiritually strong city, built on trust in YHWH, enabling its inhabitants to trample the lofty city."

Is **25:6-12** about "MOUNT ZION"? In fact, Zion is not even mentioned, but what is emphasized is YHWH's costly banquet for all peoples, and His swallowing up of death and all its symbols, universally wiping away all tears, resulting in the nations and peoples acknowledging YHWH as their God, rejoicing in His salvation--in sharp contrast to Moab with its horrific end. We say, Surely the swallowing up of death for all peoples and nations should be emphasized in the outline, not go unmentioned!

We think the title for **26:7-21**, "The waiting people of God" is too brief to be adequate. What about the "level paths" for their feet? What about their longing for YHWH? What about YHWH's judgments teaching the world righteousness? What about the prayer for overthrow of enemies? What about the denial that the unrighteous will survive death, contradicting the claim of **25:6-12**? What about suffering as a form of "giving birth"? What about the promise of resurrection from the dead, the earth giving birth to the dead? Yes, the people of God are a "waiting people." But this passage teaches much more than just that!

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Is the title for **27:1**, “Spiritual forces of evil overthrown” enough when the text raises all sorts of questions about Near Eastern mythology with its monsters being slain by YHWH in the sea? We think not.

Motyer entitles **27:2-6** “The song of the remnant of the people,” but the word remnant does not occur there; this “song of YHWH’s vineyard” is the reversal of **Isaiah 5:1-7**; it contains a wonderful promise for Israel’s future with a universal mission. We suggest “The hope-filled song of YHWH’s vineyard.”

Motyer’s title for **27:7-13** “The Lord’s harvest from a destroyed people,” Destruction (**7-11**), Gleanings (**12-13**)” is an attempt to simplify a complicated, difficult passage, which speaks of the removal of Jacob’s guilt through suffering exile, and their removal of the worship of Canaanite Gods. It also speaks of the overthrow of the “fortified city,” with no mercy on or compassion for its people. It closes with a promise of return from exile of the people of Israel, to worship in Jerusalem.

What do you think? Can you outline these four chapters in a better way than Motyer has? Do you think his outline is really helpful? Or is it a failed attempt to simplify a variegated, enigmatic, difficult four chapters?

Oswalt states that “**Chapters 24-27** have often been called the ‘Apocalypse of Isaiah,’ because their focus is upon the worldwide triumph of God. But there is now general agreement that the material is not truly apocalyptic, however that may be defined, but more correctly eschatological [concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind]. The interest is not in triumph outside time but within time. Nor is the imagery of the arcane [understood by few; mysterious or secret], numerological [belief in the divine, mystical relationship between a number and one or more coinciding events] sort usually associated with apocalyptic...”

“Rather, the prophet is moving from the particular statements of **chapters 13-23** to a broader, more generalized statement of God’s Lordship of the earth. There is an emerging consensus that these chapters cannot be understood independently but must be understood in context with **chapters 13-23**, as indeed those chapters must be understood in context with these...”

“This view is in contrast to an earlier position which tended to see **chapters 24-27** as a self-contained entity which could be lifted out of the book without creating much dislocation of the ideas. But Delitzsch is certainly correct in his choice of the figure of a finale to describe this section. It sums up the great themes of the preceding segment and puts them in the most glorious settings. Like a finale, the chapters can be read by themselves, but their greatest contribution is made within the total piece.” (Pp. 440-41)

We largely agree with Oswalt and Delitzsch. But we insist that while some of the settings are glorious, such as the promise of universal swallowing up of death and its

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symbols, and the wiping away of all tears, and the universal mission of Israel, others are not, sharply denying this universal view and holding to eternal destruction of many!

Watts states concerning **chapters 24-27** that “In accord with the general interpretation of this [Watts’] commentary, this section is interpreted as a literary portrayal of a period (that is, the reign of Manasseh) within the era of judgment which coincides with the Mesopotamian oppression of Palestine (Assyrian and Babylonian) [but Manasseh is not mentioned in these chapters; in the entire **Book of Isaiah**, the Tribe of Manasseh is mentioned only twice, both times in **Isaiah 9:21**, while King Manasseh is not mentioned once; Assyria is mentioned only once in **chapters 24-27**, at **27:13**; and Babylon is not mentioned once. Strange, is it not, that the very person whose period is being portrayed goes unmentioned?].

“[These four chapters] portray a depth of oppression unmatched in other eras. The area (אֶרֶץ, ‘the earth / land’) is totally under the heel of the tyrant. No city (after Tyre) can resist his demands...[These chapters are] intended as a part of the great era of Assyrian power that ended the age of small states and cities in Palestine...This description fits the reign of Manasseh. In terms of sustained humiliation, Judah had never experienced anything like it before, nor would she again until the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. So the comparison to Maccabean times is apt. But the literature is prophetic and liturgical in style. Only by stretching the definition and the dating of ‘apocalyptic’ can it be called that.

“With the fall of Tyre, the last of the great city-states had fallen. After Damascus, Babylon, and Thebes, no city could be found that was strong enough to withstand the imperial invader. Jerusalem was still there, but only because it had capitulated in 701 B.C.E. and continued to render tribute.

“The [**Book of Isaiah**] poses the question: If national existence for Israel / Judah is no longer possible [where does the **Book of Isaiah** say national existence for Israel / Judah is no longer possible? It does not! And in fact, national existence continued, even if under foreign control] and if the power of being a fortified city-state is denied Jerusalem, what can the future hold for the people called Israel and for the cult center called Zion?...

“[These four chapters] establish a foundation and a direction in answering that question. The foundation that is reiterated is God Himself—Yahweh of Hosts and His strategy and purpose. The direction looks to the exercise of His great power. The enemy will die, but Yahweh will ‘raise the dead’ of Israel; Yahweh will kill the dragon [Watts is identifying Leviathan / the dragon with Assyria; but if Assyria is YHWH’s chosen weapon, can she be identified as Leviathan?], regaining control from the chaotic forces loosed on the region through Assyria...

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“Death poses an ultimate end for the tyrant (as in **chapter 14**) [but at YHWH’s great banquet, death with all its symbols is swallowed up for the nations, not just for Israel!]. But it holds no such meaning for Israel, for God reaches beyond death to renewed life. Israel’s hope is that ultimately even all that the dragon, Leviathan, symbolizes is under the control of God. The key factor in Israel’s hope does not really deal with Assyria at all, but with the will and strategy (עֲצָדָה) of God. When the day of His ‘wrath’ is over, all good things are possible again for those who trust and love Him.” (Pp. 310-11)

But we ask, could you have come up with such an analysis of these four chapters simply by reading the text? We cannot.

Ackerman entitles **chapters 24-27** “The Isaianic Apocalypse,” and states that it is “a collection of oracles related to the materials found in **chapters 56-66** and dating to the late 6th century B.C.E. rather than the period of First Isaiah. Although full-blown apocalyptic texts appear only later in biblical tradition (the 2nd century B.C.E. and beyond), apocalyptically themed materials such as **Isaiah 24-27** emerge in the late 6th century B.C.E. This is probably in response to the difficulties experienced by the ancient Israelites seeking to rebuild Jerusalem and Judah after the Babylonian destruction of 587 B.C.E. and the subsequent exile of many Judahites to Babylon. The sense of crisis engendered by these difficulties gives rise to a belief that the present world is so evil that it soon must come to an end, to be replaced by a new and glorified cosmos in which only the righteous will live.” (Pp. 987-88)

But in fact, we do not find the words “end of the world” or “new and glorified cosmos” anywhere in these chapters.

What we do see is that Isaiah sees many different, puzzling, oftentimes conflicting things in his visions, exactly as should have expected in the light of **Numbers 12:6-8** and **1 Corinthians 13:9-12**.

In **chapter 24** he sees a devastating Divine judgment, but not the end of all people—a remnant will be left. But he also sees, or hears, the voice of world-wide worship of YHWH. He sees himself surrounded by treachery, calling for even more devastation, resulting in all the Divine enemies being captured and imprisoned, awaiting punishment. But he also sees YHWH reigning on Mount Zion.

In **chapter 25**, Isaiah lifts his voice in praise of YHWH for His deeds, especially the overwhelming of an unnamed enemy city, while delivering the needy. He sees strong nations glorifying YHWH because of His protection of the poor, putting down the ruthless. Especially vivid is his universal vision of YHWH hosting a great drinking-banquet for all peoples, swallowing up death and all its symbols, wiping away all tears from all the earth, resulting in YHWH’s praise. But, he also has a vision of Moab suffering horrific demolition (is not Moab one of the nations / peoples?).

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In **chapter 26** Isaiah hears a song being sung in Judah—praising YHWH and urging the people to put their trust in YHWH, Who will humble the lofty unnamed city, enabling the poor to trample upon it. Isaiah joins his voice with that song praying for the destruction of His people’s enemies. He states that whereas the other Gods (of the peoples and nations) are dead and will not live, his nation will be increased—a far cry from his universalistic vision. He sees that his people’s suffering has been like a woman in childbirth, who is unable to give birth—but he assures his people that in spite of all their failures, they will experience resurrection from the dead. And on this basis he urges his people to wait for YHWH’s coming in judgment upon iniquity.

In **chapter 27** Isaiah has a vision of YHWH’s victory over the giant monsters of Near-Eastern mythology. And he hears a song that will be sung on that day of victory—it is the “Song of the Vineyard” recalling from **Isaiah 5**, but with a totally different outcome --the vine of Jacob / Israel will take root and fill the whole world with fruit. He has a vision of Jacob’s guilt being atoned for when he destroys all his Canaanite worship centers. He envisions the fall of the unnamed fortified city, whose people will never be shown compassion or favor. But he also has a vision of the people of Israel returning from Assyria and Egypt, coming to worship YHWH in Jerusalem.

Yes, Isaiah has a vision of universalism, but then, he also has visions quite different from universalism, depicting Israel as having a glorious future, with the nations suffering destruction--without any mention of the hope of resurrection.

What can we make of this flurry of visions, with contradictory outcomes? We say, this is exactly what we should expect of the prophet and his visions, in the light of **Numbers 12:6-8** and **1 Corinthians 13:9-12**. Isaiah’s visions are enigmatic, puzzling; they are anything but unified, and clear. But they are all searching, probing, pointing to a world and a future in which YHWH God is acting, bringing a hope-filled future for His people, even including all peoples and nations. The “how” and the “when” are muffled and uncertain. But his hope is certain and steady—because it is rooted in his strong faith in YHWH, Who has revealed Himself to him. What do you say?

Ackerman’s view, over against Motyer’s view, challenges us as we study these four chapters, to look closely for relationships to other parts of the **Book of Isaiah**, and to see if the materials in these chapters are related closely to the earlier chapters in **Isaiah**, or rather to the materials in **chapters 56-66**.

Both Ackerman and Gray call **chapters 24-27** an “apocalypse.” However, we note that the word “apocalypse” (a Greek noun), so easily used by modern biblical students, is not found in the Greek translation of the **Book of Isaiah** and it must be questioned whether or not such a description is appropriate. It evidently wasn’t appropriate enough for the Greek translator(s) of **Isaiah** to use it.

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If what is meant is “a puzzling, enigmatic unveiling of God at work behind the scenes,” we could agree that this is what these chapters contain—but there is nothing new in this, and throughout biblical literature there is constant unveiling of the reality of God at work in human history, beginning with **Genesis 1**, and then continuing throughout the **Hebrew Bible**, including God’s work in all the nations of the world, bringing destruction upon wickedness, and offering hope to YHWH’s people, sometimes breaking through national limitations to include the whole world as we find in parts of **Isaiah 24-27**.

But if what is meant by “apocalyptic” is, according to Lindblom, in his important work **Prophecy in Ancient Israel**, “a book containing a system of secret doctrines concerning the cosmos, history, and age to come” (p. 275), then **chapters 24-27** of **Isaiah** hardly qualify as “apocalyptic.”

Lindblom states that “All prophetic sayings which really refer to the age to come, to the new order, may be called eschatological, because their content is eschatological in a prophetic sense [meaning, we take it, they are describing something in the future]. In the apocalyptic writings of later Judaism, a sustained attempt is made to give a coherent and systematic form to eschatological ideas taken over from the prophets and from popular belief, presenting them as Divine secrets and mysterious doctrines concerning history, the cosmos, and the age to come, revealed, as a rule, to personalities of the past [i.e., Enoch], with special authority, and codified in scriptures generally intended to be read by the groups of the initiated.” (P. 422) In this sense **Isaiah 24-27** is “eschatological,” but not “apocalyptic.” We should agree with Lindblom!

Young describes “apocalyptic” as a “mixture of transcendentalism [an idealistic philosophical and social movement that developed in New England around 1836 in reaction to rationalism, influenced by romanticism, Platonism, and Kantian philosophy. It taught that Divinity pervades all nature and humanity], mythology, cosmological orientation, pessimistic treatment of history, dualism, division of time periods, the doctrine of two ages, playing with numbers, pseudo-ecstasy, artificial claims to inspiration and mysteriousness.” (P. 269)

These are not the characteristics of **Isaiah 24-27!**

We think the term **וִּזְיוֹן**, Ὀρασις “Vision,” which is given at **Isaiah 1:1** is much more accurate term to describe these four chapters, i.e., “Isaiah’s Enigmatic, Hope-filled Vision of Future, Universal Divine Victory,” rather than the term “Apocalypse.” What do you think? How will you entitle these four chapters?

Young calls **chapters 24-27** “one of the most remarkable sections of the entire prophecy. It is obvious that they form a close connection with the preceding prophecies against the nations. Indeed, they are a fitting conclusion to those prophecies. On the

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other hand, if **chapters 24-27** are simply an isolated unit, they are practically impossible to understand.” (P. 146)

Young states that in **chapters 24-27**, Isaiah “is now uniting into one, as it were, all the enemies of God’s people which he had previously (**chapters 13-23**) discussed individually. Consequently, when he now predicts judgment it is not local but universal, one which will cover the entire covenant-breaking earth...After this widespread judgment...there will come a world-embracing salvation (**25:6-8; 26:9, 21; 27:1, 6**).” (Pp. 146-47)

H. Wolf agrees with Motyer and Young, stating that “**Chapters 24-27**...form a conclusion to **chapters 13-23** just as **chapters 34-35** form a conclusion to **chapters 28-33**.” (P. 1049)

We agree. When **chapters 24-27** are removed from their context in the **Book of Isaiah**, and treated as a separate document, they can easily be understood in a quite different way, or turned into something that they are not in their original context. But seen in the context where they are found, as the conclusion to **chapters 13-23**, with their oracles to Babylon (**chapters 13-14**), Philistia (**chapter 14b**), Moab (**chapters 15-16**), Damascus (**chapter 17**) Cush / Ethiopia (**chapter 18**), Egypt (**chapter 19**), Egypt and Cush / Ethiopia (**chapter 20**), Babylon, Dumah and Arabia (**chapter 21**), Jerusalem (**chapter 22**), and Tyre (**chapter 23**), they will be understood as summing up and universalizing Isaiah’s enigmatic, puzzling vision of judgment on the nations, including Israel, along with an unprecedentedly powerful vision of universal hope for the future.

Slotki entitles **chapter 24** “The day of universal judgment.” He comments that the chapter depicts “The wickedness of the people and consequent misery and wretchedness.” He also entitles **verse 1** “The day of retribution.” (P. 110)

Alexander states that in **chapter 24**, “Here begins a series of prophecies (**chapters 24-35**), having reference chiefly to Judah. It is not divided into parts by any titles or express intimations of a change of subject. The style is also homogenous [of the same kind, alike] and uniform. The attempts which have been made to subdivide this portion of the book, are for the most part arbitrary...”

“The first four **chapters (24-27)** are now universally regarded as forming one continuous composition. What is said of **chapter 24** is therefore in some degree applicable to the whole. This chapter contains a description of a country filled with confusion and distress, by a visitation from Jehovah in consequence of its iniquities (**verses 1-12**). It then speaks of a remnant scattered among the nations and glorifying God in distant lands (**verses 13-16**). The prophet then resumes his description of the judgments coming on the same land or another, winding up with a prophecy of Jehovah’s exaltation in Jerusalem (**verses 16-23**).

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“Eusebius and Jerome explained this chapter as a prediction of the end of the world, in which they have been followed by Oecolampadius and some later writers. Cyril referred it to the same event, but understood it in its primary meaning, as a summary of the foregoing prophecies against foreign nations. The older Jews (as we learn from Jarchi and Aben Ezra) applied the first part of the chapter to the Assyrian invasions of the holy land, and the last to the wars of Gog and Magog in the days of the Messiah. But Moses Hacoen referred the whole to the former period, Kimchi and Abarbanel the whole to the latter...

“Luther applied it to the desolation of Judea by the Romans. Calvin agreed with Cyril in regarding it as a summary of the preceding prophecies both against Israel and foreign nations, but denied any reference to the day of judgment...

“[Following his review of a large number of applications of the chapter by the German biblical scholars of his time, Alexander concludes that] the endless diversity of judgment, both among the older and later writers, shows that the prediction is generic [i.e. not specific in its application].” (Pp. 402-04) We say that it demonstrates the puzzling, ambiguous nature of the prophetic message, leading to all of these differing interpretations.

Kaiser entitles **chapters 24-27** “The Apocalypse of Isaiah.”

He comments that “As scholars became aware of the gradual growth of the **Book of Isaiah**, they could not fail to realize that it was impossible for **chapters 24-27** to have been composed by the eighth-century prophet. To mention only a few of the most obvious arguments which occur to a reader familiar with the history of Israel’s faith, it is clear that the disaster to Jerusalem in the year 587 lies behind these chapters (compare **Isaiah 27:3**, [perhaps meaning **verse 8**; Kaiser interprets **chapter 27** as depicting Jerusalem’s going into exile; we think this is probably correct, but will wait for a more informed judgment]. Unlike the genuine sayings of Isaiah, they are concerned not with the judgment of Yahweh brought down upon Jerusalem by the people’s disobedience, but with a future visitation on a world-wide scale (**24:1ff.**)...

“The emphasis on a disaster falling upon a city...makes it clear that the catastrophe is not to fall upon Jerusalem but upon some other entity...The expectation of a cosmic judgment including in its scope the powers of heaven and of the underworld (**24:21-23**; **27:1** [Leviathan]; the beginning of the reign of Yahweh on Zion, where He gives the nations a feast of rejoicing (**24:23**; **25:6-8**), the abolition of death itself (**25:8a**; **26:19**) and a new song of the vineyard which is clearly meant to provide a contrast with the earlier song (compare **5:1-7** with **27:2-5**), all show that it is impossible to date the chapters in the eighth century, and that they ought all to be regarded as composed in the late post-exilic period or even as late as the Hellenistic period.” (P. 173)

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We have had to alter the scripture references which Kaiser gives, as his are misleading and inaccurate. Kaiser is very dogmatic concerning the dating of this material, but we think the evidence is not nearly as clear as he makes it out to be. As Kaiser himself shows, there are numerous other views as to the dating of this material, and we think it is not wise to be as dogmatic as Kaiser is.

Kaiser concludes that “From the prospect of judgment of the world in **24:1-13** our attention is drawn to the rejoicing in the age of salvation, in **24:15-16a**, and then back in **24:16b** to the judgment. But as early as **24:21-23** the prospect of judgment reached its climax with the promise of the imprisonment of the heavenly powers hostile to God, the inauguration of the reign of Yahweh upon Zion, and the new fellowship of God with Israel. Thus within the chapter a twofold eschatological pattern is repeated twice...

“**26:1-18**...begins with a prophetic song of thanksgiving in **26:1-6**, which clearly reveals the edificatory purpose of comforting the community in the present time of trial, goes on to a broadly based, meditative ‘lamentation of the people’ in **26:7-18**, which stresses the necessity of the Divine judgment and so makes what is to come acceptable to the worshiping congregation, and concludes with an injunction concerning their attitude in the final wrath in **26:20-21**...

“I would attribute **24:21-23** and **25:6-8** to a third stratum which clearly displays more advanced apocalyptic speculation, and in view of the awkwardness of **25:8a** in its context, and of **26:19**, I would attribute them to a fourth redaction, which expressed a faith in the resurrection of the dead...

“The redaction of the traditional books of the **Bible** gave way, presumably under the influence of the check imposed by sectarian groups such as the Qumran community and the Samaritans, to the production of the newer works which we refer to as **Apocrypha** and **Pseudepigrapha**.” (Pp. 177-79)

All of these differing views concerning **chapters 24-27** call for careful attention to the text, and warn against dogmatism as we seek to understand the meaning of these chapters.

²Slotki states that **chapter 24** is a depiction of “the day of universal judgment,” and “the wickedness of the people and consequent misery and wretchedness.” (P. 110)

Motyer gives the following outline of **chapter 24**:

- A¹ The earth devastated: Divine action (1-3)
- B¹ The withering of the world: sin and the curse (4-6)
- C¹ The song stilled: the fall of the city (7-12)

(continued...)

²(...continued)

C² The song heard: world-wide gleanings (13-16b)

B² Personal wasting away: grief over treachery and its outcome (16c-18d)

A² The earth broken up: moral / spiritual causation (18e-20)

This is another neat, cyclical analysis of a passage, and though it can be criticized, it is a fairly accurate analysis.

Motyer notes that **chapter 24's** "general [literary] background (is) in the flood narrative (**Genesis 6-9**)...Both have references to the 'windows of the heavens' being 'opened' (compare **verse 18c** and **Genesis 7:11**); both refer to the 'everlasting covenant' (compare **verse 5** and **Genesis 9:16**); and in **verse 6** the 'curse,' in the context of the wine / vine theme of **verse 7**, links with Noah the vine-dresser and the imposition of the curse in the [world after the flood] (**Genesis 9:20, 25**)." (P. 197)

Oswalt states that "**Chapter 24** functions as a transition between **chapters 13-23** and **25-27**. It does so by generalizing the particular treatments of **chapters 13-23**. Here all the nations of the world are gathered up into a single whole. No longer is it Babylon or Damascus or Tyre being confronted by God; now it is the earth itself (repeated 17 times) which stands before the bar of judgment." (P. 443)

But this is to assume that **הָאָרֶץ**, **ha)arets** is referring to "the earth," not to "the land," that is, not to some specific country or nation. See our footnote 6.

Ackerman entitles **24:1-23** "A vision of imminent apocalypse" (p. 988) and if she means "an imminent unveiling of YHWH's judgment," we can agree with her.

Ortlund holds that in **24:1-20**, which he entitles "The Wasted City," "The Lord, ruling from Mount Zion, violently dismantles this present evil age and replaces it with the joy of worldwide worship." (P. 1281) But does the text mention "this present evil age"?

Watts comments that "Attention is drawn from Tyre to the hinterland. Yahweh is devastating the land...The scene concentrates attention on one theme: the devastated land.

Yahweh is the active Agent in the devastation (**verses 1, 3**).

All elements of the population are involved (**verse 2**).

The land is withered because of the people's sin (**verses 4-6**).

Social life is at a standstill (**verses 7-9**).

The cities lie abandoned in ruins (**verses 10-12**).

The land is abandoned and bare (**verse 13**).

"The witnesses describe the scene to the audience with animation, with astonishment that it is Yahweh Who is doing this, and with horror at the thoroughness

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of what has been done. The narrow attention which the first scene had given to Tyre itself and its clients beyond the sea is now broadened. This survey of the Phoenician hinterland and the Ante-Lebanese mountains to the Syrian Plateau and Palestine to the south reveals devastation, nothing but devastation.” (P. 315)

But not a word appears in the text concerning the Phoenician hinterland or the Ante-Lebanese mountains or the Syrian Plateau or Palestine to the south. All of this is being read into the text by Watts!

Kaiser entitles **24:1-13** “The Judgment upon the World.”

He comments that “Whatever the previous history of **24:1-13**, the prophecy in it of a world-wide catastrophe which affects men of all classes and all places should be regarded as a unity...The first three verses as it were sound the keynote for all the rest of the prophecy, and for the whole of the composition which follows. **Verses 4-6**... supply the reason for the prophecy...**Verses 7-13** prophesy and describe the effects of the coming catastrophe. The dominant feature is the end of all joy, while the background is that of the unnamed, destroyed city...The whole passage is pure prophecy, concerned with the fact of the coming world-wide catastrophe and its effects...

“The fact that people cry in their distress for wine instead of for water is associated with the fact that the poet has become confused by his theme of the disappearance of all joy...Anyone who does not share the emotion evoked by the apocalyptic prophet may consider it to his discredit that his imagination, with the images of distress which it has conjured up, cannot encompass the real distress of people who are starving and dying of thirst.” (Pp. 181-82)

Ortlund states that **verses 1-6** describe “The world order, in which human sin is exalted, is laid waste.” (P. 1281)

Oswalt states that “**Verses 1-6** paint the central picture of worldwide destruction. The earth is under a curse because its people have broken God’s laws. No one, from the highest to the lowest, will escape the devastation; thus, in the end only a remnant will remain [Yes, it is not a depiction of the complete destruction of planet earth! There will be survivors.] The language is similar to that often applied to Judah, so that some commentators, such as Kissane and Scott, hold that אֶרֶץ [erets, ‘earth,’ ‘land’], here should be translated ‘the land’ (of Judah) rather than ‘the earth.’ However, in addition to the parallel with תֵּבֵל, ‘world,’ in **verse 4**, the entirely universalistic tenor of the language argues for a reference to the whole earth. This being so, the application of the Judahistic terminology is an indication that the prophet sees God’s treatment of, and expectations for Judah and Israel as being the model for His treatment of the whole world (compare **Romans 1-3**).” (Pp. 443-44) We agree.

(continued...)

וְעֹהָ פְּנֵיהָ
וְהִפְיֵץ יִשְׁבִּיהָ:

Look!³ YHWH⁴ is laying waste⁵ the earth⁶ and is devastating it!⁷

²(...continued)

Motyer entitles **verses 1-3** “The earth devastated: Divine action.”

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 1**: “Behold Jehovah (is) pouring out the land and emptying it, and He will turn down its face, and He will scatter its inhabitants.”

He comments that “The figure is that of a bottle or other vessel drained of its contents by being turned upside down...The simple truth is, that Isaiah here speaks of the Babylonian conquest as still distant, but at the same time, as infallibly certain.” (P. 404)

That is, according to Alexander **chapter 24** is about the fall of Babylon to Cyrus the Persian—not about the “end of the earth,” as commonly understood by many commentators. But we ask, where is Babylon mentioned in this chapter? Is “the earth” a synonym for Babylon? Possibly, perhaps—but we think not. And the fall of Babylon to Cyrus was not a scene of devastation and destruction, but rather one of a transfer of power with little armed conflict.

Students of **Isaiah** need to take note of this. Alexander is one of the greatest scholars in **Isaiah** studies in the 19th century. When he reaches a conclusion such as this, it points to the enigmatic nature of the text, which can be, and has been understood in many quite different ways. Is the text about the destruction of the earth? Or is it only about the destruction of one land, one country, as Alexander holds, Babylon? We say, Don’t blame the commentators, blame the nature of the text!

³This opening exclamation of **chapter 24**, הִנֵּה, **hinne**, “Look!” occurs throughout the entire **Book of Isaiah** some 78 times, fairly evenly distributed throughout the **book**. If this is characteristic of **Isaiah**, it is even more so of **Genesis, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah** and **Ezekiel**.

Oswalt comments on the phrase, “Behold, the Lord is about to” [our “Look! YHWH is...”] “expresses the prophet’s sense of immediacy through the use of הִנֵּה, **hinneh** plus the participle...Perhaps the now archaic ‘on the point of’ captures some of the sense. Whether or not the events will happen in the next moment, yet it is an integral part of the biblical expectation. Only a God Whose control of history is so

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³(...continued)

complete that He could bring it all to a close in the next moment is worth worshipping... The teeming, scheming nations are not ultimate reality; God is.” (P. 444)

As I write these notes, I am grieving the loss of my beloved wife, Sarah; at the same time, I have been watching the television pictures of the aerial bombardment on Aleppo, Syria, reducing this former great city into rubble. Indeed, the world is passing away before our eyes. Behold—look at it! It has always been the case. It still is.

⁴Ortlund comments that “The first impression conveyed by the vision is the active presence of God.” Indeed! This is another expression of the “biblical world-view”—it is the view of a world in which God’s Divine power is actively at work, judging and destroying evil, giving a future filled with hope to His people and to all the nations and peoples of the earth (according to **Isaiah 25:6-9**), because it is the God Who created us and loves us Whose hand is active in human history.

This phrase, **יְהוָה יִהְיֶה**, “Look–YHWH” occurs in the following places in the **Book of Isaiah**:

- 19:1b**, “Look–YHWH is riding upon a swift cloud and coming (to) Egypt...”
- 22:17**, Isaiah tells Shebna, “Look–YHWH is hurling you violently, mighty man!”
- 24:1a**, here, “Look–YHWH is emptying / laying waste the earth / land and is devastating it!”
- 26:21**, “Because look–YHWH is going forth from His place to visit (for punishment the) iniquity guilt of the earth’s / land’s inhabitants upon it!”
- 62:11**, “Look–YHWH caused to be announced to (the) end of the earth / land.”
- 66:15**, “Because look–YHWH will come with the fire...”

While this phrase may well be called “Isaianic,” the slightly different phrase **הִנְנִי** (with varying ways of pointing), “Look (at) Me,” on the lips of YHWH / God, occurs (some 178 times) throughout the **Hebrew Bible**. If we define the word “apocalyptic” as meaning an unveiling of God at work in the world, then certainly **Isaiah** is an “apocalyptic” book, but there is nothing unique about this in the **Hebrew Bible**.

Watts comments that “The recognition that Yahweh Himself is laying waste the land makes the statement take on a measure of horror.” (P. 315) Perhaps...but to know that it is our God’s hand at work in human history is also a genuine basis for hope rather than for horror, especially in the light of the marvelous picture of hope for all nations and people of **Isaiah 25:6-9**! What do you think?

⁵The phrase includes two qal active participles, **בּוֹקֵק הָאָרֶץ וּבּוֹלֵקָהּ**, YHWH is “emptying / laying waste” the earth, and is “devastating” it. Oftentimes in Hebrew the present participle is used to indicate the immediate future instead of

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meaning that it is actually occurring in the present. But whether these two participles are understood as depicting something happening in the time they are spoken, or pointing to the immediate future, they depict the earth / land as subject to Divine judgment—to being laid waste, and to being devastated, because of human sinfulness—a common biblical theme, not peculiar to biblical “apocalypses” such as **Isaiah 24-27** has been called, or the **Book of Revelation**, the title of which in Greek is Ἀποκάλυψις, “Apocalypse.”

The verb **בִּקַּק** occurs earlier at **Isaiah 19:3**, but nowhere else other than here in **24:1** and **3**. The verb **בִּלַּק** occurs nowhere else in the **Book of Isaiah**. Watts notes that these two verbs “have similar meanings.” (P. 314) They sound alike in Hebrew, **baqaq** and **balaq**. And while they predict the earth’s being laid waste and devastated, they do not by any means predict the “end of the earth.”

Oswalt comments that “In mighty convulsions similar to [Noah’s flood], the face of the earth will be devastated and changed, the population so reduced that the world will seem empty.” (P. 444)

Still, the passage goes on to speak of the sounds of praise of YHWH coming from west to east and from the “wing / end of the earth”—which seems to depict a world that is not empty, but full of YHWH’s praises. What do you think?

⁶Gray comments that “The object of Yahweh’s judgment is the world, not the northern kingdom of Israel, nor, at least exclusively, Judah; the time is the immediate future, not the past...There is more reason to consider the possibility of **הָאָרֶץ**, **ha)arets**, having the limited sense of land...of Palestine, rather than earth...for if the whole earth is emptied, whither are the inhabitants dispersed?...

“[Nonetheless] that the earth is intended, is shown by the use of the parallel and unambiguous **תִּבְלָל**, world, in **verse 4**.” (Pp. 408-09)

Young agrees with this, and says that since the noun is here used as a parallel to **תִּבְלָל**, “world,” in **verse 4**, the noun **הָאָרֶץ** must have a wider significance. (P.149) Our Greek translation has τῆν οἰκουμένην, “the inhabited earth,” “the world.”

But Watts is of a different mind. He asks, “What is to be understood as **הָאָרֶץ**, **ha)arets**, ‘the land’? The answer one gives determines one’s attitude to the entire section. When one translates ‘the earth,’ that very act predisposes the reader to see this as referring to all the world and thus as apocalyptic in scope and meaning.

(continued...)

⁶(...continued)

“However, the Hebrew word is common enough. It is used regularly in **Isaiah** in the ordinary sense of a defined territory, political unit, or land. It is sometimes defined precisely ‘land of Egypt,’ ‘land of Judah.’ (It is interesting to note that ‘land of Israel’ does not occur in **Isaiah**.) There seems to be no reason to understand it differently here [but see Gray and Young’s insistence that it is parallel to **תִּבְלָל**, “world,” in **verse 4**]. It refers to a defined territory.

“*The land* occurs a large number of times in this chapter [we find **הָאָרֶץ** 10 times and **אֶרֶץ** 6 times in **chapter 24**] and deserves special treatment. Its natural scope would include the Phoenician hinterland along the coast from the mountains to sea. But in a broader sense, which is appropriate here, it takes in the Palestinian-Syrian area, fanning out from the Phoenician coast to include what, from an Israelite point of view, was embraced in David’s kingdom. The Assyrian campaigns have been taking one after another of its constituent elements. With the fall of Tyre the whole *land* is under their control.” (Pp. 315-16)

Watts insists on this understanding of “land” again and again in his commentary, but the text itself does not offer any such understanding. Nowhere in the text of **Isaiah** is such an attempt made at defining a specific area as included in “the land.” Watts is reading all of this into the text.

Where our Hebrew text reads **הָאָרֶץ**, in **verse 1**, 1QIs^a reads **הָאֲדָמָה**, “the ground / earth.” Again we say, the problem is rooted in the enigmatic ambiguity of the text, not in the commentators on it. The biblical text can be understood in differing ways.

⁷The poel active participle in the phrase **וַיְבֹלְלֵהָ**, “and devastating it,” is from the root **בָּלַל**, which occurs in the **Hebrew Bible** only here and in **Nahum 2:11**^{Heb} / **10**^{Eng} where it appears as a noun, describing the city of Nineveh as a “devastation.”

Slotki’s translation has “Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty and maketh it waste,” and he comments that “the force of the assonance of the Hebrew original in this and in many of the following verses cannot be reproduced in English.” (P. 110) But we can hear the sounds of the Hebrew: **boqeq haarets ubeholeqah**, with the repetition of the “b” and “q” sounds. See our footnote 5.

Motyer comments that “This vocabulary of destruction of the physical world is preparing for the description of the city in **verse 10** as [a city] ‘of emptiness / meaninglessness,’ the **תֵּהוֹ** of **Genesis 1:2**.” (P. 197)

(continued...)

And He will distort its surfaces,⁸
and He will scatter its inhabitants!⁹

⁷(...continued)

But this language, “destruction of the physical world” goes beyond what the text actually says, and is easily taken up by those foretelling “the end of the world.”

Young comments that “In a few short bold sentences, Isaiah compactly sets forth the heart of the judgment which is pictured in the following sections...From these words alone, it is impossible to tell precisely when the events described will occur.” (P. 147)

There is little that is new in this announcement of devastation and destruction coming on the earth, and already similar announcements of coming destruction have been made. See:

Isaiah 2:9-21, especially **verses 11-12**:

- 11 Eyes of haughtiness of a human being was (**sic.**) abased;
and lofty pride of people will be brought low.
And YHWH alone will be exalted in that day!
- 12 Because a day belongs to YHWH of Armies,
over everything proud and exalted,
and over everything lifted up—
and it will be brought low!

Compare the similar **Isaiah 13:9-13**. Only, in **chapters 24-27**, that Divine judgment which was more “localized” in Isaiah’s visions of **chapters 13-23**, is seemingly made much more broad.

⁸The phrase **וְעִנָּה פְּנֵיהָ**, literally “and He will bend / twist its faces / appearances,” does not indicate total destruction, but only change of appearance. Gray holds that this means “making it unrecognizable by destroying places, plantations, and the like upon it” (as Dillman before him held). (P. 409)

Young comments that “Possibly the reference is to the ravages that war brings, and that so upset and displace everything that it no longer looks as formerly.” (P. 149)

⁹The phrase **וְהִפִּיץ יְשֻׁבֵיהָ**, “and He will scatter its inhabitants,” reminds the reader of the story in **Genesis 11:4, 8-9**--the scattering of the builders of the tower of Babel / Babylon. It is quite different from “destroying the earth completely,” or “bringing planet earth to an end.” For if that were the case, where would the inhabitants be dispersed or scattered to?

Motyer notes that the use of this verb, “scatter,” “sets the scene for the city, looking back to the original Babel, the city where people began their still-continuing

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search for a cohesive society based on their own abilities and technologies.” (P. 197)

English translations of **verse 1** vary:

King James, “Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.”

Tanakh, “Behold, The LORD will strip the earth bare, And lay it waste, And twist its surface, And scatter its inhabitants.”

New Revised Standard, “Now the LORD is about to lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants.”

New International, “See, the LORD is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants—“

New Jerusalem, “ See how Yahweh lays the earth waste, makes it a desert, buckles its surface, scatters its inhabitants...”

Ortlund comments that “Alluding to Babel, Isaiah foresees another, final judgment of human autonomy.” Again we note that such a phrase as “final judgment” does not appear in the text, either in **Genesis 11**, or **Isaiah 13** or here in **Isaiah 24-27**, and this is not by any means a statement of “the end of the world.” Rather, should we not conclude that the text means that just as YHWH acted at the tower of Babel, and on Babylon in its fall, so He will act in the future, and on a broader scale?

Again we warn, interpreters of texts such as this should take care not to use language like “final judgment,” as if the text is predicting the final “end of the world”—which it is not!

¹⁰Slotki comments on **verse 2** that “All classes and ranks are equally affected... The Hebrew [text] is identical with that of **Hosea 4:9**,

וְהָיָה כְעֵם כְּכֹהֵן
 וּפְקֻדָּתִי עָלָיו דְּרָכָיו
 וּמַעַלְלָיו אָשִׁיב לוֹ:

And it will happen—like the people, like the priest;
 and I will visit upon him his ways;
 and his deeds I will return to him!” (P. 110)

But this is overstatement by Slotki. Compare the present Hebrew text of **Isaiah 24:2**,

And it will happen—like the people, like the priest;
 like the slave, like his master;
 like the female servant, like her mistress;

(continued...)

כְּעַבְדִּי כְּאֲדָנָיו
 כְּשֹׁפְחָהּ כְּגִבְרָתָהּ
 כְּקוֹנֶהָ כְּמוֹכֵר
 כְּמַלְוֶה כְּלוֹה
 כְּנֹשֶׂה כְּאִשֶּׁר נִשָּׂא בּוֹ:

And it will happen—like the people, like the priest;¹¹
 like the slave, like his master;
 like the female servant, like her mistress;
 like the one purchasing, like the one selling;
 like the one lending, like the one borrowing;
 like the one selling on credit, like the one being in debt to him.¹²

¹⁰(...continued)

like the one purchasing, like the one selling;
 like the one lending, like the one borrowing;
 like the one selling on credit, like the one being in debt to him.

If fact, only the first line of the verse is identical to the first line of **Hosea 4:9**.

Slotki adds that “The other parallels in the verse suggest that the priests formed the ruling class.” (P. 110) We do not think the text suggests this—do you? Perhaps if only the lines 2-4 are considered, where the priest is parallel to the master and the mistress and the one selling. But in lines 5-6, the priest is parallel to the one borrowing and the one being in debt.

Alexander translates **verse 2**: “And it shall be, as the people so the priest, as the servant so his master, as the maid so her mistress, as the buyer so the seller, as the lender so the borrower, as the creditor so the debtor.” He comments: “That is, all ranks and classes shall fare alike.” (P. 405) Position or wealth will make no difference.

¹¹Compare **Hosea 4:1-10**, where the first line is parallel to the first line of **Isaiah 25:2**. Hosea depicts the devastation of Northern Israel because of the sinful condition of its people—the same theme of **Isaiah 24**, only the location is not clear.

¹²**Isaiah 24** goes far beyond the one “religious” contrast of **Hosea 4:9**, giving a list of six contrasts, which, as Motyer states, “form an idiom of totality.” But again, this

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is not new for Isaiah. Compare also **Isaiah 3:1-5**, where Isaiah has earlier depicted the judgment coming on varying classes of society:

- 1 Because look—the Lord, YHWH of Armies
 is removing from Jerusalem and from Judah,
 male support and female support,
 every support of food / bread,
 and every support of water(s).
- 2 Mighty man and man of war,
 judge and spokesperson / prophet,
 and one divining, and elderly person / official,
- 3 captain of fifty, and one lifted up in appearance,
 and one counseling, and wise person of magic arts,
 and one understanding (the art of magic) charms.
- 4 And I will give / place youths (as) their princes,
 and caprice will rule over them!
- 5 And the people will press hard—
 man against man, and a man against his neighbor;
 the youth will storm against the elderly / official,
 and the dishonorable person against the honored person.

What Isaiah has said concerning Judah and Jerusalem in **chapter 3** is now said concerning universal judgment. All social distinctions will no longer be of importance—there will be no difference between clergy and laity, between male slaves and masters, female slaves and mistresses; no difference between buyers and sellers, lenders and borrowers, creditors and debtors, which is to say no differences between wealthy people and poorer people, when humanity comes face to face with the judgment of God! Isaiah envisions the total breakdown of all such distinctions in the imminent destruction that he sees coming on the land / earth.

As Motyer puts it, “Every aspect of life is under sentence along with every group and individual.” (P. 197)

Young becomes political in his commentary, insisting that “What is pictured here is actually a form of socialism.” (P. 149)

We think this is mistaken. Socialist governments still have clergy and laity, bosses and workers, buyers and sellers, wealthy and poor—as we saw in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—which allowed only one political party, but still had many different levels among its citizenry, and as is seen still today in Communist China. Isaiah is not depicting such a “socialist” form of government, but rather is depicting a devastating judgment from God that destroys governments.

Young goes into a detailed description of how such a breakdown of distinctions among people causes anarchy and destroys individual initiative on pages 150-52. We

(continued...)

¹²(...continued)

think such political comment is totally out of place, as well as mistaken, just as is Watts' insistence that this material in the **Book of Isaiah** is written to announce the end of the small city-state era of government.

Gray insists that "Living under the post-exilic hierocracy [so certain is he of the date of this material], the writer takes the priest as typical of rank...and the (common) people as the antithesis." (P. 409) He quotes **Hosea 4:9** where "like people, like priest" is used—but that certainly didn't imply that there were no kings in pre-exilic Northern Israel.

We think Gray is stretching to find indication of post-exilic dating for **chapters 24-27**. It is not, in our opinion, found in this verse, although perhaps elsewhere.

Kaiser states, "That the poet is concerned less about how the catastrophe is to take place than about its consequences for mankind is shown by the six contrasting sets of two words in **verse 2** which cover cultic, domestic and economic life...

"The imminent catastrophe will destroy all religious and social privileges. It will come upon people without regard for their social standing, their riches or their poverty... No one can hope to escape it because of religious or political influence, authority to command, or riches, nor indeed because of their unimportance, dependence or poverty...

"What now fills with life will disappear. No one can escape this visitation from God. This is the message which the apocalyptic poet places at the head of his poem, and for which he claims Divine authority by referring to what Yahweh has already said (compare **1:20** and **40:5**)." (Pp. 182-83)

And we warn, such claims to Divine authority do not lessen the fact of prophecy's enigmatic nature, or its ambiguity!

¹³Alexander translates / comments on **verse 3**: "*The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled, for Jehovah speaks (or hath spoken) this word.*"

He comments that the reduplication of the Hebrew verbs "is no doubt emphatic... and may be expressed by a simple repetition, *emptied emptied*...or by combining a verb and adjective, *empty and emptied*...or by introducing an intensive adverb, *utterly, wholly (empty)*...

"The *land* here mentioned is supposed by Hitzig to be Assyria; by all other interpreters Palestine [of course, Alexander knew nothing of Watts' interpretation]...

"In order to justify his reference of this part of the chapter to past time, Gesenius explains the last clause as relating to the Divine purpose or decree (for so Jehovah had

(continued...)

וְהַבּוֹז | תְּבוֹז

כִּי יִהְיֶה דְבַר אֶת־הַדְּבַר הַזֶּה:

Being emptied, the earth / land will be empty,
and being plundered, it will be plundered!¹⁴

¹³(...continued)

commanded), whereas it elsewhere denotes the certainty of the event because predicted by Jehovah. The necessity of this departure from the usage of the phrase is a strong objection to his interpretation of the chapter, as written during the Babylonian exile by a captive Jew.” (P. 405)

We are not sure exactly what Alexander is criticizing here. His own translation has the alternative “hath spoken,” and in fact the text uses the qal perfect (“past” tense): כִּי יִהְיֶה דְבַר אֶת־הַדְּבַר הַזֶּה, “because YHWH spoke this word,” which we think should not be translated “speaks.”

¹⁴In both the first and second lines of **verse 3**, the infinitive absolute is followed by the finite verb, making the statements emphatic. As Oswalt comments, “The totality of the destruction envisioned is underlined through the use of infinitive absolutes to emphasize the main verbs.” (P. 444)

Oswalt goes on to state that plundering “suggests again that the world’s end will not be merely natural. Warfare, oppression, and greed will also bear their part. At the same time, it must be asserted that the writer is more concerned with images than with logic [does he mean the writer is illogical?]. He wants his hearers to picture the teeming, abundant earth as an abandoned heap when God finishes with it. Precisely how it becomes that way does not seem to be a major concern of his.” (Pp. 444-45)

Again we warn against using language that feeds into the understanding that **Isaiah** is predicting the “world’s end”! It is not predicting the end of the world, for the people that survive the destruction are scattered—that is they go elsewhere on planet earth, and the passage goes on to depict world-wide praise of YHWH. We do not think the passage depicts the former abundant earth as “an abandoned heap.” Rather, it is a picture of a world that has suffered Divine judgment, but that continues to be humanity’s dwelling-place, where Divine blessings abound, far beyond anything humanity has ever known before, at least according to the universal vision in **chapter 25**! No, the passage does not depict God as being “finished with earth.”

Tanakh has “The earth shall be bare, bare; It shall be plundered, plundered.”
New Jerusalem has “Ravaged, ravaged the earth will be, despoiled, despoiled.”

(continued...)

¹⁴(...continued)

In the second line, **וְהִבְּזוּ | תִּבְּזוּ**, “and to be plundered, it will be plundered,” the implication is not that the possessions being plundered, or taken as spoil, will cease to exist—but rather, that they will be taken away from those who once possessed them, by others—probably meaning armed invaders who do the work of plundering / taking spoil in battle, although no national enemy is named.

Gray translates by “The earth shall be wholly emptied, And ‘the world’ shall be wholly despoiled.” (P. 405)

Such a translation can easily lead to the conclusion that the passage is depicting the “end of the world,” but as **verse 6** states (Gray’s translation), “Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, And few shall be the mortals that are left.” That is not a depiction of the total destruction of planet earth, with no one surviving!

¹⁵Oswalt states that “For the prophet, all of this is sure for one reason and one reason only—God has spoken. Although this is a frequent phrase in **Isaiah**, its importance cannot be overemphasized. He believed in a God Who could communicate His truth and His will clearly. He not only believed He could, but that He had. Thus the prophet could make completely dogmatic statements which rested on one support—God had spoken. Where the Church is anemic and helpless today, is it not because we no longer have the conviction of the prophets?” (P. 445)

We say, Yes—Isaiah and his fellow prophets were convinced that God had spoken—and the Church today needs to proclaim the truth of God with equal fervor. But Oswalt is overlooking the fact that many of Isaiah’s statements are anything but “clear.” Isaiah’s entire book is a “Vision”—see **Isaiah 1:1**. And the difference between a “vision” and a face-to-face revelation from God is that the vision is enigmatic, puzzling—the very opposite of “clear.” See **Numbers 12:6-8** and **1 Corinthians 13:9-12**. The fact is that the prophets of Israel do not speak with one voice, one message, clearly announced, with no differences, no contradictions. Read the **Book of Isaiah** side by side with the **Book of Zechariah**—you will have a hard time coming away thinking they proclaim the same message! No, while deeply convicted that God has spoken, their understanding and proclamation of that word is filled with different emphases, understandings, and yes, contradictions.

Just look at these chapters that we have been studying—many of which are filled with enigma and obscurity. And look at the way interpreters of the **Bible** have understood the prophets—predicting the exact dates of the “end of the world,” or the “Rapture,” or the “Second Coming of Christ,” or the “Millennium,” etc. etc. Read Alexander’s commentary, with his survey of so many German commentators on **Isaiah** in earlier centuries, with their striking differences of interpretation. “Clear”? No. Enigmatic, puzzling? Yes!

(continued...)

¹⁵(...continued)

But in spite of this obvious fact, still the student of **Isaiah** and Israel's other prophets can hear the voice and the call of God through their writings—an unequaled call for justice and righteousness, for unselfishness, for becoming servants to others, for rejecting formalistic and legalistic religion, for building the beloved community based on grace and forgiveness. When we read these messages / teachings, our hearts are touched, and we feel that we have heard the Divine voice speaking through the prophets!

I have been asked time and again, How do you know the difference? My response is that our hearts must be attuned to God--open, receptive to His voice. We have to get rid of the idea that we know all the answers, that we do not need Divine guidance. We must be humbly listening, and seeking to discern the Divine voice as we study the prophets. When we are doing this, in a marvelous way we will begin to “sing the song of Isaiah”—our hearts will be caught up in the message, and our lives will be changed!

For example, as we study this chapter, and see the many differing interpretations concerning the meaning of “the land / earth,” and the conflict between a judgment occurring in history and a final judgment at the “end,” we will still sense the powerful statement that all people and nations are subject to the Divine judgment—we must all give account for our deeds, our choices, our failures! We do not know exactly when, or how, but we are responsible to our Creator and Judge, YHWH, Who loves us in spite of our sins, and is calling us into honest dialogue with Himself, offering us and our world full forgiveness and newness of life! What do you think?

¹⁶Gray entitles **verses 4-13** “The world suffers for its sins, and ‘the city of Chaos’ falls into ruins.”

He notes that in these verses there is a predominant use of perfect tense verbs, which he says, may “be descriptive of the actual past or present, or they may be prophetic perfect.” (P. 410)

Motyer entitles **verses 4-6** “The withering of the world: sin and the curse.” He comments that whereas “**Verses 1-3** predict devastation but offer no justification of it...it is to this that the present verses proceed. Since the justification proffered is the inner, personal reality of sin, the vision of a blighted nature is suitable, humankind communicating their contagion to the world.” (P. 198)

He adds that **verses 4-6** are “full of Isaiah’s deliciously assonantal Hebrew.” (P. 198) By “assonance” is meant the repetition of sounds to create internal rhyming within phrases or sentences.”

Oswalt states that in **verses 4-6** “the prophet develops his images of desolation further, and is so doing explains more fully the causes of the desolation. Here the

(continued...)

¹⁶(...continued)

picture is of a drought where the earth is parched dry and the people are in mourning...

“It was thought that the failure of rain was an indication that Death had somehow conquered Life [Oswalt capitalizes both death and life; we don’t know why]. But the biblical view will have none of a cosmic struggle between life and death. If there is a desolation in the earth, it is God’s doing just as much as if there is abundance. The struggle is in the hearts of human beings and it is over the issue of pride or trust. The pride which says ‘I’ll do it myself’ receives drought from His hand. The trust which says ‘I’ll commit myself to Him’ receives abundance.” (P. 445)

Do you agree with this comment? Would you say it fits the situation of Job? Did Job’s “drought” come because Job said “I’ll do it myself”? And, in fact, does trust which says “I’ll commit myself to Him” always receive abundance?

We are reminded of Job’s friends who had all the answers, based on their doctrine of “retribution.” Oswalt has all the answers, based on his doctrine of “committed trust.” Job’s friends’ answer was clear and definite, just as is Oswalt’s. But reality is not as simple and clear as is oftentimes held by devout, honest people—like Job’s friends, and Oswalt.

What do you think? Do you agree with Oswalt that there is no “cosmic struggle between life and death”? Our study of **Deuteronomy 30:11-20** convinces us that there is certainly a struggle within our hearts over whether to choose life or death, whether or not to obey the Divine voice. Perhaps that is not what Oswalt means by “cosmic struggle”—but it is a struggle that goes on in our cosmos / world!

Kaiser entitles **verses 4-6** “The judgment as a punishment.”

He comments that **verse 4** “answers the fearful question aroused by the previous verses. What do they mean? There will be a drought, comes the reply, on a vast scale, and affecting not only the earth but also the heavens, described here as in **verse 21** as ‘the height.’ The meaning has to be understood within the framework of the contemporary picture of the world as the drying up of the ocean which lies above the earth, in heaven, and below the earth (compare **Genesis 1:6-7, 9; 7:11** and **Amos 7:4-5**. The apocalyptic poet draws the idea from **Hosea 4:2** as a prophetic utterance.” (P. 183)

We can only say, What a confusing comment! Does the passage depict the drought affecting the heavens?

Alexander translates **verse 4**: “The earth mourneth, fadeth; the world languisheth, fadeth: the highest of the people of the earth languish.” He comments that **הָאָרֶץ** is not the land (Gesenius), as appears from the parallel expression **תָּבֵל**. Earth and world, however, are not to be taken in their widest sense...but as poetical

(continued...)

אִמְלֵלָה נִבְלָה תִּבְלָה

אִמְלֵלוּ מְרוֹם עַם־הָאָרֶץ:

The earth / land mourned,¹⁷ it sunk—¹⁸,¹

¹⁶(...continued)

descriptions of a country...not Assyria...but Palestine. Jerome refers the whole description to the end of the world.” (P. 405)

We think that Alexander’s criticism of Gesenius’ view applies to his own view that limits the description to the land of Palestine. The language seems to us to mean the whole world. But the fact is that the passage is enigmatic / obscure, and both can be and has been taken in different senses. Therefore, to hold that one interpretation is the “true” interpretation is unfounded.

The Greek translation of **verse 4** has only one verb in each of the first two lines, whereas the Hebrew text has two verbs in each line.

Where the Hebrew text in line one has the two verbs אִבְלָה נִבְלָה, **abhelah nabelah**, “it mourned, it sunk” (notice the rhyming sound of these verbs), the Greek text has only the one verb, ἐπέεθησεν, **epenthesen**, “it mourned.”

Where the Hebrew text in line two has the two verbs אִמְלֵלָה נִבְלָה, **umlelah nabelah**, “it grew feeble / languished” (again with a rhyming sound), the Greek text has only the one verb, ἐπέεθησαυ, “it mourned.”

Oswalt claims that the verb אִמְלֵלָה, **umlelah** “means to lose fertility,” referring to **1 Samuel 2:5; Jeremiah 15:9; Isaiah 16:8; 24:7; Joel 1:12**. (P. 438) **Brown-Driver-Briggs** agrees, stating that the verb means “*be or grow feeble, languish; of loss of fertility (woman)*.” We think Oswalt is correct.

Oswalt comments on **verse 4** that “One has only to study accounts of recent droughts to be reminded forcibly how very non-independent we human beings are...In that universal drought [depicted here in **Isaiah 24**], even the high and the mighty of earth will be affected. No one’s independence will be left untouched.” (P. 445)

¹⁷Young comments that “Isaiah continues his description of judgment, pointing out in addition to what he has already said that the earth is in mourning...Up to this point he has placed the description in the future, using either the perfect with *waw conversive / consecutive* or else participles or even simple futures. Beginning with this verse, however, he employs perfects; and they are possibly to be understood as prophetic. The events described have not yet occurred, but they are so vivid to the prophet’s eyes that he pictures them as though they had already transpired.” (P. 154)

(continued...)

¹⁷(...continued)

We agree. Isaiah is depicting a vision of the future, and in that vision he uses many different tenses of verbs. This is no problem when we understand Isaiah to be describing an enigmatic / puzzling vision—the problem comes when interpreters try to make his language chronologically exact, and attempt to draw up calendars / roadmaps of the future on the basis of such visionary material. Again we mention **Numbers 12:6-8** along with **1 Corinthians 13:9-12**, which warn against attempting to understand prophetic materials in such exact ways, as if they are not filled with the enigmatic, with lack of clarity and exactness.

The root verb אָבַל, “to mourn,” occurs in **Isaiah** at:

3:26 And her (Zion’s) gates will grieve (synonym) and they will mourn,
and she will be cleaned out—
she will sit on the land / earth.

19:8 And they will grieve (synonym) the fishermen (of Egypt);
and they will mourn—all those who cast a hook into the Nile;
and those throwing out a fishing-net upon (the) surface of (the) waters
languished.

24:4 It mourned, it sunk, the land / earth;
it languished, it sunk, (the) world;
they languished—height / highest people of the land / earth.
(What has been affirmed of Zion and Egypt is now greatly broadened.)

24:7 It mourned—new wine;
it languished—the vine;
they sighed—all all being glad / merry of heart / mind.

33:9 It mourned, it languished—earth / land.
It was ashamed—Lebanon—it decayed.
The Sharon became like the desert-plain,
and shaking / stirred up—Bashan and Carmel!

66:10 Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all those who love her!
Exult with her (in) exultation, all those mourning over her!
(In the good times coming, the former mourning will be turned to rejoicing!)

Compare **Hosea 4:3**, where, after having listed the manifold violations of YHWH’s laws, Hosea states,

For this reason the land / earth will mourn,
and everyone dwelling in it will languish,

(continued...)

(the) world¹⁹, ² languished, it sunk;
high people of the earth / land²⁰ grew feeble / languished.²¹

¹⁷(...continued)

among wild animal(s) of the field, and among bird(s) of the heavens,
and also fish of the sea—they will be gathered / taken away!

¹⁸The two verbs used here are an example of Isaiah’s “assonance” [repetition of sounds] as well as rhyming sounds: **אֲבֵלָה נִבְלָה**, **abelah nabhelah**.

If these verbs are taken to mean drying up, i.e., drought conditions, as **New Revised Standard** and **New International** translate them, compare a similar statement concerning Moab’s condition in **Isaiah 15:6**:

Because waters of Nimrim will be devastations / wastes;
because herbage dried up,
grass was finished,
there was no greenness!

For occurrences of the verb **נבל**, “to sink / droop” in the **Book of Isaiah**, see our end-note 1.

¹⁹The noun **תֵּבֵל**, **tebhel**, “world,” which occurs as a synonym to **אֶרֶץ**, “earth / land,” may imply the earth as being productive—see **Brown-Driver-Briggs**. The Greek translation of **tebhel** is ἡ οἰκουμένη, which means “the inhabited earth.”

Slotki agrees, stating that the noun means “the inhabited parts of the earth,” (p. 110) and Motyer also agrees, claiming that it means “the inhabited world,” “the world of human beings and affairs.” (P. 138)

For occurrences of the noun **תֵּבֵל**, “world,” in **Isaiah**, see end-note 2, where we note that all of its occurrences are in the first half of **Isaiah**, with no occurrences in **chapters 40-66**. The noun is found nine times, at **13:22; 14:17, 21; 18:3; 24:4** (here); **26:9, 18; 27:6** and **34:1**.

²⁰The phrase in Hebrew is: **מְרוֹם עַם-הָאָרֶץ**, literally “height of people of the land / earth.” **Rahfs** has οἱ ὑψηλοὶ τῆς γῆς, “the high ones of the earth.”

King James has “the haughty people of the earth”; **Tanakh** has “the most exalted people of the earth”; **New Revised Standard** has “the heavens languish together with the earth”; **New Jerusalem** has “the pick of earth’s people”; **Gray** has “The highest people of the earth.” Slotki has “lofty people.” He states that it is “literally ‘the height of the people,’ denoting the nobility.” (P. 110)

(continued...)

²⁰(...continued)

Young comments that “Not only the earth itself, but also the highest of its inhabitants feel the judgment.” (P. 155)

Motyer notes that the phrase “the exalted of the earth / the height of the people of the earth’ is an unparalleled expression. Taken at face value, it means that even earth’s exalted ones are infected with this deadly blight.” (P. 198)

²¹1QIs^a, the Syriac and Latin Vulgate translations read אֲמִלִּל instead of our Hebrew text’s אֲמַלְלָהּ, that is the singular instead of the plural, and this is a correction of our Hebrew text, reading a plural verb with a singular subject [מְרוֹם עִם־הָאָרֶץ], “height of people of the land / earth.”

Gray thinks that the author has thought of the noun עַם, “people,” as having a collective sense. (P. 414) We think this may well be the case. 1QIs^a evidently originally omitted the noun עַם, “people,” and a later copyist has written it in above the line.

It is a constantly recurring biblical motif. We human beings, including the very highest, are responsible for the earth’s blight and pollution—not only physically, but especially morally!

English translations of **verse 4** vary considerably:

King James, “The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.”

Tanakh, “The earth is withered, sear [‘charred,’ ‘scorched’]; The world languishes, it is sear; The most exalted people of the earth languish.”

New Revised Standard, “The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth.”

New International, “The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish.”

New Jerusalem, “The earth is mourning, pining away, the pick of earth's people are withering away.”

Young comments on the verb “languish” that it “suggests...the strength of the earth is gone or exhausted, and that the earth itself is lying without power...Isaiah had earlier employed it to describe the fields of Heshbon (16:8) and the Nile fishermen (19:8). Here it is strengthened by the repetition of faded. ‘Just as plants without cultivation and proper care may fade away and die,’ we may paraphrase the thought, ‘so the earth, now suffering under the curse that has come upon her through the punishment of judgment, languishes, mourning and fading away.’” (P. 155)

²²Watts states that in **verses 5-6** “the discussion turns to the reasons for the destruction. It is clearly blamed on lawlessness and a breach of covenant by its inhabitants. These are not necessarily Israelite laws which would have no validity here, but obedience to law, the maintenance of a common morality, and fidelity to contractual agreement in perpetuity, which have a universal basis. Such a moral breakdown lies at the core of the problems. Countries do not have sins, but people do. And countries suffer as a consequence of the guilt of their peoples. So the curse which is normally a part of every covenant obligation (compare **Deuteronomy 28:15-68**) falls across the land because the covenant was broken.” (P. 317)

Alexander translates and comments on **verse 5**: “And the land has been profaned under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statute, broken the everlasting covenant...”

“Knobel reads, ‘and so the land,’ as if the verse contained the punishment and not the sin of the chosen people [where in this text is the phrase ‘the chosen people’ found?]. In accordance with this hypothesis, he explains the profaning of the land to be its invasion and subjection by the Babylonians. ‘Under its inhabitants’ will then mean nothing more than the land with those upon it. All other writers seem to apply the passage to the Jews [but where in this passage are ‘the Jews’ mentioned?], and to understand it as referring their calamities to their transgressions.” (Pp. 405-06)

See our comments concerning Alexander’s interpretation in footnote 2. Those comments apply here as well.

Gray comments that “The cause of all this [suffering in the world] is the pollution of the earth by the transgressions of its inhabitants, more especially by bloodshed; compare:

Isaiah 26:21

Because look—YHWH is going forth from His place to visit (with punishment the)
iniquity of the land’s / earth’s inhabitants upon it;
and the land / earth will reveal its bloodsheds,
and it will not again cover up its murders!...

“The idea of the profanation of the land of Israel by the conduct of its inhabitants in shedding of blood, committing adultery, or practicing idolatry is found in **Numbers 35:33; Psalm 106:38, Jeremiah 3:9**; compare **Deuteronomy 21:1-9, Genesis 4:10-11** and **Job 16:18**. But the shedding of blood was one of the things forbidden not only to the Jews, but to the whole of the descendants of Noah, by the *eternal covenant*, i.e. the covenant made after the flood between God and ‘all flesh which is upon the earth’ (**Genesis 9:1-17**)...”

(continued...)

²²(...continued)

“In view of תְּבִילָה in **verse 4**, הַאָרֶץ here cannot be limited to the land of Canaan, nor the transgressors of the laws to the Jews...nor the eternal covenant to that of Sinai.” (P. 411) Yes!

Ackerman likewise states that **verses 5-6** show that “the reason for the coming apocalypse is the sinful nature of the earth’s inhabitants.” (P. 988)

Slotki holds that the “everlasting covenant” refers to “The Torah of Moses which was given at Sinai as a covenant between God and Israel. Others refer the phrase to the Noachic covenant made between God and the human race after the flood (**Genesis 9:16**). Under this covenant every member of the human race is subject to certain moral laws, one of which is the prohibition of murder (**Genesis 9:5**).” (P. 111)

Oswalt comments that the phrase “the earth is polluted” “has a very modern ring to it. Sin has a way of making things unclean...Hatred pollutes, as does dishonesty [we could name many more pollutants, such as pride, selfishness, willful blindness, etc. etc.]. Both of these, as surely as too many phosphates or too much sewage, create a setting in which human life cannot continue. This is so because there are spiritual laws which are just as ironclad as the physical ones. And like the physical laws, we do not break them, we only break ourselves upon them. Thus love, joy, patience, etc (**Galatians 5:22-23**) are not desiderata [things needed or wanted], they are necessities if human life is to endure.” (P. 446)

Stop and meditate on this profound truth! Whether you believe in God or not, you need to realize that there are in fact what Oswalt calls “spiritual laws which are just as ironclad as the physical ones”! Do you agree that there are in fact “spiritual laws”?

Oswalt continues: “Isaiah is thus using law here just as Paul uses it in **Romans 1-3** [Yes!]. It is not so much the revealed law of the Jews, although the principles are the same. Rather, it is the fundamental principles of human behavior that are as accessible, and as incumbent, as the elementary principles of physics. Whether or not persons recognize these principles, living in any other way than in accord with them must ultimately destroy us, as the history of numberless fallen civilizations ought to teach us.” (P. 466) Again we say, Yes!

Kaiser states that “The reason for Yahweh’s act of judgment is given in **verse 5a** as the pollution of the earth by its inhabitants, which according to **Numbers 35:33** (compare **Psalms 106:38**) is brought about by blood-guilt, according to **Jeremiah 3:2** by the adultery of a woman, and according to **Jeremiah 3:9** by idolatry [but does the author have these passages in mind?]...

“Since it must be a covenant which takes in the whole of mankind, the only possible basis is the covenant with Noah in **Genesis 9:1ff.**, which includes the legal ordinance followed by **Numbers 35:33** (compare **Genesis 9:6**) and which is explicitly

(continued...)

כִּי־עֲבְרוּ תוֹרַת חֲלָפוֹ חֶק הַיַּפְרוּ בְּרִית עוֹלָם:

And the earth / land was polluted / defiled beneath²³ its inhabitants--²⁴

²²(...continued)

described as an everlasting covenant (**Genesis 9:16**) [but cannot YHWH make covenants that we don't know about? Is the Divine activity limited to what is recounted in biblical stories? Compare again **Amos 9:7**]...

“Any one who has brought guilt upon himself falls victim to the consequences of guilt, punishment, unless his sins have been pardoned...The earth polluted by the spilling of guiltless blood no longer receives rain or spring water...and becomes unfertile. In this way the human population is wiped out in large numbers [but is the spilling of guiltless blood the only cause of drought?]...”

“It looks in fact as though the apocalyptic poet felt that **Hosea 4:1-10** gave him the authority for the present prophecy...One must assume that he so frequently received news of wars and rumors of wars that he considered the hour had come in which the prophecy of **Hosea**, which he regarded as referring to the whole earth, would be fulfilled. If we feel that this led him away from the prophet's message, it brings him nearer to the reader who is searching the **Bible** for an answer to the problems of life, and the preacher who is seeking guidance for his congregation.” (Pp. 183-84)

Kaiser's phrases “It looks in fact as though,” and “One must assume” indicate how subjective his treatment of the text is, with his dogmatic setting of dates and situations related to the text which he so easily changes and adapts to his liking.

²³Where our Hebrew text has the preposition תַּחַת, “underneath,” “below,” **Rahfs** translates by the Greek preposition διὰ, “through,” or “by means of.” **Watts** notes that **Wildberger** holds the preposition תַּחַת is correct, meaning that the earth has to bear the burden of its inhabitants. (P. 314) Perhaps...but the text is not that clear.

²⁴The 3rd person feminine singular qal verb חָנַפָּה, **chanephah**, means “(the earth) was polluted / defiled.” This is, of course, a very “modern” problem, as **Oswalt** has observed (see footnote 22)! For this matter of “polluting / defiling” the earth, see:

Numbers 35:33, shedding blood in the earth / land pollutes it.

Psalms 106:38, the Israelites polluted their earth / land by the blood of their sons and daughters whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan.

Jeremiah 3:1-2, divorce and remarriage pollutes the land.

Jeremiah 3:9, faithless Israel's prostitution with foreign Gods has polluted the land.

(continued...)

because they passed over teachings'²⁵ they broke / frustrated a statute²⁶,

²⁴(...continued)

And can we not today list numerous other causes of pollution of the earth, such as radioactivity, injurious smoke emitted by cars, buses, trucks, trains, and factories, namely sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides . Even smoke from burning leaves and cigarettes...and the list of physical pollutants goes on and on. Beyond the physical pollutants are spiritual pollutants such as racism, selfishness, the love of money, pride, etc. etc.

²⁵The plural noun תּוֹרָה, **thoroth**, the plural of תּוֹרָה, **torah**, "direction," "instruction," "teaching," "law," occurs some 12 times in the **Hebrew Bible**, at:

Exodus 18:20, Moses' father-in-law advises Moses,

And you shall teach them the statutes and the teachings / laws;
and you shall make known to them the way in which they shall walk,
and the work which they shall do.

Leviticus 26:46

These (are) the statues and the judicial decisions and the teachings / laws
which YHWH gave between Him and Israel on Mount Sinai,
by Moses' hand.

Isaiah 24:5, here

And the earth / land was polluted / defiled beneath its inhabitants--
because they passed over teachings / laws,
they broke a statute, a covenant of long-lasting time.

Jeremiah 32:23

and they came, and they dispossessed it (the earth / land);
and they not listen to Your voice,
and by Your teachings / laws they did not walk;
everything which You commanded for them to do, they did not do;
and You caused to happen to them all this evil.

Ezekiel 43:11 (twice)

Ezekiel is to make known to the Israelites all the teachings / laws concerning the
new temple. **Ezekiel 44:5**, similar.

Ezekiel 44:24b

(continued...)

²⁵(...continued)

and My teachings / laws and My statutes,
at all appointed times they shall keep,
and My days-of-rest they shall set-apart.

Psalm 105:45, YHWH brought Israel into the promised land,

in order that they will keep His statutes
and will guard His teachings / laws—
praise (you people) Yah!

Daniel 9:10, in a confession of his people's failures, Daniel adds,

and we did not listen to YHWH our God's voice,
to walk in his teachings / laws
which He placed before us by (the) hand of His servants the prophets.

Nehemiah 9:13,

and upon Mount Sinai You came down,
and speaking with them from (the) heavens;
and You gave to them right judicial decisions
and true teachings / laws, statutes and good commandments.

Motyer holds that the plural "is either a generalizing plural ('laws whatever they may be') or a plural of application ('laws covering every aspect of life')." (P. 199) We think such an "either / or" statement is too narrow—there may well be other meanings intended by the plural, for example, "teachings," or "judicial decisions."

Alexander comments that "the ancient versions...make **תּוֹרָה** a plural [**תּוֹרָהִים**], and this reading is found in one Hebrew manuscript and one edition of the **Hebrew Bible**.

Aben Ezra explains the unusual plural **תּוֹרָהִים**, 'torahs,' as denoting not the law of Moses, but the laws common to all nations...There seems to be no sufficient reason for departing from the ordinary meaning of the Hebrew words as denoting the Divine law generally. The three terms used are substantially synonymous, *law[s]*, *statute*, *covenant*, being continually interchanged...The simple meaning of the verse is that they disobeyed the will of God." (P. 406)

²⁶Ortlund comments that "Human sin defiles the world in God's sight...Judgment comes as the world defies God's revealed will in order to construct an alternative social order." (P. 1282)

What do you think when we moderns approve of "alternative life-styles"? Do you believe that YHWH God commands certain life-styles, and disapproves of others?

(continued...)

a covenant of long-lasting time.^{27, 3}

²⁶(...continued)

For example, if you believe in “same sex marriages,” how do you reconcile this with the commandment in **Leviticus 20:13** to put homosexuals to death?

Or, if you believe that physical punishment of children is wrong, how do you deal with the commandments such as **Deuteronomy 21:18-21, Leviticus 20:5, Exodus 21:15** that rebellious children should be put to death? Are you willing to take the lead in putting your rebellious child / children to death?

What can you say to those who hold that the murder of homosexuals and unruly children and adulterous adults (**Leviticus 22:22**) defiles the world rather than constructing a truly good society? Where do you think Jesus, both by his teaching and example, stood on these issues? Who did he think should be stoned to death?

And do you believe that Jesus Christ set the example for such murders and rigid discipline of children? How did He deal with prostitutes and adulterous women? Was Jesus teaching an alternative life-style of grace and forgiveness over against the Pharisaic life-style based on biblical commandments?

²⁷Motyer asks, “So what has happened? Three charges are abruptly stated...:

1. Transgression of revealed truth...They have transgressed the laws. The basic idea of **torah** is not ‘authoritative imposition’...but authoritative instruction [our ‘teaching / guidance’]. The first charge, therefore is that they refused to hold to and live by Divine revelation.
2. Changing what was intended for perpetuity...The second charge is of introducing an innovative morality.
3. Broken...actually annulling, nullifying or setting aside the whole concept of covenant relationship and life..In essence, the annulling of the covenant was the refusal to live in the fellowship which God opened.” (Pp. 198-99)

Young likewise states that “the earth has become profane. Just as Palestine itself, the holy land, had become profane through the sin of its inhabitants:

Numbers 35:33,

And you people shall not profane / pollute the land which you are in,
because the blood—it will profane / pollute the land.
And for the land—it will not be covered for the blood.
Because the blood which was poured out / shed I it,
only by blood of (the) one pouring it out / shedding it...

Jeremiah 3:9, Judah has not learned from her sister Israel’s failure:

(continued...)

²⁷(...continued)

And it will happen, from / because of (taking) lightly her sexual immorality,
and she profaned / polluted the land,
and she was sexually immoral with the stone and with the tree!
(We think this is referring to “spiritual adultery,” intercourse with other Gods.)

Psalm 106:38,

And they (the Israelites) poured out innocent blood
blood of their sons and their daughters,
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan;
and the land was profaned / polluted by the bloods.

Young continues: “So also the entire earth became profane when the ordinances given to it were violated.” (P. 156)

For the phrase **בְּרִית עוֹלָם**, “covenant of long-lasting time,” see end-note 3.

Ortlund comments that the covenant being referred to is “Perhaps the covenant given through Noah (**Genesis 9:8-17**), which applies to all mankind; or the covenant with the house of David (**2 Samuel 23:5; Isaiah 55:3**), through which all mankind is to be blessed...

“Other interpreters think this refers to the implicit covenant with all mankind contained in the ‘laws’ and ‘statutes’ of God that He imparts through human conscience (compare **Romans 1:18-32; 2:12-15**), although this option, unlike the first two, is not called ‘everlasting covenant’ in the **Old Testament**.” (P. 1282)

H. Wolf comments that “Although everlasting from the Divine viewpoint, God’s covenants can be broken by sinful mankind.” (P. 1049)

Watts states that “The violent murders, wars, and executions on this land have brought down the reproach foreseen in the law...[The phrase] *a permanent covenant*... is more than a political agreement. A comparison with **Genesis 8:21 / 9:8-17** is instructive. This also deals with the curse on the land / ground because of man’s violence. The obvious reference is to the everlasting covenant of **Genesis 9:12**.” (P. 318)

Commentators, especially legalistic-minded commentators, are concerned to understand what specific laws, and statute, and “covenant” are being referred to. But Isaiah is not concerned to answer this question—he simply states that laws and a statute and a long-lasting covenant have been “passed over,” and “changed,” and “broken”—without mention of exactly what laws, or what statute is intended, or what “long-lasting covenant” it is he is referring to. Of course, if we raise the question with specific

(continued...)

²⁷(...continued)

reference to Judah / Israel, the answer is easy to give—it will be the Mosaic covenant made at Mount Sinai.

But since Isaiah is speaking of a universal matter, the answer is more difficult to determine. We think the reference to Paul’s understanding in **Romans 1** and **2**, especially his statement concerning the universal “law of conscience,” is probably the best answer.

What do you think? On what basis do you think God deals with the peoples and nations who do not acknowledge or follow the teachings / laws of the **Bible**? Does He simply condemn them and forsake them? Or does He deal with them on a different basis? Do they become “a law unto themselves,” based on their consciences? Are they forever separated from the grace of God? How do you think Isaiah himself would answer these questions? Do you think he would agree with Paul?

In terms of **Isaiah 25:6-9**, is not YHWH’s feast for “all peoples,” with its swallowing up of death and all its symbols for “all nations” an affirmation that His grace includes all people and nations? Do you think **Ezekiel 16:53-63**, with its promise that in spite of their having suffered Divine destruction, the sinful cities of Sodom and Samaria, and the much more sinful city of Jerusalem, will have their “fortunes / captivities restored,” speaks to this question?

²⁸Gray states that **verses 6-9** describe the “consequences of the corruption of men—a curse devours the earth, men are reduced to a few in number, joy departs.” (P. 411)

Here in **verse 6** Isaiah’s use of “assonance” is particularly noticeable:

עַל-כֵּן אֱלֹהֵי אֶחְלָה אֶרֶץ, (al-ken)alah)akhelah)erets,
 therefore a curse devours (the) land / earth
 וְנִשְׁאַר אִנּוֹשׁ מִזֶּעַר, wenish)ar)enosh miz(ar
 and a man is left remaining a few

Simply reading the Hebrew words as transliterated gives a sense of Isaiah’s use of similar sounds.

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 6**: “Therefore a curse devoured the earth, and those dwelling in it were reckoned guilty (and so treated). Therefore the inhabitants of the earth burned, and there are few men left.”

Oswalt comments on **verse 6** that “A part of the ancient Near Eastern covenants

(continued...)

וַיֵּאשְׁמוּ יוֹשְׁבֵי בְהֵ
עַל-כֵּן חָרַו יוֹשְׁבֵי אֶרֶץ
וַנִּשְׂאָר אֲנוֹשׁ מִזֶּעַר:

Because of this²⁹ a curse³⁰ devoured (the) earth / land,³¹ 4

²⁸(...continued)

was the section on blessings and curses: blessings for keeping the covenant and curses for breaking it (compare **Deuteronomy 27-28**). So the writer here, having asserted that the inhabitants of earth have failed to keep the covenant, moves to a logical ‘therefore a curse consumes the earth.’ This is not an arbitrary punishment on God’s part any more than diphtheria or typhus is a punishment for polluting one’s drinking water. It is a natural consequence (**Genesis 3:17**[but this is a Divine curse on humanity, not a natural consequence!]). So is guilt, the internal response to failure. Guilt is in the world because the people of the world habitually break God’s covenant...

“Nothing can remove the overall sense of human failure except God Himself... But if the people will not receive His pardon, either insisting they have no guilt or believing they can expiate it themselves, then there is no alternative but that they bear the consequences themselves. So the earth is parched dry like a desert and the people are reduced to a handful...

“World War I took the lives of almost two-and-a-half million people. Our sin pollutes our environment to the point that it cannot maintain but begins to destroy life (**Isaiah 13:11, 12**).” (Pp. 446-47)

In the light of Oswalt’s comment, should we conclude that there is no hope for those whose lives have been taken because of human sin? Compare footnote 27 with its reference to **Isaiah 25:6-9** and **Ezekiel 16:53-63**, and the hope expressed in those passages for all people and nations, and for the triplet sinful cities, Sodom, Samaria, and Jerusalem—to which the Divine promise of renewal is extended in spite of their having suffered Divine destruction. How will you understand these passages, apart from concluding that even beyond destruction and death, there is hope for the worst of sinners?

²⁹The phrase עַל-כֵּן, “because of this,” or “therefore,” is repeated in the first and third lines of this verse. Ortlund comments that this indicates Isaiah is explaining “the guilt of human sin and the justice of God’s judgment.” (P. 1282)

³⁰The noun אָלָה, “oath” or “curse” occurs some 370 times in the **Hebrew Bible**. **Brown-Driver-Briggs** gives the following five differing meanings:

(continued...)

³⁰(...continued)

1. oath in testimony:
2. oath of covenant
3. curse from God
4. curse from men
5. execration, in the phrase לאלה יהיה become an execration

Again, commentators such as Young go to great length to determine exactly what this “curse” is, comparing the blessings and curses of **Leviticus 26** and **Deuteronomy 28**, and comparing Paul’s language in **Romans 1:18-3:20**. But Isaiah does not seek to specify the nature of the curse, simply stating that a curse has come upon the earth because of humanity’s “passing over” laws, “changing” a statute, and breaking a long-lasting covenant. We think it is a mistake to become dogmatic in attempting to make specific what a biblical author has not made specific. What do you think?

Watts explains the “curse” as being “the result of a broken covenant and a blood-drenched land (compare **Numbers 35:33**)...The problem of releasing the land and its people, including Israel and Jerusalem, from this awful ban will occupy the rest of this act [**chapters 23-27**].” (P. 318)

Young states that “Inasmuch as the inhabitants of the earth have transgressed, they too are to be regarded as violators of the law, and consequently deserving of the punishment that must come to those who transgress...Isaiah is here speaking of the whole world in the same terms that he elsewhere uses to describe the people of God. He has taken the language of the theocracy, terms such as laws, statute, eternal covenant, they are reckoned guilty, etc., designations which belong to Israel; and he has applied these to the whole world.” (Pp. 159, 160)

We agree, and add that this means Isaiah is depicting God as treating all humanity as His people, who are responsible to Him and His laws. See our end-note 3 with its discussion of **Amos 9:7**.

³¹Motyer comments that “**Verse 4** dealt with earth and people languishing and wilting and **verse 5** noted the moral cause—the earth was burdened by its apostate people. **Verse 6** takes matters to their final diagnosis. Sin has the effect described because there is a Divine agency at work, a *curse*...This is the ‘curse of the covenant’ (**Leviticus 26:25-45; Deuteronomy 11:26-28; 28:15ff.; Daniel 9:11; Zechariah 5:3**), not the Lord breaking off His covenant but operating in covenant wrath to rid the covenant community of false or pretended members.” P. 199)

Motyer speaks of the Divine curse as being the “final diagnosis.” But in fact, it was not the final diagnosis for Israel. Punishment for sin, yes. But out beyond that punishment, Isaiah envisions the Divine mercy returning Israel from its punishment, and rebuilding Israel as His servant-people—see **Isaiah 40-55**! Compare footnotes 27 and

(continued...)

and those inhabiting it were guilty.³²

Because of this those inhabiting earth / land burned,³³,⁵

³¹(...continued)

28.

We say, Yes, there is a Divine curse on human sin, and there is Divine destruction. But beyond that fact, there is Divine grace and forgiveness, which promises renewal and restoration for those who have suffered Divine destruction, and the swallowing up of death and all its symbols for all peoples and nations.

Do you agree? Why? Why not?

³²Our Hebrew text has וַיִּשְׁמְנוּ, with *waw-conversive / consecutive* prefixed to the imperfect verb “they will offend / be guilty,” but which is converted to a perfect verb in understanding, “and they offended / were guilty.” But 1QIs^a omits the **נ**, and reads וישמו, which Oswalt holds is from the root שָׁמַם, **shamem**, and means “and they were spoiled.” (P. 438)

King James has “are desolate.” **Gray** has “have paid penalty.” Slotki thinks the translation should be “having been found guilty.”

Watts states that “God’s people (Israel) are responsible for a share, at least, of the whole land’s guilt, shame, and disgrace...Theirs was a part of the shroud of death that had covered the land for centuries.” (P. 318)

Yes, but as **chapter 25** goes on to show, that shroud of death has already begun to be removed, and YHWH will take it away forever at His great drinking-banquet for all nations.

³³Where our Hebrew text has וַיִּבְרֹחוּ, “they burned,” 1QIs^a has וַיִּבְרֹחוּ, “they grew white / pale.” **Tanakh** has “have dwindled.” Slotki’s translation has “waste away,” and Slotki suggests changing it to “are parched,” that is “by the consuming heat of God’s wrath.” (P. 111)

Alexander comments that the Greek translation “makes וַיִּבְרֹחוּ mean *they shall be poor*; Symmachus, *they shall be exhausted*; J. D. Michaelis, *they shall be diminished*. The [Aramaic] Targum gives the word the general sense of being consumed or destroyed; but the latest writers [in the mid-19th century] all prefer the more specific sense of burning or being burnt, either by internal heat like that of fever, or by the fire of outward persecutions.” (P. 406)

H. Wolf comments that “Because of the intensification of evil in the world, God’s

(continued...)

and a few weak men³⁴ will be left remaining!³⁵

24:7^{36, 6} אֲבֵל תִּירוֹשׁ

³³(...continued)

devastating curse will burn up the earth's inhabitants." (P. 1049)

For this matter of YHWH's "burning" up His enemies, see our end-note 5.

³⁴**Gray** has "And few shall be the mortals..." Motyer translates by "humankind," and states that אֲנָשִׁים "is often used of people in their human frailty." (P. 200)

³⁵Motyer holds that the story of Noah is the background for this statement. "For Noah was part of a totality under condemnation (**Genesis 6:5-7**) but was brought within a working of grace (**Genesis 6:8**). Thus here too 'gleanings' (**Isaiah 24:13-16**) will remain." (P. 200)

This is a strange comment—that Noah was brought within "a working of grace." We say that Noah was brought within "a working of Divine mass genocide," in which the entire world population was drowned, with the exception of one family, that of Noah. Is that "Divine grace"?

And we wonder, is that story, with its devastating depiction of the wiping out of an entire world population by Divine judgment, the reason for **1 Peter 3:18-4:6's** depiction of Jesus' upon his death going to those who were disobedient in the days of Noah, to proclaim good news to them? Is that not another biblical way of saying that though there is Divine punishment of destruction, the Divine grace does not end with that, but provides in grace for those who have suffered that punishment?

But nevertheless, here in **Isaiah 24** the picture of Divine judgment on the world does not result in the end of the human race—as in the story of Noah and the flood, there is a "remnant," at least some who are not victims of that judgment.

What do you think?

³⁶Ortlund states that in **verses 7-13**, "The worldly lifestyle of escapist revelry falls silent." (P. 1282)

Oswalt comments on **verses 7-13** that "These verses are unified by the recurring mention of wine and harvest (**verses 7, 8, 9, 11, 13**). Traditionally, the grape harvest was a time of joy and hilarity. When the grapes were in, the last of the back-breaking work of summer was ended and there was time for a little merriment, helped along by the new wine, before the fall plowing and planting had to begin. However, if the harvest had been poor, then harvest time would be conspicuous for the absence of the usual hilarity...

"Isaiah draws on that picture here...Thus in place of a happy, abundant, self-

(continued...)

³⁶(...continued)

sufficient world, the prophet shows us a world where merriment has ceased. So it must always be wherever joy is dependent upon alcohol and material blessings. The laughter always has a forced quality about it, for who knows how quickly it will end? By contrast, **chapters 25-27** will speak of songs which do not need alcohol or record harvests to give them their lilt [rhythm]. Their joy springs from deeper dependency: trust in a God Whose grace does not fail.” (P. 447)

Yes...but we must not forget that the Divine banquet depicted in **chapter 25** is one characterized by “wine settled on the lees,” that is the very best of wine! **Chapters 25-27** are not speaking about a life of abstinence from alcoholic beverages, which one might suppose from reading Oswalt’s comment!

Kaiser entitles **verses 7-13** “The consequences of the judgment.”

He comments that “If we ignore **verse 13**, which is clearly based upon **Isaiah 17:16**, there is no link with an underlying prophetic text comparable to that in the previous stanzas, although there are many expressions reminiscent of passages in scripture...

“The repetition in **verse 7** of the theme of the drought from **verse 4**...seems to echo **Joel 1:10-13** (compare also **Haggai 1:11**): on the thirsty earth the juice dries up in the grapes and the branches of the vine...

“The close connection, obvious to anyone living in the Mediterranean regions, between wine and joy (compare **Judges 9:13**) brings into the foreground the theme of the end of joy, **verse 8** echoing **Lamentations 5:15** and the content of **verse 9** being reminiscent of **Isaiah 5:11-12** and **Amos 6:3-5**, but also of **Joel 1:5** and **16**...A comparison with **Joel 1** shows how much more concrete the description of the drought is there than in the present passage...

“Finally, it is surprising that the prophecy of the desolation and ultimate decay of the city, which is given here as an example of the fate of all cities, should be followed by a recurrence of the theme of the end of wine and joy (compare also **Isaiah 32:12**) when in view of the general distress and many deaths, leading to the desolation and ultimately to the decay of the cities, we would expect to find a reference to funeral laments...

“This may well be related to the fact that the apocalyptic writer lived in a society which was itself unaffected by the wars of the time, and in which the upper classes at least could devote themselves undisturbed to a life of enjoyment. The preacher seeks to impress upon them that the time is not far off in which their survivors, and all whose main aim is pleasure and the enjoyment of life, will long for the golden days of the past and go wailing through the streets...

(continued...)

³⁶(...continued)

“In accordance with the whole context, **verse 12** can hardly be regarded as an allusion to military attacks leading to the destruction of the city. In a city empty of human beings everything decays, even the gates. Similarly, **verse 10** also assumes only the decay of a dying city, in which the dwellings are either kept locked by the few survivors or which are collapsing so that their entrance is blocked. Joy will come to an end; the present life of the cities will cease!...

“**Verse 13** correctly summarizes the meaning of the stanza, that only a minute number upon the whole earth will survive the catastrophe. It recalls the beating of the olive trees, when...only a few olives are left hanging on the tree, and extends the simile of **17:6** to the grape harvest, when only a few grapes are left for the gleaners in the vineyard.” (Pp. 184-85)

Motyer entitles **verses 7-12** “The song stilled: the fall of the city,” and comments that “This is the first of the two contrasting sections which lie at the heart of this poem: the end of the world’s song...Now we trace the progress of the deadly contagion as it kills the sources of joy (**verse 7**), ends the experience of joy (**verses 8-9**) and banished joy itself (**verse 11**), while the city lies ruined and defenseless (**verses 10, 12**).” (P. 200)

Motyer outlines this section as follows:

- A¹ The source of joy gone (**verse 7a**, 2 lines)
 - B¹ Joy stilled, satisfaction gone (**verses 7b-9**, 6 lines)
 - C The city broken and empty (**verse 10**, 2 lines)
 - B² Satisfaction lost, joy banished (**verse 11**, 3 lines)
- A² The source of security gone (**verse 12**, 2 lines)
[We think this outline is artificial. What do you think? Would you have seen such an outline simply by reading the text?]

He comments that “The ‘feeling’ is as of a series of hammer blows [15 lines, mostly of three words each], as if we were watching the city being brought to ruins.” (P. 200) We agree that the text feels very much like a “series of hammer blows.”

Slotki states that **verses 7-9** depict how “All joy and festivity have ceased.”

Gray likewise states that **verses 7-9** depict “No more grapes, nor more merry feasts with wine, music, and song.” (Gray, p. 412)

Ackerman states that “The joyful music typically associated with the wine-harvest festival will be stilled in the face of doom and destruction.” (P. 988) See our end-note 6 for other similar statements concerning the coming of judgment.

Alexander translates **verse 7**: “The new wine mourneth; the vine languisheth; all

(continued...)

אִמְלֵל־הַגֶּפֶן

נֶאֱנַחַו כָּל־שְׂמֵחֵי־לֵב:

New wine³⁷ mourned,³⁸

vine(s) grew feeble / languished;³⁹

all joyful of heart / mind sighed.⁴⁰

³⁶(...continued)

the merry-hearted do sigh.”

He comments that “the whole description is figurative,” and “there is no need of departing from the usual sense of *sweet* or new wine...”

“Gesenius [who supposed the imagery of **verse 6** to be taken from **Joel 1:18-20**] informs us that this **verse [7]** was also copied from **Joel (1:10-12)**, where he says it stands in a much more natural connection.” (P. 406)

³⁷Oswalt comments that “New wine was technically the unfermented juice from newly crushed grapes. It sometimes parallels ‘wine.’ Here, however, it is paralleled with ‘vine’ and this suggests that it may be referring to the grapes themselves. Thus the vines and grapes together have a sad and withered look about them. There will be no [or ‘little’?] juice from these!” (P. 447)

³⁸**Tanakh** has “fails”; **New Revised Standard** and **New Interational** have “dries up.” The Hebrew easily personifies non-humans, as it does the vines here.

³⁹Motyer notes that “not only the fruit (new wine) but also the source (vine) is blighted.” (P. 200)

Young comments that “The grapes mourn in that they present a withered, sorrowing appearance; the vine which bears the grapes combines with them...in giving this appearance. All nature, in other words, shares in the sorrow of the land; the picture is the opposite of that given earlier in **14:7, 8** [where the whole earth is depicted as being at rest and quiet].” (P. 161)

⁴⁰Motyer comments that “The ‘party atmosphere’ of the city as it once was (compare **5: 11ff.**) exposes its this-worldly philosophy of life. This is the serious backdrop to a picture of revelry. The only thing we need to know about their life was its dependence on the elation of alcohol...a life-style looking wholly to what this world provides and seeking wholly an immediate and earthly satisfaction...”

“Even *the merrymakers* / ‘joy of heart,’ those who have a naturally joyful temperament, need the help of alcohol and without it their natural joviality turns to its opposite (groans).” (Pp. 200-01)

(continued...)

⁴⁰(...continued)

Young states that “Those who enjoy the wine of the vines also groan; they who usually are *rejoicers of heart* are now mourners and groaners; the life which they must now face without the fruit of the vine is one that causes only sighing and anguish. Lovers of luxury are now haters of plainness. The *rejoicers of heart* are all too often those who forget God; when He deprives them of their luxury, they do not turn to Him, but sigh at their own supposed misfortune.” (P. 161) See: **Psalm 104:13-15**,

- 13 He [YHWH] gives mountains drink from His upper rooms
 from Your works' fruit You satisfy the earth--
 14 causing green grass to grow for the cattle,
 and vegetation for the human being's labor,
 to bring forth bread from the earth,
 15 and wine (that) rejoices mankind's heart,
 to make faces shine from oil,
 and bread sustains mankind's heart.

⁴¹Alexander translates **verse 8**: “Still is the mirth of drums; ceased is the noise of revelers; still is the mirth of the harp.”

He comments that “Music is here mentioned as a common token and accompaniment of mirth. Three Hebrew manuscripts, instead of שִׁשְׁאוֹן [‘roar’], read גִּבְאוֹן [‘exaltation’].” (Pp. 406-07)

Oswalt states that “This verse conveys the picture of a great modern city during what should be Mardi Gras

[also called Shrove Tuesday, or Fat Tuesday, in English, names which refer to events of the Carnival celebrations, beginning on or after the Christian feasts of the Epiphany (Three Kings Day) and culminating on the day before Ash Wednesday. Mardi Gras is French for ‘Fat Tuesday,’ reflecting the practice of the last night of eating richer, fatty foods before the ritual fasting of the Lenten season. Related popular practices are associated with Shrovetide celebrations before the fasting and religious obligations associated with the penitential season of Lent. In countries such as England, Mardi Gras is also known as Shrove Tuesday, which is derived from the word shrive, meaning ‘confess’ (**Wikipedia**, 2/23/2018),

or Carnival, or Oktoberfest. But in place of the teeming crowds and the music and the dancing, all is silent...When the judgments of God come upon the earth all our contrived festivals melt away. Those who have depended upon their own sources of joy will have

(continued...)

⁴¹(...continued)
none.” (Pp. 447-48) Compare:

Isaiah 13:20-22,

- 20 She will not sit / dwell for perpetuity,
and she will not settle / dwell until generation and generation!
And an Arabian will not pitch a tent there;
and shepherds will not cause (their flocks) to lie down there!
- 21 And wild beasts / desert dwellers will lie down there,
and owls will fill their houses.
And a daughter of (the) ostrich will settle there,
and wild goats will leap there.
- 22 And hyenas will sing among its widows / in its citadels,
and jackals in its palaces of delight.
And her time is close to coming,
and its day will not be drawn out.

Isaiah 22:1-4,

- 1 Utterance / oracle of (the) Valley of Vision:
What is it to you (singular) then,
that you went up, all of you (singular) to the roof-tops?
- 2 (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!
- 3 All your chiefs / rulers fled together
without a bow they were imprisoned.
All your people being found were imprisoned together.
They fled from afar / far away.
- 4 For this reason I said,
Look away from me!
I will be bitter with weeping.
You (plural) shall not hasten to comfort me,
over (the) daughter of my people’s destruction!

Isaiah 32:9-14,

- 9 Women at ease, arise!
Listen to my voice!
Daughters (who are) trusting / complacent,
give ear to my speech!
- 10 (Just) days above a year,
you trusting / complacent ones will quake / shudder;

(continued...)

חָרַל שְׂאוֹן עֲלִיזִים

שָׁבַת מְשׁוֹשׁ פְּנֹר:

Rejoicing⁴² of tambourines ceased;

uproar⁴³ of exultant people⁴⁴ stopped;

rejoicing of lyre(s) / stringed instrument(s) / harps ceased.⁴⁵

⁴¹(...continued)

when grape-harvest is ended,
gathering (of grapes) will not come!

- 11 Tremble, women at ease!
Quake / shudder, trusting / complacent (daughters)!
Strip, and make yourself bare--
and girdle your waists,
- 12 (striking yourselves) upon (your) breasts,
wailing / lamenting over pleasant fields,
over vine(s) making fruit!
- 13 Over my people's ground
thorn (and) thorn-bush (synonym) grow up!
Because over all houses of rejoicing / exultation,
of a city of jubilation--
- 14 Because a citadel / palace was forsaken,
a noisy crowd of a city deserted;
hill and watch-tower
became useful as caves for long-lasting time,
a rejoicing of wild donkeys,
a pasture for flocks.

⁴²The noun מְשׁוֹשׁ, “exultation, rejoicing” occurs in the **Hebrew Bible** at: **Job 8:19; Psalm 48:3; Hosea 2:13; Isaiah 8:6; 24:8, 8, 11; 32:13, 14; 60:15, 18; 62:5; 65:18; 66:10; Jeremiah 49:25; Lamentations 2:15; 5:15** (the same phrase as here in **24:8, 8, מְשׁוֹשׁ שָׁבַת**) and **Ezekiel 24:25**, that is, 11 times in **Isaiah**; 7 times elsewhere.

⁴³The noun שְׂאוֹן, “roar / crash” occurs in the **Hebrew Bible** at: **Isaiah 5:14; 13:4; 17:12, 12, 13; 24:8; 25:5; 66:6; Jeremiah 25:31; 46:17; 48:45; 51:55; Hosea 10:14; Amos 2:2; Psalms 40:3; 65:8, 8 and 74:23**, that is, 8 times in **Isaiah**; 10 times elsewhere.

⁴⁴**New International** has “the noise of the revelers has stopped.”

⁴⁵Lines 1 and 3 of **verse 8** are identical except for the last word in the lines:

(continued...)

⁴⁵(...continued)

שִׁבַּת מְשׁוֹשׁ תַּפִּיִּים, “it ceased, exultation of tambourines”;

שִׁבַּת מְשׁוֹשׁ כְּנֹר, “it ceased, exultation of stringed instrument(s) / lyres.”

Line 1 is closely similar: חָדַל שִׁאוֹן עַלְיָיִם, “it stopped, uproar of exultant ones.”

Slotki comments that the verse has reference to “the musical celebrations at the vintage festivals (compare **Amos 8:3, 10**).” (P. 111)

Motyer comments that “The repetition conveys a sense of inevitability.” (P. 201)

Young comments that here in **verse 8**, Isaiah continues his description of the languishing earth with three short sentences, each consisting of three words [in Hebrew]...These words bring out emphatically the thought of the verse, namely, the ceasing of mirth. What Isaiah depicts is the opposite of what is set forth in **Jeremiah 33:10-11**:

11^{Heb} / 10^{Eng} In this way YHWH spoke:

Again it will be heard in this place—
of which you people are saying,

It is a waste, without a human, and without an animal
in (the) cities of Judah and in (the) streets of Jerusalem,
those desolate ones without a human and without a dweller and
without an animal--

12^{Heb} / 11^{Eng} a voice of rejoicing, and a voice of gladness,
a voice of (the) bridegroom and a voice of (the) bride;
a voice of those saying Give thanks / confess YHWH of Armies,
because YHWH (is) good; because His steadfast love is for long-
lasting time—
(as they are) bringing a thank-offering (into) YHWH’s house / temple.
Because I will return the land’s captivity, like at the first!
said YHWH.

Young continues: “The rejoicing of the timbrels, i.e., the rejoicing caused by the timbrels, has ceased...And with its ceasing there has disappeared the luxurious festivals to which the music of the timbrel or tambourine was an accompaniment. There has also come to an end the noise made by those who are reveling or exulting. How readily the carefree exulting of light-hearted people comes to an end when the reality of judgment appears!...

“It is a light-hearted and not a deep-seated, profound rejoicing, for it is a rejoicing divorced from God and devoted only to enjoyment. Isaiah is not condemning music as such, for music in itself is one of God’s most wondrous gifts; he is pointing out rather

(continued...)

24:9⁴⁶ בְּשִׁיר לֹא יִשְׁתּוּ-יַיִן

יִמַּר שֶׁכָּר לְשִׁתּוֹ:

With the song they will not drink wine;⁴⁷

strong drink⁴⁸ becomes bitter to those drinking it.⁴⁹

⁴⁵(...continued)

that revelers, whose delight comes only from drunken festivals, sigh and groan when there is taken from them that in which they find their only pleasure.” (Pp. 161-62)

⁴⁶Alexander translates / comments on **verse 9**: “*With the song they shall not drink wine; bitter shall strong drink be to them that drink it.*”

“שֶׁכָּר” [‘intoxicating drink,’ ‘strong drink’] is neither beer...nor palm-wine... specifically, but intoxicating drinks in general. The last clause means...that they should lose the appetite for such enjoyments.” (P. 407)

Oswalt comments that “What drinking there is is without any gladness. Its only purpose is forgetfulness, and the experience is a bitter one.” (P. 448)

⁴⁷H. Wolf comments that the singing along with drinking wine is depicted in **Isaiah 5:11-12** as characteristic of Judah:

- 11 Woe—those rising early in the morning
they pursue strong drink;
who tarry in the twilight,
wine inflames them!
- 12 And there was stringed instrument and guitar
tambourine and flute and wine—(at) their drinking banquets.
And YHWH’s work they did not observe,
and (the) deed of His hands they did not see!

⁴⁸Somewhat strangely, **New International** has “beer.” The Hebrew noun שֶׁכָּר normally means “intoxicating or strong drink.”

⁴⁹Motyer comments on **verse 9** that “Even while this is happening the point is reached, within the revelers themselves, where their way of life ceases to give them any satisfaction. They drink their wine but cannot bring themselves to sing! Their beer is flat! To want nothing but this world is to end up with nothing but want.” (P. 201)

It is important to observe that in contrast to these negative things said about alcoholic beverages, the vision in **Isaiah 25:6-8** is of a great drinking-banquet given by YHWH Himself for all peoples and nations at which death and tears are ended forever.

⁵⁰Slotki states that **verses 10-12** depict how “Sadness and desolation prevail everywhere.” (P. 111)

Gray states that in **verses 10-12** “the destruction of a city now becomes the theme, the passing away of its glad throngs, the broken gates, the desolation that remains.” (P. 412)

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 10**: “*Broken down is the city of confusion* (emptiness or desolation), *shut up is every house from entering* (i.e. so that it is not or cannot be entered).

“The last clause might be understood to refer to the closing of the houses by the inhabitants against the enemy, or to their being left unoccupied; but the first clause seems to show that it rather relates to the obstruction of the entrance by the ruins.” (P. 407)

Young translates by “she [the city] is broken,” and comments that “A broken city is one that is defeated and destroyed. To express the desolate condition of the city Isaiah even uses the word תְּהוֹי (desolation [our ‘confusion’]), which in **Genesis 1:2** described the unformed condition of the earth. It is an apt word to characterize a city that has suffered the ravages of war, and consequently lies desolate. In the following century Jeremiah found it suitable to use of Palestine after the armies of Nebuchadnezzar had laid that land waste.” (P. 163)

Oswalt comments on **verses 10-12** that “The focus now shifts from the drinking to the city in which the partying has taken place. Instead of a brightly lighted, rollicking metropolis, there are only silent ruins. In place of the rivers of wine, there is thirst. Earth City is desolate...

“The writer is not so much working out a logical statement as he is creating an impression—an impression of a gray, mirthless, depopulated, and ruined world. Attempts to reorganize or criticize elements of the picture on other grounds can only do disservice to it and nullify its impact.” (P. 448)

Yes...but we must remember along with this depiction of the great world-city’s destruction, **Ezekiel’s chapter 16**, which takes up the story of the earthly city’s destruction, applying it specifically to Sodom, Samaria, and especially, Jerusalem—the most sinful city of all. Divine destruction is decreed upon all three cities, and anyone who reads the **Hebrew Bible** knows that it depicts the destruction as having happened—see for Sodom’s destruction, **Genesis 18-29**; for Samaria’s fall to Assyria by Divine mandate, **2 Kings 17:1-18**; and for Jerusalem’s destruction, **2 Kings 24:18-25:21**; **Jeremiah 52**.

(continued...)

סֵגֶר כָּל-בַּיִת מִבּוֹא:

A city of confusion^{51, 7} was broken;⁵²

⁵⁰(...continued)

Still, **Ezekiel 16:53-63** predicts the Divine restoration of the fortunes of all three cities. Divine destruction is not the “final word” in YHWH’s program! Rather, grace and renewal by YHWH is the final word! Do you believe this? Does it play an important role in your theology?

⁵¹**King James** has “The city of confusion”; **Tanakh** has simply “towns”; **New Revised Standard** has “The city of chaos”; **New International** has “The ruined city”; **New Jerusalem** has “The city of nothingness.”

It is difficult to determine the exact meaning of the masculine noun תְּהוֹי, as is obvious from these varying translations.

Slotki’s translation has “city of wasteness,” but he suggests the translation “city of chaos, *tohu*, the word used in **Genesis 1:2**.” He adds that “No particular city seems intended, the scene of devastation being general.” (P. 111)

The Greek translators vary in their translation of the noun תְּהוֹי, sometimes translating by κενόν, “empty,” “idle,” “exhausted”; sometimes by οὐδέν, “nothing,” “no one”; and sometimes by μάταιον, “idle,” “foolish,” “unmeaning.” Here, our Greek translation has πᾶσα πόλις, “every city.” Watts notes that this “reflects a tendency to generalize the judgment.” (P. 314)

Gray states concerning this “city of chaos” that “It seems clear that the writer had a definite city, or definite cities, and a definite people in view, but unfortunately the descriptions are so vague that they are satisfied by any of the many cities with which at different times and by different writers they have been identified—Nineveh, Babylon, Shushan, Tyre, Samaria, etc.” (P. 399)

He adds that “the city of chaos is the city of idolatry, of sham Gods, in contrast to Jerusalem, ‘the city of God’; it is essentially, as the capital of the world-empire which is in rebellion against God, the embodiment of those powers which claim to be somewhat [perhaps meaning ‘a big deal’], but are truly unreal.” (P. 412)

Motyer notes that “Many attempts have been made to identify the unnamed city of **24:10** etc., and no doubt elements in the description are suited to these various locations...

“[Isaiah] has in mind the ‘global city,’ the whole world organized on a human-centered, non-spiritual basis. He has now taken us past the point where we say, ‘Babylon has fallen,’ and brought us to the point where the spirit of Babylon is

(continued...)

⁵¹(...continued)

encapsulated in ‘the city without meaning’ (**24:10**), in whose fall the earth itself returns to primeval meaninglessness (**24:18b-20**; compare **Genesis 1:2**; **Jeremiah 4:23ff.**) And beyond which shines the city where the Lord reigns (**24:21-23**).” (Pp. 195-96)

Motyer adds that “It is the city of תְּהוֹם, the word translated ‘formless’ in **Genesis 1:2** where the first stage of the creative process was the material substrate of the world, and it was תְּהוֹם וְרֵבְבוֹתָיִם (‘formless and empty’). The Divine Potter had brought into being the clay but as yet it was without the impress of His hands; it did not contain inherently any meaning or purpose, nor any tendency towards them; it had not stability and no life; it was תְּהוֹם.” (P. 201)

Ortlund states that “The city is an important image in **chapters 24-27** (compare **24:12**; **25:2**; **26:1-2**, **5**; **27:10**). Isaiah sees world culture as a city because it is a place both of concentrated population and of imagined safety...The world city of human civilization, though highly developed, rejects the will of God and thus wastes its own potential.” (P. 1282)

But also see **Isaiah 17:1-2**, where Damascus and the cities of Aroer are similarly described, and **Isaiah 19:18**, where one of five cities in Egypt is called “City of Destruction.” This is not a new matter for **chapters 24-27**, but continues a theme already announced by Isaiah in preceding material. We are reminded of Augustine’s 22 volume **City of God**, and especially of his contrast between the “city of this world” and the “city of God.”

But still, we feel that the greatest passage in the **Hebrew Bible** for determining the identity of this “city of chaos” is **Ezekiel 16**, with its metaphorical description of Jerusalem, and her two sister-cities, Sodom and Samaria—all three of which were doomed to suffer Divine judgment—but all three of which were also promised a future beyond that destructive judgment. What do you think?

For occurrences of the adjectival noun תְּהוֹם in the **Hebrew Bible**, where some 11 of its 19 occurrences are from **Isaiah**, see our end-note 7.

Motyer comments that “**Jeremiah (4:23)** had a vision of the world reverting to this state, deprived of all that makes it habitable and meaningful, dark, unstable, empty of life and without a hint of purposeful activity. In a word, without what only God can provide.” (P. 201)

Do you agree with Motyer? Was not the original state of matter the creation of God? Did it not contain within it the countless swirling atoms and ingredients which would be transformed by the ordering, designing hand of God into the beautiful Eden-

(continued...)

⁵¹(...continued)

like earth / cosmos? And can we not believe that out of this city of chaos YHWH both can and will create His beloved city? Motyer continues:

“The ‘city of *tohu*’ lives without the ordering, life-giving hand of God, opting for a life on its own, within itself, depending on itself. Consequently, it is unstable and without purpose, spinning on the wheel but having dismissed the Potter, its ever changing shapes and fashions not dictated by purpose but by whimsy. Life is simply one thing after another. Rejecting the moral absolutes of **verse 5**, everything is relative and ultimately individualistic. Humankind’s great world city is ‘the city without meaning’ –a veritable Babel-*redivivus* [‘come back to life,’ ‘revived’] (**Genesis 11:1ff.**), where they thought they could find on earth and in themselves all they needed for secure community and a future, and they found only disorder, division and meaninglessness...

“Thus Isaiah looked through the Babylon he knew (**13:1ff.**) to the ongoing spirit of Babylon ever-present in world history (**21:1-10**), and finally to the ultimate Babel where at length human-kind’s self-sufficiency would bring their whole world about their ears.” (P. 201)

We think this comment is very important, and find it in accord with what we have learned from the **Book of Revelation**, where the City of Rome’s code-name is “Babylon.” See **Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10** and **21**. This tying together of **Genesis 11, Isaiah 24** and the **Book of Revelation** is very impressive in our estimation, especially when we see them all in the light of **Ezekiel 16!**

Young comments that “The judgment hitherto described has affected the entire world and not merely the land of Judah...The city of destruction must in some sense be representative of the universality of the sin and judgment.” (P. 163)

Oswalt notes that תֹהוּ, *tohu*, ‘chaos,’ “is a favorite word of Isaiah’s occurring 11 times in this **Book** and only 9 times in the rest of the **Old Testament**. It is probably used to express the conviction that only God is the Guarantor of order, not the idols.” He adds that “Prevention of chaos is a major theme in mythic literature.” (P. 439)

Oswalt states in his excursus found on pages 441-43 that “There is a great variety of opinion on the date and authorship of these **chapters [24-27]**, ranging all the way from Isaiah himself to Deutero-Isaiah to someone in the early second century B.C.E. Part of this divergency is due to the complete lack of datable historical allusions...

“Numerous attempts have been made to identify the overthrown city, reaching from Nineveh in 609 B.C.E. to Babylon at various times to Samaria in 107 B.C.E. [this position was rendered untenable by the discovery of 1QIs^a at Qumran and its date

earlier than 107 B.C.E.], but none of these has gained currency, and most

(continued...)

every house was shut up from entering.⁵³

24:11⁵⁴ צוֹחָה עַל-הַיַּיִן בַּחֲצוֹת

⁵¹(...continued)

contemporary writers agree that no specific city was intended but that the ‘city’ symbolized the world.” (P. 441)

He adds that “The city of chaos may describe conditions before or after Divine judgment...Instead of a gay city, alive with banners, its streets full of laughing crowds going from house to house for free drinks, all is empty and tumbled down, doors tightly locked.” (Pp. 448-49)

We say, No—the description is obviously the city after Divine judgment. What do you think?

⁵²Gray refers to **Jeremiah 51:8a**, “Suddenly Babylon fell, and it was broken.” He holds that “it refers, here at least, perhaps to the breaking down of the walls...The city is open to the assailants, and, therefore, the citizens shut up their houses against intrusion.” (P. 413)

Instead of our Hebrew text’s “it was broken, a city of **tohu** / chaos / confusion,” **Rahfs** has “every city was laid waste.”

⁵³Slotki comments on the phrase “every house is shut up,” that it means shut up “by the falling stones and rubble.” But, he says, “Others explain: shut up and barred by the survivors who live in constant fear of intrusion by undesirable visitors.” (P. 111)

Motyer notes that “Within the ruin one feature is noted that *the entrance to every house is barred*. This speaks of the spirit of fear which pervades. Life in the city of meaninglessness is a lonely and scary thing.” (P. 201)

Young asks, “Does the prophet mean to say by this figure that the houses are destroyed so that in the fullest sense the city is one of desolation? Or does he mean rather that the inhabitants are so terrified and filled with fear that they bolt themselves in their houses in order that no one may enter? The latter view is probably correct...The [pual perfect] verb סָנַר [‘shut up,’ ‘closed’] suggests that there was an actual closing of the doors of the houses, rather than that the doors were merely blockaded by the debris of the fallen city.” (P. 164)

⁵⁴Alexander translates / comments on **verse 11**: “A cry for wine in the streets—darkened is all joy—departed is the gladness of the earth ...

“Gesenius calls this verse “a plagiarism from **Joel 1:15**,” and Hitzig calls it “completely lame and flat.” He states that “One ground of objection to it is that a calling for wine, though perfectly appropriate in **Joel**, is entirely out of place in this description of a conquered and dismantled town. The later writers have had taste enough to see

(continued...)

עֲרֵבָה כָּל־שְׂמֵחָה

גְּלָה מְשׁוֹשׁ הָאָרֶץ:

An outcry over the wine⁵⁵ (is) in the streets;⁵⁶

⁵⁴(...continued)

that the cry meant is not that of drunkards for more liquor, but of the perishing inhabitants for necessary refreshment...perhaps with special reference to the sick and wounded...All the latest [mid-19th century C.E.] writers acquiesce in Buxtorf's definition of [עֲרֵבָה] as meaning to grow dark, with special reference to the setting of the sun or the coming on of twilight. This beautiful figure is itself an answer to the aesthetical sneers of certain critics." (P. 407)

Motyer comments that **verse 11** "corresponds to **verses 7b-9**, sharing the same vocabulary, *wine* (9), *joy* (שְׂמֵחָה); a component of *merrymakers*...) and *gaiety* (8ac)...In the parallel passage we saw the failure of stimulants, in both supply and effect. Here, with grim sadness, Isaiah observes the people of the city of meaninglessness crying out for failed remedies. For in that city, humankind, shut up to themselves, can only turn to what has already been tried and failed." (P. 201)

Oswalt states that "An outcry for wine is not out of place in this context. It refers to the now disappeared alcoholic gaiety. Where there was an abundance of wine, there is now none and those who have developed a dependency are in desperate trouble." (P. 449)

⁵⁵Slotki's translation has "amidst the wine." He comments that "Their orgies of drinking are interrupted by the bitter cry of the sufferers. Other renderings are: 'for the want of wine,' 'instead of the wine,' 'because of wine'...i.e. the vineyards which are destroyed." (P. 112) Compare **Isaiah 32:11-12**,

- 11 Tremble, women at ease!
Quake / shudder, trusting / complacent (daughters)!
Strip, and make yourself bare--
and girdle your waists,
12 (striking yourselves) upon (your) breasts,
wailing / lamenting over pleasant fields,
over vine(s) making fruit!

⁵⁶Young comments that "It is not the outcry of drunkards for more wine, but that of the ordinary inhabitants for refreshment. As the people needed bread for sustenance, so they needed wine for refreshment, and for quenching their thirst." (P. 166)

all rejoicing became dark;⁵⁷
rejoicing of the earth / land was removed.^{58, 8}

24:12⁵⁹ נִשְׂאָר בְּעֵיר שָׁמָּה

⁵⁷Young comments that “Over the joy of the city the sun has set, and joy has entered into evening; darkness has come.” (P. 166)

Oswalt comments that the phrase “All joy is darkened” “fits the picture very well in its evocation of the shift from bright, flashing color to dull grayness. Both the Greek translation and the Aramaic Targum, however, seem to point to the root עָבַר, ‘pass away,’ as being the original instead of ‘to be dark,’ עָרַב, (**arabh**.” (P. 449)

⁵⁸The phrase נִגְלָה מִשׁוֹשׁ הָאָרֶץ, “rejoicing of the land / earth was removed,” probably implies “was taken into captivity.” The qal participle נִגְלָה means “captive,” and oftentimes the qal verb means “go into exile.” See our end-note 8.

Westermann translates by “has been carried away from misery and harsh servitude”; Hillers has “has gone into exile after suffering and much toil.”

Motyer comments that “following the revelation of the broken city (**verse 10**) the poem seems to tumble to a quick conclusion...*All gaiety is banished from the earth!* ‘The gaiety of the earth has gone into captivity,’ i.e. has passed into other hands from which it cannot be recovered; it is, therefore, irretrievably lost.” (P. 202)

Young says, “As **verse eleven** shows, there has been a great departure. Joy is gone; rejoicing and gladness are no more. There is, however, something left behind, namely, desolation, and with it the crushing of the city’s gate. The שָׁמָּה, **shammah** (waste, appallment [depression occasioned by terror]) is a word that calls to mind the exile...The prophet paints a grim picture. The one-time mirth and rejoicing that accompanied the reveling of the people have gone, and in their place waste and desolation remain. Accompanying this waste is the fact that the gate, the most important part of the city, will itself be smitten so as to become nothing but ruins.” (Pp. 166-67) We agree—see the 39 occurrences of this noun, of which by far the majority are in **Jeremiah**.

Alexander mentions that nine [Hebrew] manuscripts have כָּל, “all,” before הָאָרֶץ, “the land / earth,” and the Greek translation supplies πᾶσα, “all,” before “rejoicing.” (P. 407)

⁵⁹Alexander translates / comments on **verse 12**: “*What is left in the city is desolation, and into ruins is the gate beaten down...*”

(continued...)

וּשְׂאִיָּה יִכַּת־שַׁעַר:

Waste / horror⁶⁰ was left remaining in the city,⁶¹
and ruin⁶² will have struck (its) gate(s).⁶³

⁵⁹(...continued)

“The first clause is in apposition [two elements, normally noun phrases, are placed side by side, with one element serving to identify the other in a different way] to the last clause of **verse 11**. Joy is gone and desolation is left behind...The gate is here named as the most important part of the city; but it does not directly mean the city itself.” (Pp. 407-08)

Oswalt comments on **verse 12** that “All that remains of the city is desolation. Even the gates through which the crowds once thronged are fallen into rubble.” (P. 449)

⁶⁰The noun שְׂנֵיָהּ, “waste / horror,” occurs some 42 times in the **Hebrew Bible**, at: **Genesis 36:13, 17; Deuteronomy 28:37; 1 Samuel 16:9; 17:13; 2 Samuel 23:25, 33; 2 Kings 22:19; Isaiah 5:9; 24:12 (here); Jeremiah 2:15; 4:7; 5:30; 8:21; 18:16; 19:8; 25:9, 11, 18, 38; 29:18; 42:18; 44:12; 49:13, 17; 50:23; 51:29, 37, 41, 43; Ezekiel 23:33; Hosea 5:9; Joel 1:7; Micah 6:16; Zephaniah 2:15; Zechariah 7:14; Psalms 47:9; 73:19; 1 Chronicles 1:37; 2 Chronicles 29:8 and 30:7.**

⁶¹Slotki notes that “in the city” has traditionally been understood as referring to Jerusalem, but he says that here, just as in **verse 10**, “no particular city seems intended...”

“In place of mirth which is gone (**verse 11**),” only desolation / waste / horror is left.” (P. 112)

We say, the city is any city that has suffered the Divine visitation of judgment, as did Sodom, Samaria, and Jerusalem (see **Ezekiel 16**).

⁶²The noun שְׂאִיָּהּ, “ruin / desolation” occurs only here in the **Hebrew Bible**. **Brown-Driver-Briggs** calls this a “late” word, but how can this be determined unless we assume that **chapters 24-26** as a whole are “late”? Related words in Hebrew are

שְׂוֹאָה, “devastation,” “ruin,” “waste.”

שָׂאָה, “make a din,” or “crash,” “crash into ruins.”

שְׂאוּהָ, *kethibh*, what is written, שְׂאוּהָ *qere*, to be read, “devastating storm.”

שְׂאוּן, “roar,” “din,” “crash,” “uproar.”

(continued...)

⁶²(...continued)

שָׁאֵת, **Brown-Driver-Briggs** calls this a “doubtful word,” perhaps for שָׁאֵת, “din of battle.”

⁶³Gray has “And the gate shall be crushed into ruins.” Our other English translations, including Motyer’s, all have a past tense, but the hophal verb יָבַת is imperfect / “future.” Motyer states that **verse 12** “speaks of destruction coupled with defenselessness.” (P. 202)

Rahlfs has οἶκοι, “houses,” instead of the Hebrew text’s “gates.”

⁶⁴Motyer entitles **verses 13-16b** “The song heard: world-wide gleanings,” and comments that “Isaiah is a master of the unexpected note of hope (e.g. **6:13; 28:5**). The ‘cutting down’ ([יָבַת]) of the gate (**verse 12**) merges into a different sort of ‘striking down’ (כָּנְקַף)—the blows which harvest the olive crop (**verse 13**). The remaining few of **verse 6** becomes a world-wide ingathering and, as the song of the city fades (**verses 9, 11**), its place is taken by a different song rising from all over the earth (**verse 16**)...”

“The section is marked by *repetitions—on the earth, among the nations (verse 13); they raise, shout, acclaim (verse 14); in the east, in the islands of the sea; the Lord, the Lord, the God of Israel (verse 15).*” (P. 202) We say Yes...Accompanying the fall of the city of chaos is the rising world-wide song of praise to YHWH!

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 13**: “*For so shall it be in the midst of the earth among the nations, like the beating of an olive-tree, like gleanings when the gathering is done...*”

“The fact that some survive is indeed referred to, but only indirectly and by implication, so that the verse is not properly an antithesis to the verse before it. Instead of saying that Isaiah here repeats his beautiful comparison in **17:5-6**, Gesenius and his followers set this down as the plagiarism of a later writer...”

“[The phrase] ‘In the midst of the nations’ is explained by Hitzig as contrasting the condition of the country with that of its neighbors. Others understand it of actual dispersion among foreign nations.” (P. 408)

Slotki states that “Tradition applies the verse to the remnant of Israel among the Gentiles. Others see in it a visitation upon all the human race of which a small remnant only will survive.” (P. 112) We see no indication of “the remnant of Israel,” but do see Isaiah’s depiction of praise to YHWH coming from all directions—a universal hymn of praise.

(continued...)

בְּתוֹךְ הָעַמִּים

כְּנִקְרָה זֵית

כְּעוֹלֵלֵת אֶם-כֹּלָה בְצִיר:

Because⁶⁵ in this way it will be in (the) midst of the earth / land,

among the peoples--

like an olive-tree is beaten;

⁶⁴(...continued)

Oswalt comments on **verse 13** that the phrase “Thus it shall be” “signals a concluding statement to this part of the poem. Up until this point prophetic perfects have been in use, indicating the finality of the judgment to come. Now the imperfects appear to mark the fact that these events still lie in the future. In that day, the fate earlier predicted for Israel (**17:6**) will befall all the peoples. The world will look like an olive orchard or a vineyard after the harvest. As only a few stray clusters or a handful of small olives remain, so it will be for the world. Out of all its fullness, only bits and pieces remain. This is the destiny of a people or a world which will refuse to acknowledge that the earth is full of God’s glory, not ours.” (P. 449)

Or, the depiction may be intended to mean that just as great joy accompanies the completion of harvest, as the gleaners finish their gleaning, so it will be that following the fall of the city / cities of chaos, will emerge world-wide rejoicing. What do you think?

⁶⁵Motyer comments that “The initial ‘For’ [our ‘Because’] looks back over the whole preceding context, where statements of total destruction (**verses 1-3, 7-12**) bracket the survival of a ‘few’ (**verses 4-6**)...”

“Initially, the theme of total loss [?] is continued. The ‘beating off of olives’ was the correct way to harvest them, and we are allowed to assume that this is the ‘grim reaper’ at work world-wide. But suddenly harvesting becomes gleaning, the careful gathering of what is left after (literally) ‘grape harvest is finished.’” (P. 202)

Does the text say anything about “the grim reaper at work world-wide”? We see the text depicting the Divine judgment falling upon the city / cities of chaos—but following that judgment, world-wide rejoicing arising, similar to the rejoicing that completion of harvest causes.

And, as **chapter 25** continues, the reason for world-wide rejoicing is clear—it is YHWH’s plan / purpose to swallow up death and its symbols forever for all peoples and all nations, as He spreads a universal wine-banquet for everyone to share in.

like gleanings / left-overs when grape-harvest was finished.⁶⁶

⁶⁶Slotki comments that the beating of an olive-tree occurs “when only a few olives remain on the branches of the olive-tree and a few grapes on the vine.” (P. 112) But is that the case? See on the Internet “Images for harvesting of olive trees in ancient times,” with its many depictions of the beating of the olive-tree in the very midst of the harvest—not only at its conclusion.

Ortlund comments that **verse 13** uses the olives beaten from the olive-trees, and the gleanings left after vintage harvest as metaphors for “the few men” of **verse 6**, left remaining after the Divine judgment. (P. 1282)

Again we note that this is not a new theme for **chapters 24-27**, but has already been seen in **Isaiah**:

17:5-6,

5 And it will be like gathering a harvest of standing (grain)--
and his arm reaps ears of grain in Rephaim Valley.
6 And there is left over in it gleanings,
like striking an olive-tree--
two, three ripe olives on top of a highest branch / summit,
four, five on its fruitful branches.
It is a saying of YHWH, God of Israel.
(What is said concerning Israel in **17:5-6** is said in **24:13** of the nations.)

Young comments that “After the olive tree has been shaken, there still remain olives upon the tree. After the first harvest, the gleanings, i.e., what remains after the harvest, are still on hand. So it will be with the judgment. After it has fallen, a remnant will still be present.” (P. 168)

Watts explains **verses 1-13** as follows: “The scene surveys the devastation which the Assyrian campaigns have brought about in the whole country [yes--but Assyria is not mentioned even once in **chapters 24-27!**], from the Euphrates to the River of Egypt. Yahweh is the prime Cause. The effects are universal on all the land’s peoples and on all its parts. A curse has bound the land. It looks like a tree after its fruit and leaves have been stripped off...

“Canaanite civilization [the phrase ‘Canaanite civilization’ is not found in the **Book of Isaiah!**] had dominated Palestine / Syria for well over a millennium. Now it is about to disappear.

“Noah’s curse had been on it for a long time (**Genesis 9:25-27** [where Noah, awakening from drunkenness, mistakenly curses Canaan to be the slave of Shem and Japheth; his curse should have been directed against Ham, his son, not his grandson Canaan! This ancient story should not be made the basis for understanding world-

(continued...)

⁶⁶(...continued)

history, or be a proof-text for human slavery as it was used by advocates of slavery in America's south during the Civil War!). Israel's entry into Canaan assumed this curse and capitalized on it. But Israel had not been able to transform the land. It came to share the Canaanite characteristics that God abhorred. And now she shares in the suffering of the land...

"The prophecy of the destruction of the whole land occurred in **Isaiah 10:23** [but with Israel excluded as a 'remnant'] and **13:5** [speaking of the land of Babylon, not of Canaan!]. There is no reason to see the meaning in **chapters 24-27** in any other way... Therefore these chapters should be seen as a climax and culmination of the previous

sections and of a piece with them, and it is misleading to give them a distinctively different genre...Issues raised in and by **chapters 24-27** should be understood in the light of the **Book** itself and as a part of the larger message and meaning of the **Book**. The basic characteristics of apocalyptic *cannot* be demonstrated in this section [we agree with these last two sentences, in spite of basically disagreeing with Watts' overall interpretation]...

"Just as **Genesis 6-9** describes the end of an age and the beginning of another, so the [**Book of Isaiah**] is doing the same thing [but nowhere is anything said concerning 'the end of an age' or 'the beginning of an age']...[It] takes up the course of events in the reign of Uzziah at mid-eighth century [B.C.E.]. It announces that Yahweh is bringing about drastic changes, not only for Israel and Judah, but [for] the entire 'world' within which they existed: its economy, its political framework, and its social structures.

"This destructive goal is reached when Assyria subjugates Phoenicia in 655 B.C.E. (**Isaiah 23**) [but this is an arbitrary dating; many other dates have been proposed for the fall of Phoenicia / Tyre]. Thus Yahweh has indeed devastated *the whole land* from Israel and Damascus (**chapter 10**), to Babylon (**chapters 13-14** and **21**) on one end and Egypt (**chapters 18** and **19**) on the other, including Edom, Moab, Philistia in between. The whole land lies devastated (**chapter 24**) [but these chapters that depict devastations apply to different places and times, and in just a short time the devastated cities and countries recovered—they were not all devastated at one time!]...

"Isaiah's [**Book**] sees this as the work and will of God. It calls upon those who survive the destruction to be alert to God's will for them, to God's new structures and God's new ways of life within the imperial structures that now dominate the scene. These were destined to exist for a long time. After Assyria came Babylon, Persia, the Hellenistic kingdoms, and the Romans. God was calling for a people to serve Him in the new age, just as He had called Abraham, Moses, and David in the old age. Israel and Judah in the old age had been blind, deaf, uncomprehending, and rebellious toward God...

(continued...)

⁶⁶(...continued)

“The [**Book of Isaiah**] implies that the people of God in the new age tended to be just the same. For them, then, there could be no hope (**Isaiah 65** [but **chapters 40-66** overall ring with hope!])—only those who yield to God and seek to serve Him in His new way will share His life and His city.” (Pp. 320-22)

We respect Watts for his long-time work on the **Book of Isaiah**, and are indebted to him for his many valuable observations concerning the Hebrew text of **Isaiah**. However, we have to disagree strongly with his attempt to put all of this material together, as he reads so much into the text, not genuinely finding it there! We ask, Who could ever derive all of this out of simply reading the **Book of Isaiah**? Watts, of course, but any other student of **Isaiah**? Certainly not me!

⁶⁷Watts entitles **verses 14-22** “Yahweh and the Kings.”

He comments that “the dark mood of the last scene is broken by the sound of the excited cheers for Yahweh from far edges of the land (**verses 14-16** [yes; but it sounds like universal praise from outside Israel]). But the cheering is not unanimous. A single voice speaks its woe and a chorus [?] supports him with cries of ‘Foul!’ (**verse 16** [?]). The response of the witnesses is a sharp reprimand, reminding one of the nature of the curse recalled in **verse 6** and of the solemnity of the judgments that mark the end of the age (**verses 18c-20a**). The renewed curse falls on people (**verse 18**), on the land (**verses 20b-d**) and on the kings (**verses 21-22**).

“This scene like scene 1 creates space for a delayed reaction in later scenes (‘after sufficient days,’ **verse 22**).” (P. 324) And we ask, Is this what you get from reading these verses? And, Is **verse 17** left out?

Kaiser entitles **verses 14-16a** “The Rejoicing at the Time of Salvation.”

He comments that “This short prophecy has been treated by modern commentators in a number of different ways. Whereas some regard it as purely a future prophecy, others regard it as a description of premature joy on the actual occasion of an act of salvation which was supposed at the time to have brought the turning point of history [where is anything said about ‘the turning point of history?’]...

“There is nothing to suggest that the tense of the verbs should be regarded as anything other than future, as in the preceding passage, **24:1-13**...It is also clear that in exactly the same way as **Psalms 113:3**, [‘from (the) sun’s rising as far as its setting--may YHWH’s name be praised!’] **verse 15** addresses its call to rejoicing first to the east and then to the islands lying in the west...

“Henry thinks that the rejoicing is at the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in 539

(continued...)

⁶⁷(...continued)

B.C.E., Rudolph to that associated with the conquest of Babylon by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.E., and Ludwig [thinks of] the battle at Emmaus in 165 B.C.E. which is decisive in **1 Maccabees 3:37-4:25**, and in which the Maccabees achieved their first great victory...

“Following the prophecy of the world-wide catastrophe, we are introduced to a new group of persons, distinguished by an emphatic pronoun from the rest of mankind...This group is to rejoice [are they not now heard rejoicing according to the text?] at the majesty of Yahweh, and in the conceptual world of Jewish eschatology it is obvious to suppose that they are members of the people of God [no—these are voices coming from beyond Israel—this is the non-Jewish world praising YHWH!]...

“For according to this mode of thought the judgment upon the world ultimately means salvation for Israel, even though Israel and its spiritual center at Jerusalem are first of all to share in the suffering (compare for example, **Isaiah 29:1ff.; 30:27ff.; chapters 33, 34 and 35** [but nothing like this is said in this text!])...The things that are going to bring Israel’s salvation in the future will surpass the miracle of the exodus at the first...

“We must remember, however, that apocalyptic thought is still conducted entirely within the myth and does not have to construct the unity of its world, but finds it ready made in the mythical consciousness, and also that the basic principle of this kind of thought is that of a multiplicity of approaches, which makes it possible for statements to follow each other which according to our conceptions would be contradictory; whereas the only concern of ancient man in any particular case was to bring to prominence the aspect which concerned him at that moment. First the judgment; then the salvation of Israel! [but is this stated in this text? We do not think so. We say, first the judgment of the city / cities of chaos, then the rising of world-wide praise of YHWH!]] It was the purpose of the apocalyptic writer who introduced not only this song of thanksgiving but also the song in **Isaiah 25:1f.**, that both should be emphasized.

“It is not clear who the speakers are in **verses 15 and 16a**. The most likely possibility is the redeemed Jews in the holy land, who are now putting out a call to the nations of the world to give their God Yahweh the honor due to Him, and hear their call echoed by the choirs at the ends of the earth [perhaps; but the text clearly depicts worship of YHWH coming from distant shores, while it does not identify the speakers]...

“Thus the nations set forth, singing, upon their journey to Zion, and the great pilgrimage of the nations begins [where in this text is anything said concerning a journey to Zion, or concerning the great pilgrimage of the nations? Kaiser is reading this into the text from other passages—but none of this is found here!], which had been awaited since the days of Deutero-Isaiah and which had been ceremoniously anticipated previously in the cult of the first temple.” (Pp. 186-88)

Kaiser, we repeat, is reading all kinds of ideas into the text, which are not actually

(continued...)

⁶⁷(...continued)

found there, but which he has found elsewhere.

Ortlund comments that in **verses 14-16**, “The drunken binge of **verses 7-11** is replaced with the joyful worship of those redeemed from the world.” (P. 1282) [But where is anything said concerning “those redeemed from around the world”? Ortlund, like Kaiser, is reading this into the text!]

Gray entitles **verses 14-16** “Praise, and a summons to Praise,” but notes that “these verses are exceedingly obscure and uncertain...A large part of the difficulty of interpretation consists in attempting to determine who these different speakers are, and the exact purport of their sayings...Any attempt to interpret the verses must, therefore, be tentative, and no complete and satisfactory interpretation of them in their present position seems possible.” (Pp. 414-15)

We agree that there are obscurities and uncertainties in the text, but insist that there should be no doubt that the text depicts world-wide praise of YHWH arising in the wake of the Divine judgment.

Ackerman summarizes these verses by stating, “Although peoples throughout the earth give glory to God, the prophet maintains that evil-doing is rampant.” (P. 988) And we ask, Is that the case? We see the text as depicting rampant evil-doing as the cause for the Divine judgment on the city / cities of chaos—but it says nothing concerning that evil-doing continuing following the judgment. Do you agree?

Watts asks concerning **verses 14-16**, where it is stated that “they raise their voices,” “Who are these who shout encouragement to Yahweh [is the shout ‘encouragement to Yahweh,’ or rather, praise of YHWH, the giving of glory to YHWH?] from the outer edges of the land which forms this stage of action? Are they the Israelites who have been exiled to far places? Are they members of Yahweh’s heavenly court? Are they admirers from among the nations? They remain unidentified. It is sufficient to note that Yahweh’s work is known and appreciated. He is recognized as majestic, as God of Israel, and as the Righteous One.” (Pp. 324-25) Yes.

Oswalt comments on **verses 14-16** that “This enigmatic passage has elicited reams of comment but very little certainty. That this uncertainty extends very far back in the past is evidenced by the diversity of the [Greek translation] and the Aramaic Targum from the Masoretic Text and from each other. It seems clear that the readings of these later versions are the results of attempts to explain what they saw as a somewhat incomprehensible text.” (Pp. 445-50)

See our end-note 9 for the translations of this passage in both the Greek and the Aramaic Targum.

Oswalt adds that “Possibly **verses 14-16a** are the response of the oppressed to

(continued...)

יִרְנֹוּ בְּגִּיאֹן יְהוָה
צְהִלּוּ מִיָּם:

These / they⁶⁸ will lift up their voice;⁶⁹

⁶⁷(...continued)

the news of the destruction of the ‘city of chaos,’ the world power (compare **14:4b-8**)... But the prophet cannot join in the gladness yet. His vision is still filled with the sight of the world’s evil which must come to a violent end...He also knows that wave upon wave of human treachery must precede that day (compare also **15:5; 17:9, 11; 22:4**)...As the drunken music of the world-city fades away, the reader is given a momentary glimpse of another kind of singing, which began before the world’s birth, and will continue forever when the world is but a memory.” (P. 450) Possibly...but not for sure.

Slotki comments on **verses 14-15** that “Those who survive the catastrophe will from the distant parts of the earth offer hymns of praises to God.” (P. 112)

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 14**: “*They shall raise their voice, they shall sing (or shout), for the majesty of Jehovah they cry aloud from the sea.*”

“The ‘they’ refers, not to the nations...or the Jews left in the land, but to the few dispersed survivors of these judgments.” (P. 408)

⁶⁸Slotki’s translation has “Those yonder,” and Slotki states that “Some apply the pronoun (the Hebrew is literally ‘they’) to the Israelites in the Diaspora [Jews living outside Israel].” (P. 112) But does the text mention anything about “Israelites in the Diaspora”? We think not.

Motyer comments that “The emphatic pronoun [הֵמָּנָה, ‘they,’ ‘these,’ ‘the same’] merits translating as ‘These are they who...’, identifying these newcomers on the scene with the ‘gleanings’ of **verse 13** and the ‘few’ of **verse 6**, who now ‘lift up their voice, shout aloud of the majesty of the Lord, having raised a festal cry from the west.’” (P. 202)

That is, they are the “remnant” left from the Divine destruction, or as H. Wolf states, the “they” or “these” refers to “The Godly remnant that survives the judgment.” (P. 1049)

Gray states that “If we seek to explain הֵמָּנָה [‘they’] by what precedes, its only possible reference is to those who escape the judgment; that small remnant which has just been compared (**verse 13**) to the olives left after the striking, and the grapes on the vine after the vintage. Of whom then does this remnant consist, of Jews or Gentiles? Does **verse 14** describe the joyous praise of Yahweh by the Jews who shall escape in the great world-judgment, or the confession by Gentile survivors of the ‘God of Israel’

(continued...)

they will give a ringing cry⁷⁰ in / at YHWH's exaltation / majesty;^{71, 10}

⁶⁸(...continued)

(verse 15) as the true God of all mankind?...

“17:6, which is the model of 24:13, is immediately followed (17:7) by a statement that all mankind will turn ‘to the Holy One of Israel.’” (P. 415)

⁶⁹Compare **Isaiah 52:8**,

A voice of your (feminine singular, i.e., Zion's) watchmen—
they lifted up a voice together they will ring out / ring out;
because eye on / to eye they will see / are seeing,
as YHWH returns (to) Zion!

In this verse (**Isaiah 52:8**), the “they” refers to “Zion's watchmen.” But does that mean that this is the “they” of this present text?

Oswalt comments that it is just as probable that “no definite subjects are intended, the fact of the singing being more important than the identity of the singers.” (P. 450) We agree.

⁷⁰The verb יִרְנְנוּ is 3rd person plural qal imperfect, “they will give a ringing cry.” But while no subject for the verb is given in the Hebrew other than “these,” **Rahlfs** supplies one: οἱ δὲ καταλειφθέντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εὐφρανθήσονται, “but then the ones having been left behind upon the earth [i.e., the ‘remnant’] will be gladdened.”

Young states that “One thing is clear. The deliverance places a song of rejoicing in the hearts and on the lips of those who remain. Judgment often gives way to rejoicing.” (P. 169) Yes. Judgment is not by any means the final word. The final word is rejoicing. Do you believe that?

⁷¹**New Revised Standard, New International** and **New Jerusalem** all give these first two lines in the present tense, rather than the imperfect / future as the Hebrew has it.

For occurrences of the noun גָּאֹן , “exaltation,” “majesty,” see our end-note 10.

Oswalt comments that “The word used is גָּאֹן , **ga)on**, which the prophet roundly condemns in humanity (**Isaiah 13:11, 19; 14:11; 16:6; 23:9; 28:1, 3**). The reason he condemns it is because of its inappropriateness. Only God is truly exalted, and until the nations of the world recognize that, they are condemned to humiliate themselves before His majesty (**Isaiah 2:10, 19, 21**). But when they do recognize the truth through His judgments, He intends to share His majesty with them (**Isaiah 60:15**).” (P. 450)

they cried shrilly⁷² from (the) sea / west.⁷³

24:15⁷⁴ עַל-סֵן בְּאָרְיִים

⁷²The verb צָהָלוּ, **tsahalu**, is 3rd person plural qal perfect, “they cried shrilly,” or “they neighed.” **King James** and **Tanakh** both translate by the future tense, while **New Revised Standard**, **New International** and **New Jerusalem** all translate by the present tense. The Hebrew text has a strange combination of two future verbs followed by a perfect “past” tense verb.

⁷³**Rahlfs** translates this line by παραχθήσεται τὸ ὕδωρ τῆς θαλάσσης, “the water of the sea will be troubled,” and we wonder what Hebrew text is being translated.

Gray states that “it is not improbable that among the many other passages of scripture that haunted the writer’s memory was **Psalm 47**, which speaks of the joyful hand-clapping and ringing cries (קוֹל רְנָה), “with a voice of ringing praise,” **Psalm 47:2** [compare here הִמְנֵה יִשְׂאוּ קוֹלָם יִרְנֹוּ בְּגִאוֹן יְהוָה, ‘they will lift up their voice; they will sing with ringing joy at YHWH’s majesty’]) with which the heathen that survive will welcome the accession of Yahweh in Mount Zion (**verse 23** [of **Isaiah 24**]) as King of all nations (**Psalm 47:3, 9**)...compare...**Isaiah 25:6**, Yahweh’s coronation-feast for all nations.” (P. 416)

We have entitled **Psalm 47** “Celebrating the Universal King”—see **47:9**^{Heb} / **8**^{Eng}

God has reigned over [the] nations!
God has sat down upon his set-apart throne!

Slotki explains that the phrase “from the sea” means “from the direction of the Mediterranean. The Hebrew word יָם, **yam** also means ‘the west.’” (P. 112)

Oswalt suggests that “*in the west* (literally ‘from the [Mediterranean] sea’) may indicate Israel, the homeland of the Jews, and that the singers invite the rest of the world to join them. But more likely it is the opening line of a statement of the universality of the song. It extends from west to east and to the islands of the sea (**Isaiah 42:4, 10; 51:5; 59:18, 19; Psalm 97:1-12; 97:1, 6; 98:2, 4**.)” (P. 451)

We agree that it is much more likely that it is an indication of the “universality of the song.” And we add, the author is already hearing that song, ringing out shrilly from west to east, proclaiming the majesty of YHWH. See the footnotes that follow, especially footnotes 77, 78 and 80. What do you think?

⁷⁴Slotki comments on **verse 15** that “The verse gives the words which ‘those yonder’ [or ‘they’] (in the previous verse) will sing.” (P. 112)

(continued...)

כְּבִרְוֵי יְהוָה

בְּאֵי תֵימָם

שֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Therefore in the lights / east,⁷⁵

⁷⁴(...continued)

Alexander translates **verse 15**: “*Therefore in the fires glorify Jehovah, in the islands of the sea the name of Jehovah God of Israel.*”

Alexander thinks the verse is “really an address to the persons who had already been described as praising God, exhorting them to do so still.” (P. 451)

Young comments on **verse 15** that “Isaiah now directly addresses those who had been praising God, and commands them to continue doing so.” (P. 169)

⁷⁵Alexander comments that “[the plural word] אֲרָיִם has been variously explained as meaning valleys, caverns, doctrines, fires of affliction, exile, Urim (and Thummim), Ur (of the Chaldees), etc...”

“It is now [mid-19th century C.E.] commonly agreed to be a local designation... Barnes suggests that אֲרָיִם may denote the northern lights or aurora borealis. Henderson thinks the prophet means the region of volcanic fires, that is, the Mediterranean coasts and islands. But the weight of exegetical authority [what does that mean? Does he mean a majority of skilled commentators and lexicographers?] preponderates in favor of the meaning in the east (as the region of sunrise, or of dawning light) in opposition to the sea or west.” (P. 408)

Oswalt comments that “*in the east* (literally ‘in the lights’) has been taken to mean ‘lands of light’ and thus the east, but it is a unique usage and thus open to question (the Greek translation omits the phrase completely and the Aramaic Targum paraphrases ‘when light comes to the righteous’). If [our] interpretation is correct, the peoples of one end of the world are being called on to join those of the other until the song resounds to the very limits, the islands. The content of the song will be the glory of the character (*name*) of Israel’s God. It is not His label or His title which is so marvelous, but Who He is as Creator, Judge, Redeemer, and Lord. As such He is worth praising forever (**Revelation 4:8-5:13**).” (P. 451)

King James has “in the fires”; **Tanakh** has “with lights”; our other English translations have “in the east.” **Brown-Driver-Briggs** holds that it probably means “in the region of lights,” i.e., in the east, where the dawn comes up.

(continued...)

honor YHWH!⁷⁶

In the coasts / regions of the sea^{77, 11}

(honor) YHWH, God of Israel's name!⁷⁸

⁷⁵(...continued)

Slotki's comments that "If this is a designation of the east, the purport of **verses 14-15** is that the west will call to the east to unite with them and the islands of the sea in hymns of praise and glory to the God of Israel." (P. 112)

Gray states that "It is very doubtful whether this means the East as the region of light; but some term for East in antithetic parallelism with *the isles of the sea* (**verse 15b**), i.e. the West, may very well have stood here." (P. 417)

⁷⁶The verb כִּבְדוּ has been pointed by the masorettes as masculine plural imperative, "you people, honor YHWH!" It is not a future verb, meaning "you people will honor YHWH," but a present imperative, implying "join your voices even now in honoring YHWH!" It can also be pointed as a qal perfect, "you people honored YHWH."

Motyer comments that "The imperative 'give glory' [our 'honor!'] is a device to indicate the prophet's own excitement in what he is hearing. The songs from *the west* (**14**) make him want world-wide praise to begin, therefore he calls for matching songs from *the east* and then from *the islands*." (P. 203)

⁷⁷For occurrences of this phrase, אֲרָצוֹת יָם, "coasts / regions of the sea(s)," in the **Hebrew Bible**, see our end-note 11. It seems obvious from reading all the passages where "coasts / regions" occur that the reference is to the non-Jewish peoples throughout the wide earth. Notice that in **Isaiah 49:1** the word "coasts / regions" is parallel to "peoples from afar!"

⁷⁸Isaiah envisions a universal worship of YHWH, that is already beginning as he hears its sounds from the west, the east, and from the islands.

Gray comments that this term for God, "YHWH God of Israel," "would be particularly suitable if the heathen are the subject of *glorify* [our 'honor!']." (P. 417)

Compare **Isaiah 2:2-4**, where all the nations are depicted as going up to Jerusalem and the temple to learn YHWH's teaching:

- 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.
- 3 And many peoples will go,
and they will say, Come!

(continued...)

⁷⁸(...continued)

And we will go up to YHWH's mount,
to (the) God of Jacob's house / temple!

And He will teach us some / from His ways,
and we will walk in His ways!

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 to a nation,
and they will not again learn war!

This is **Isaiah's** stated goal of the Divine Warrior, YHWH. It is a world united as one people, living in that city of the future, learning from YHWH, and living in peace, with the absence of war!

We say, What a dream / vision! And we compare with it **Isaiah 25:6-8**, with its dream / vision of a Divine feast spread for all peoples and nations, in which death is swallowed up forever, and all tears are wiped away. Again we say, What a dream / vision! We can gladly sing that song of hope!

Motyer comments that the nations "do not come to contribute religious insights into a common pool of truth but rather they have jettisoned whatever belonged to them nationally in favor of that which belongs to Israel, whose God alone they will name. 'Thus,' says Kaiser, 'the nations set forth, singing, upon their journey to Zion, and the great pilgrimage of the nations begins.'" (P. 203)

What do you think? Where does **Isaiah** say that the nations will have jettisoned whatever belonged to them nationally in favor of that which belongs to Israel? And, Where does this text mention the nations "setting forth," or "their journey to Zion," or "the great pilgrimage of the nations"? This text, **Isaiah 24**, does not mention any of this—and Motyer, just like Kaiser, is reading these ideas into the text, based largely on the earlier text, **Isaiah 2:2-4**.

What do you think **Revelation 21:24** means when it says concerning the "new Jerusalem" that "the nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth are bringing their glory / splendor into it"? Is that a depiction of them "jettisoning everything that belongs to them nationally"? We think not. Rather, it means (we think), the nations bring their gifts and achievements into the city of God, to share them with all the other citizens.

⁷⁹Young groups **verses 16-23** as a unit, and states that "**Verse 16** constitutes an introduction to the section that follows, and **verse 23** a conclusion. Separating these

(continued...)

צְבִי לְצַדִּיק
 וְאָמַר רְזִי-לִי
 רְזִי-לִי אֲוִי לִי
 בְּגָדִים בְּגָדָו
 וּבְגָד בּוֹגְדִים בְּגָדָו:

From the earth's extremity⁸⁰ we heard songs--⁸¹

⁷⁹(...continued)

two verses are three groups each consisting of two verses." (P. 171)

Slotki comments on **verses 16-20** that "The prophet hears jubilant songs ascending from the uttermost parts of the earth, perhaps from Persia [to the east] or Ethiopia [to the west]. But he exclaims in despair, 'Woe is me, I waste away, I waste away,' because the rejoicing is premature; the world has yet to pass through tribulation and sorrow before traitors and treachery would be swept away and the earth could be cleansed." (P. 113)

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 16**: "*From the wing (skirt or edge) of the earth we have heard songs, praise to the righteous; and I said, Woe to me, woe to me, alas for me! The deceivers deceive, with deceit the deceivers deceive.* [This verse means "We hear promises and praise to the righteous [our 'to the Righteous One']", but our actual experience is that of misery." (P. 409)

Slotki comments on **verse 16** that "The prophet's realization of the true state of affairs brings on a feeling of sickness in contrast to the rejoicing of the peoples." (P. 112)

⁸⁰The noun כַּנֶּף is literally "wing," and is used for "extremity" such as the edge of a garment, or of an army, or of the land / earth, as it is intended here, at **24:16**.

Young states that "To show the universality of this praise, Isaiah begins with the words, *from the wing of the earth*, by which he means earth's farthest extremities. The word is singular, but may be understood generally, 'We have heard songs which have come even from the extremity of the earth.'" (P. 171)

Again, this is not something first mentioned in **chapters 24-27**. See **Isaiah 11:12**, where in the good times coming YHWH is depicted as gathering His dispersed people:

(continued...)

⁸⁰(...continued)

And He will lift up a signal / sign for the nations,
and He will gather Israel's thrust out / banished ones,
and scattered ones of Judah He will gather,
from the land's / earth's four wings / extremities!

The noun פְּנֵי (penei) occurs elsewhere in **Isaiah**, at **6:2, 2** (wings of the seraphim); **8:8** (wings of an overflowing river, symbolism); **10:14** (wing of a bird); and **18:1** (wings of insects?).

Rahifs' translation of **verse 16** is unique: ἀπὸ τῶν περὺγων τῆς γῆς τέρατα ἠκούσαμεν ἐλπίς τῷ εὐσεβεῖ καὶ ἐροῦσιν οὐαὶ τοῖς ἀθετοῦσιν οἱ ἀθετοῦντες τὸν νόμον, "From the wings of the earth we heard wonders—hope for the devout person; and the ones setting aside the *torah* / teaching will say, Woes to the ones who set aside!"

Oswalt comments on **verse 16** that "The description of the geographic extent of the celebration reaches its climax in the phrase *the ends (the wing) of the earth*. Elsewhere the term is plural (**Isaiah 11:12; Ezekiel 7:2; Job 37:3**) when used in this way, but the sense is the same: the outer edge, the hem of the world." (P. 451)

⁸¹Motyer comments that "The prophet envisages himself in a listening company saying to one another, 'From the ends of the earth we hear songs.'" (P. 203)

The Hebrew verb is qal perfect, i.e., "past" tense, זָמַרְתָּ שְׁמֵנוּ, literally, "songs we heard," and we see no reason for changing the tense as Motyer does.

We are reminded of statements attributed to YHWH in **Malachi 1:11** and **14b**,

1:11 Because from sun's rising and as far as its going down / setting,
great (is) My name among the nations,
and in every place incense is brought to My name,
and a clean / pure offering,
because great (is) My name among the nations,
said YHWH of Armies!"

1:14b Because a great King (am) I,
said YHWH of Armies,
and My name (is) fearsome / revered among the nations.

Rahifs translates these verses in **Malachi** by:

1:11 Because from risings of (the) sun until / as far as settings / goings down,
the name of Mine has been glorified / honored / praised among the

(continued...)

⁸¹(...continued)

nations;
and in every place incense is being brought forward to My name,
and a clean / pure sacrifice.
Because great (is) My name among the nations,
says Lord, Ruler of All / Almighty.

1:14b because I, I am a great King,
says Lord, Ruler of All / Almighty,
and the name of Mine splendid / remarkable / glorious among the nations!

However, some English translations, evidently threatened by this affirmation of YHWH's universal worship centuries before the coming of Christ, change the tenses of the verbs:

King James, "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name *shall be* great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts...for I *am* a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name *is* dreadful among the heathen." (This translation shows that the tenses have been changed in **verse 11**, by placing them in italics. In **14b King James** does not change the tense.)

New International, "My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty...For I am a great king, says the LORD Almighty, and my name is to be feared among the nations." (This translation has no indication that it has changed the tenses in **verse 11**, nor any justification for its "is to be feared" in **verse 14b**.)

Other English translations, truer to the Hebrew text, do not change the tenses:

Tanakh, "For from where the sun rises to where it sets, My name is honored among the nations, and everywhere incense and pure oblation are offered to My name; for My name is honored among the nations--said the LORD of Hosts...For I am a great King--said the LORD of Hosts--and My name is revered among the nations."

New Revised Standard, "For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts...for I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name is revered among the nations."

New Jerusalem, "But from farthest east to farthest west my name is great among the nations, and everywhere incense and a pure gift are offered to my name, since

(continued...)

beauty / honor^{82, 12} to the Righeous One!⁸³

⁸¹(...continued)

my name is great among the nations, says Yahweh Sabaoth...For I am a great king, says Yahweh Sabaoth, and among the nations my name inspires awe.”

We think that what Isaiah and his companions have heard is what **Malachi** is describing—a universal worship of YHWH, and a recognition of His greatness, all around the world. And Isaiah affirms that he and others with him have heard that voice.

C. F. Keil frankly states concerning this passage from **Malachi** that, "The idea, therefore, that the statement, that incense is burned and sacrifice offered to the name of Jehovah in every place, refers to the sacrifices which the heathen offered to their Gods, is quite inadmissible. At the time of Malachi the name of Jehovah was not great from the rising to the setting of the sun, nor were incense and sacrifice offered to Him in every place, and therefore...the expression ['in every place' says too much]. Consequently we must understand the words prophetically as relating to that spread of the kingdom of God among all nations, with which the worship of the true God would commence 'in every place.' ['In every place'] forms an antithesis to

the *one* place, in the temple at Jerusalem, to which the worship of God was limited during the time of the old covenant..." (P. 438)

All of which means, **Malachi's** statement cannot be taken at face value [nor can this statement in **Isaiah 24!**], and the modern commentator has the right to change the prophet's perfect and present tenses into futures!

But this is to reject a recurring biblical theme that can give the student of **Malachi** a much broader and fuller understanding of the nature of YHWH, the God of Israel, and in addition give further testimony to the fact that Jesus Christ in His universal mission is truly the embodiment and fulfillment of the **Jewish Bible!**

It is an interesting and helpful question--Why do Christian translators / commentators like Keil feel compelled to change from the present into the future tense? A closely related question is, "Why are some Christian readers of the **Jewish Bible** so reticent to affirm its numerous statements concerning YHWH's loving forgiveness and granting of salvation to human beings long before the coming of Jesus?" Do Christians feel that they are detracting from the honor of Jesus by admitting what the **Hebrew Bible** claims about YHWH? How do you personally respond to such matters? Are we the heirs of an incipient anti-Semitism, that is reflected in such views? And are we afraid to admit with Isaiah and Malachi that YHWH was in fact being praised and worshiped throughout the world in their time?

How will you deal with these questions? They are very important for the understanding and interpretation of the **Bible!**

⁸²For occurrences of this noun צְבִי which oftentimes occurs meaning “gazelle,” but which also occurs meaning “beauty,” “honor,” or “ornament,” see our end-note 12.

⁸³**Verses 14-16a, b** depict universal worship of YHWH. In **verse 16b, King James and Tanakh** have “glory to the righteous.” Our other English translations have “glory to the Righteous One” or “Upright One.” **Gray** has “beauty for the righteous.” We think it best to assume that the reference is to praise of YHWH, not of righteous people (the adjective is singular, not plural).

Alexander states that צְדִיק “is not an epithet of God...or Cyrus...but of righteous men in general.” (P. 409) Perhaps...but we think the text would use the plural, צְדִיקִים, “righteous ones,” if it was referring to “righteous men in general.”

He also states that לְצְדִיק [our ‘beauty to the Righteous One’] is commonly regarded as the very language of the song referred to; but it may as well be a description of it, (a song of) praise or honor to the righteous.” (P. 409)

Young holds that “In the light of **Isaiah 4:2** that beauty is seen to be the Branch of the Lord, and that Branch is the Messiah. The beauty of the redeemed is Christ. For those who have escaped the ravages of the judgment and have been delivered therefrom there is truly a glory and a beauty, namely, their Deliverer.” (P. 172)

This is a possible interpretation, but the phrase is not “beauty for the Branch.” It is just as possible to say that “in the light of **Isaiah 28:5** that beauty is seen to be YHWH.” As Young notes, “Calvin and others think that the word ‘righteous’ is here applied to God, so that the song of the delivered ones becomes a paean [a choral song] of praise to God Himself.” (P. 172)

Gray comments that “No longer will great worldly but unrighteous empires like Babylon appear beautiful, but the righteous nation (**Isaiah 26:2**; also **Habakkuk 1:4, 13; 2:4**), i.e., the Israel of the future and those who, as fearing the One True God, attach themselves to it. The suggestion that the righteous means Yahweh has now been rightly abandoned.” (P. 418)

But this is not the case, as is obvious from translations being made after Gray’s time (1865-1922).

Oswalt states that “*The Righteous One* is taken here to refer to God on the basis of the context; in the two previous verses it is the Lord’s glory being hymned. At the same time, Delitzsch’s arguments that it must be Israel cannot be dismissed lightly.

These arguments are that צְבִי, **tsebhuy**, ‘glory, beauty,’ is elsewhere God’s gift to His people (**Isaiah 4:2; 28:5**), not an attribute of His, and that while the people are called ‘the righteous’ (**Isaiah 3:10** [there us no definite article, and the passage is somewhat

(continued...)

And⁸⁴ I said,⁸⁵ leanness / wasting⁸⁶ to me;

⁸³(...continued)

obscure]), God is not without some additional qualifier. However, while it would certainly be consistent for the nations to sing of what God had done for His people (**Isaiah 60:2, 3; 62:2**), both of these arguments are from silence, and apart from other evidence, should not outweigh the context.” (P. 451)

⁸⁴Watts translates the phrase **וְאָמַרְתִּי**, “But then I say...” We agree that “but” may well be the meaning of the conjunction here, but the *waw-conversive / consecutive* changes the tense from imperfect / future to perfect / past, and there is no reason for translating it by the present tense.

As **Brown-Driver-Briggs** states, sometimes the conjunction “connects *contrasted* ideas, where in our idiom the contrast would be expressed explicitly by *but*; in such cases prominence is usually given to the contrasted idea by its being placed immediately after the conjunction, as in **Genesis 2:17**, ‘*but* [literally, and] of the tree of the knowledge...thou shalt not eat.’”

Watts comments that “There is dissent, both individual and group [we see the individual, Isaiah himself, we think; but where is the ‘group’?], from those who would insist that there is no justice in this, only treachery. This cry would come from some who have felt the loss personally, but admit no personal guilt to account for it. They think they have been cheated.” (P. 325)

We think Isaiah himself is speaking, and while he hears the voices of praise to YHWH from west to east, he sees himself surrounded by (fellow Israelites) who are treacherously betraying YHWH—that is, the very people who should be leading the praise of YHWH are traitors to His cause! What do you think?

⁸⁵Kaiser entitles **verses 16b-20** “No Escape from Judgment.”

He comments that “This passage looks back behind **24:14-16a** and returns to the coming judgment...The way in which the apocalyptic writer in this passage works is so similar to that which we observed in **24:1-3** that it is likely that the author is the same...

“The devout author’s study of scripture has made him certain what will happen in the future. Thus he regards himself as the bearer of the eschatological secret (the uncertainty of translation should be explicitly mentioned, although the usage of the [Aramaic] Targum and the testimony of [Rahlf’s] seems adequate to me), the content of which first of all justifies a cry of despair at those who are false, treacherous and objectively unreliable. This is a particular characteristic, within the expectations of the final age, of the mysterious conqueror of Babylon and in **Isaiah 33:1** as the attacker of Jerusalem. The plural here seems to imply the figures and forces on earth which are hostile to God.” (P. 190)

(continued...)

⁸⁵(...continued)

But where in this passage is there anything said concerning “the mysterious conqueror of Babylon” or “the attacker of Jerusalem”?

Motyer entitles **verses 16c-18d** “Personal wasting away: grief over treachery and its outcome.” He comments that “It seems quite obvious that there is a new section of text beginning at **16c**. Note the three-fold repetition of לִי, “to me...to me...to me,” as well as the two-fold repetition of “leanness / wasting, leanness / wasting.”

Where our Hebrew text has the 1st person singular, **Rahlfs** changes to οὐαὶ τοῖς ἀθετοῦσιν οἱ ἀθετοῦντες τὸν νόμον, “Woe / alas to those setting aside, the ones setting aside the law!”

Young comments that Isaiah “draws attention to himself, indicating his own reaction to the song of praise. He uses the past tense, because his actual speaking had already taken place in the vision...It was in the vision that Isaiah spoke; now, looking back upon what he had seen and recording what had happened, he employs the past (tense).” (Pp. 172-73)

Gray quotes the German commentator Marti who states, “Our poet judges otherwise (than the voices which have spoken in **verses 14-16a**). No, he says, not צְבִי [‘beauty’], but רָזַי [‘leanness’ / ‘wasting’]; not victory...but sickness...not the dawn of the Bright Age, but continuance of illness. The prophet proves this by the prophecy, ‘Plunderers plunder.’” (P. 418) But is that a “prophecy,” or a statement of fact? We think it is the latter.

H. Wolf comments that the “I” in this verse [and the ‘me’] is “probably collective for the Godly community that wastes away because of the villainy of the treacherous nations that seek to crush the people of God.” (P. 1050)

What do you think? Should we instead take this to be the words of Isaiah himself, lamenting his condition in life? We think Isaiah has seen a vision filled with beauty for YHWH’s people in the coming future—but his statement shows that he recognizes that the realization of that hope is not for him to share, because of the treachery that surrounds him.

⁸⁶The noun רָזַי occurs only here in this passage (twice), and nowhere else in the **Hebrew Bible**. Related to this noun are the following words: רָזַי vb. be or grow lean (**Zephaniah 2:11**); the adjective רָזַי, “lean” (**Numbers 13:20** and **Ezekiel 24:20**); and רָזַי, “leanness,” “wasting,” “scantiness” (**Isaiah 10:16**; **Psalms 106:15** and **Micah 6:10**).

(continued...)

⁸⁶(...continued)

This rarity of usage of the noun יִרְיָ means that it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to determine its meaning in this text. However, we think it is most possible that this is an “Aramaism,” and that the word should be understood as “my secret.”

Alexander states that “Several of the ancient versions and of the rabbinical interpreters take יִרְיָ in the sense of ‘secret’: ‘my secret is to me, and I must keep it,’ i.e. ‘I cannot utter what I know.’ Aben Ezra and Kimchi...gave it the specific sense of ‘leanness.’ But the latest [in the mid-nineteenth century] writers understand it as denoting ruin, misery, or woe, and the whole exclamation is substantially equivalent to that which follows.” (P. 409)

Gray notes that other versions than the Hebrew and Greek “understand יִרְיָ to mean *my secret*. יִרְיָ is in Aramaic a loan word from Persian.” (P. 419)

The noun יִרְיָ, “secret,” occurs in the **Aramaic** portion of **Daniel** at **2:18, 19, 27, 30, 47** and **4:6**. In the plural יִרְיָיָ, “secrets” it occurs at **Daniel 2:28** and **47**. In **verse 29** it occurs with the definite article, יִרְיָיָא, “the secret.”

This noun is found oftentimes in the Qumran texts, especially in its “sectarian” literature. On the Internet, see the many publications in which יִרְיָ, “secret” occurs, especially the phrase יִרְיָ נִהְיָה, “secret that has become” (?) in the Qumran texts—evidently referring to the eternal mystery that is revealed to initiates in the Qumran community, in the light of which both the past, present and future can be understood.

⁸⁷Motyer comments that “another voice speaks of personal wasting away...The implications of the fall of the world city—the curse falling on earth and people alike (**verses 4-6**) and no escape possible (**verses 17-18**)—are like a wasting disease within himself. Though he has heard and called for the song of the remnant (**verses 15-16** [where is anything said about ‘the remnant’?]), he cannot abandon himself to joy because he has also seen the reality of sin and the curse...”

“*Woe to me* is exactly as at **Isaiah 6:5**. Isaiah now feels the condemnation of others as deeply as once he felt his own.” (P. 203) We agree.

Ortlund states that “The prophet laments the present treachery of the world,” and says to compare **Isaiah 21:2-4**, where Isaiah is alarmed and horrified over the vision that he has seen concerning the fall of Babylon. But nothing is said in this passage about “the world,” or “the fall of Babylon.”

(continued...)

Those acting faithlessly acted faithlessly!

And with faithlessness those acting faithlessly acted faithlessly!⁸⁸

⁸⁷(...continued)

Watts thinks a first voice is heard in lines 3 and 4, but then another voice, that of a chorus, is heard in lines 5 and 6; but there is no indication of this in the text.

Young states that “Between (leanness) and (beauty) there seems to be an intentional contrast of meaning...’To the righteous there is (beauty),’ we may picture Isaiah as saying, ‘to me there is (leanness).’ As the one word suggests all that is beautiful and to be gloried in, so the other points to what devours and consumes, a weakening or sickness that eats away the strength of the body. For the sake of emphasis Isaiah repeats the phrase, and follows it with an ‘alas is me.’” (P. 173)

For this phrase, אֲוִי לִי, “woe to me!” (or “to us,” etc.) see our end-note 13.

Instead of our Hebrew text’s אֲוִי לִי, “woe to me!”, our Greek translation reads οὐαὶ τοῖς ἀθετοῦσι, “woe to those rejecting.”

⁸⁸The Hebrew text of the last four lines of **verse 16** are filled with alliteration and assonance, repetition of sound:

רָזִי-לִי רָזִי-לִי	razi-liy, razi-liy,
אֲוִי לִי)oy liy
בְּגָדִים בְּגָדִים	bogedhiym baghadhu
גְּדִים בְּגָדִים	ghedhiym baghadhu

Rahlfs omits the last line of **verse 16**.

Five times in these last two lines of **verse 16**, the root בָּגַד, “act faithlessly / treacherously / deceitfully,” occurs. Alexander states that “the latest [mid-nineteenth century] writers make בָּגַד express, not fraud, but violence, which is contrary to usage and entirely unnecessary. Ewald takes בְּגָד in its usual sense of ‘garment,’ and explains the clause to mean, that robbers strip off the very clothes.” (P. 409)

Young adds that “Each of these (five words in the last two lines in Hebrew) is based upon the same root, twice appearing as a participle, twice as finite verbs in the perfect, and once in a noun form...

“Isaiah...is either speaking of those who by means of deceit are leading the people to destruction or of outside enemies who are plundering the nation. The fivefold

(continued...)

⁸⁸(...continued)

appearance of the root, however...seems to indicate the highest degree of emphasis. His own people are the objects of attack, and it is this which affects the prophet. He can have no joy while the people of Zion suffer.” (Pp. 173-74)

For similar statements see:

Isaiah 21:2,

a harsh vision was declared to me:
the one acting faithlessly acts faithlessly,
and the one destroying destroys.

Isaiah 22:18, Isaiah says to Shebna:

Wrapping up he will wrap you up, a wrapping,
like the ball / circle into a land of wide borders / hands.
There you shall die,
and there your chariots of your honor.
(You) shame (to) your masters house!

Isaiah 33:1,

Woe (to) one despoiling / devastating,
and you were not despoiled / devastated;
and acting faithlessly,
and they did not act faithlessly against him!
When you are finished despoiling / devastating,
you will be despoiled / devastated!
When you have ceased to act faithlessly,
they will act faithlessly against you!

Isaiah 48:8, YHWH says to His people who refuse to listen to Him,

Also you (singular) did not hear;
also you did not know;
also from that time you did not open your ear.
Because I knew, acting faithlessly, you would act faithlessly!
And “One Rebelling from (the) Womb” you were called / named!

Jeremiah 5:11,

Because acting faithlessly, they acted faithlessly against Me,
Israel’s household and Judah’s household!
It is a saying of YHWH.

(continued...)

⁸⁸(...continued)

Oswalt states that “In response to the songs of praise which he saw occurring in the future [the text, we think, depicts the songs of praise occurring in the present, which the prophet is hearing], the prophet says, ‘But what of events until then?’ This experience is similar to that of Daniel in his alarm of the portent of his vision (**Daniel 7:28; 8:27**) , for he saw not merely the ultimate victory, but all that would lead up to it. So instead of glory and abundance he experiences leanness and woe.” (P. 452)

Oswalt comments on the phrase “the treacherous” [our ‘those acting faithlessly’] that “Utilizing the Hebrew language’s propensity for cognate accusatives through its root structure, the prophet drives home the ugliness of what he sees. The five words after ‘Woe is me’ all come from the same root בָּגַד, **bgd**, which contains the idea of plunder through deceit. The plosive [denoting a consonant that is produced by stopping the airflow using the lips, teeth, or palate, followed by a sudden release of air. The basic plosives in English are t, k, and p and d, g, and b] quality of the consonants lends a hammering sound which reinforces the idea of the statement. Before the gavel falls for the last time, how much treachery, how much brutal plunder must take place?...

“The Jewish people have represented the rest of us. How often they were to be plundered: by Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Spaniards, Russians, Germans. Nor have they suffered alone. They have indeed represented millions of others. Glimpsing a bit of that, who would not cry, ‘Woe is me?’” (P. 452)

We think however, that the cry is not over the treachery of others committed against Israel, but the treachery of the Israelites themselves, to whom Isaiah is sent to preach.

⁸⁹Oswalt comments on **verses 17-23** that “In this final segment of the poem, the writer reverts to a description of the judgment which will come upon the earth before the Lord’s glory hinted in **verses 14** and **15** will be fully seen. The segment divides naturally into two parts: **verses 17-20** and **verses 21-23**...

“In the first part all the emphasis is upon the cataclysms to be suffered on the earth. The diversity of images suggests again that the prophet is not so much interested in a logical and literal picture as he in creating an impression of a stable, predictable world gone completely awry, to the horror of those whose only stability is in this world...

“The second part expands the picture to the whole cosmos. The earth’s problem is rebellion (**verse 20**), and so the Lord against Whom the rebellion is directed comes to judge. His action is directed against the mightiest of all creation with the result that they are cast into the depths (**Isaiah 2:12-17; 5:14-16; 14:4b-21**). In the end only God will reign...

(continued...)

⁸⁹(...continued)

“Again, one may wonder how literally the prophet intended to be taken, or was he using poetic language to make a theological point? If the latter is so, as I suspect it is, some of the lengthy technical discussions of the meaning of the ‘host of heaven’... may be beside the point. The issue is that no great nation or people is ultimate in creation. Only God is. This is the message of **chapters 13-23**, and it is all brought to a fine point in these three verses.

“Virtually all commentators believe that **verses 21-23** were not written by the author of **verses 17-20**...However, there is now a growing awareness that they form a very apt conclusion to the previous verses.” (Pp. 452-53)

Gray entitles **verses 17-20** “The completeness of the World-Judgment.” He comments that “After the difficult and obscure parenthesis (**verses 14-16**), the prediction of judgment on all mankind is resumed; and, first, **verses 17, 18a-b**, by means of a different figure the thought of **verse 13** is emphasized: few will escape altogether, for to escape from one disaster will merely be to fall into another...The lines recur with slight variations in **Jeremiah 48:43**, where they are applied specifically to Moab.” (P. 419)

Compare **Jeremiah 48:43-44**,

- 43 Dread and the pit and the trap
(are) upon / before you, inhabitant of Moab!
It is a saying of YHWH.
- 44 The one running / fleeing from before the dread
will fall into the pit.
And the one going up from the pit
will be captured in the trap.
Because I will come to her, to Moab,
(in the) year of their visitation (for punishment)!
It is a saying of YHWH.

Young states that as a result of the plunderers plundering, “all that remains for the land’s inhabitants is fear, the pit and snare...It is possible that the imagery used is taken from the language of hunting. The wild animal fears its pursuers, then finds the pit; if it avoids the pit, it is taken by the snare. It finds no escape.” (P. 174)

Kaiser comments that “Taking up an alliterative and possibly proverbial expression, ‘the (hunter’s) snare and the pitfall (compare **Lamentations 3:47**,

פֶּחַד וּפְחַת הִיָּה לְנוֹן
הַשֵּׂאת וְהַשְּׁבֵר:

(continued...)

⁸⁹(...continued)

dread and pit became ours,
the devastation (?) and the breaking;],

the poet continues the alliteration [all three Hebrew words start with the same letter **פ**:

פַּחַד וַפְּחַח וַפְּחַח, **pachadh waphachath waphach**, 'dread and the pit and the trap / 'snare'; Kaiser says this last word is actually the 'drop-net'] and given a new version of **Amos 5:19**,

[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!]

a prophecy which in language full of associations describes the darkness of the coming day of Yahweh. The purpose is to impress upon the reader that there is no escape from the judgment that is to come (compare **24:2**)." (P. 190)

Also compare **Psalm 139:7-12**,

7 To where will I go (to get away) from Your Spirit?
And to where (to get away) from Your faces / presence will I flee?
8 If I ascend (to the) heavens, there You (are)!
And (if) I shall spread out (my bed in) sheol, behold You (are there)!

9 I will lift up wings of (the) dawn;
I will settle down / dwell at (the) far end of (the) sea;
10 even there, Your hand will guide me,
and Your right hand will take hold of me!

11 And I said, Surely darkness will cover me--
and (dark) night (will be all the) light about me;
12 even darkness will not cause darkness from You!
And night like the day will give light--
like the darkness, like the light!

Oswalt comments on **verses 17-18b**: "Again, with pounding assonance, Isaiah drives home the fate of those whose trust is in the earth. There is no reliability in earth, or at least in earth's inhabitants [or is this talking about 'the land,' i.e., Israel?]; only treachery (**verse 16**). As a result, it is terror which awaits such persons, the terror of knowing that life is a series of traps from which there is no final escape...Only commitment to a living, almighty, purposeful, transcendent God can make any sense out of life...

"What can be more terrible than breathing a sigh of relief that one has escaped one pitfall, and at that moment discovering one is in a worse situation? Yet, that awaits

(continued...)

יושב הארץ:

Dread and the pit and the trap⁹⁰ (are) upon you,
the earth's / land's inhabitant!^{91, 14}

24:18⁹² וְהָיָה הַנֶּס מִקּוֹל הַפֶּחַד

⁸⁹(...continued)

all who will not flee to the only refuge—God (**Psalm 57:9-12**^{Heb} / **8-11**^{Eng}; **91:1-6**; **Isaiah 33:18**; **54:14**)." (P. 453)

Alexander translates **verse 17**: "Fear and pit and snare upon thee, O inhabitant of the land!" He comments that "It is a probable though not a necessary supposition, that the terms here used are borrowed from the ancient art of hunting. פֶּחַד would then denote some device by which wild beasts were frightened into snares and pitfalls." (P. 409)

⁹⁰These three nouns are translated by Johnson as "panic and pit and pitfall" (quoted by Motyer, p. 204), "*pah...pah...pah*," another example of Isaiah's use of alliteration and assonance.

⁹¹The exact phrase יוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ, "one inhabiting the land / earth," is found some twelve times in the **Hebrew Bible**, and in the majority of these occurrences, it refers to non-Jewish occupants. See our end-note 14.

Strangely, **New Jerusalem** changes from the Hebrew's יוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ, "one inhabiting the land / earth" to "inhabitants of the city." Is that accurate translation, or a rewriting of the text?

⁹²Alexander translates / comments on **verse 18**: "*And it shall be (that) the (one) flying from the voice of the fear shall fall into the pit, and the (one) coming up from the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare; for windows from on high are opened, and the foundations of the earth are shaken...*

"The first clause carries out the figures of the foregoing verse; and the second introduces those of a deluge and an earthquake. One [Hebrew] manuscript instead of מִקּוֹל ['from a voice'] reads מִפְּנֵי ['from before'], and some interpreters regard קוֹל ['voice'] as a mere idiomatic pleonasm [use of more words than are necessary]. But it much more probably denotes the voice of the hunter or the noise made by the instrument called פֶּחַד ['fear']...The allusion to the flood is rendered certain by the resemblance of the language to that used in **Genesis 7:11** [also, **8:2**]." (Pp. 409-10)

יִפֹּל אֶל־הַפִּתְחַת
 וְהָעוֹלָה מִתּוֹךְ הַפִּתְחַת
 יִלְכַד בַּפֶּחַ
 כִּי־אַרְבּוֹת מִמְרוֹם נִפְתָּחוּ
 וַיִּרְעֲשׂוּ מוֹסְדֵי אֶרֶץ:

And it will happen—the one fleeing from (the) sound / voice⁹³ of the dread / fear
 will fall into the pit;
 and the one going up from the pit's midst
 will be captured in the trap.⁹⁴

⁹³Where our Hebrew text has תִּנָּס מִקּוֹל הַפִּתְחַת, literally “the one fleeing from a voice / sound of the fear / dread,” **Rahlfs** omits any mention of “from a voice / sound,” reading ὁ φεύγων τὸν φόβον, “the one fleeing the fear / dread.”

⁹⁴Compare the somewhat similar pictures in:

Amos 5:19, Amos affirms that the Day of YHWH will be

just like a man will run / flee from before the lion,
 and the bear will meet him;
 and he will enter the house,
 and will lean his hand upon the wall,
 and the snake will bite him.

Amos 9:1-4,

- 1 I saw My Lord standing upon the altar of sacrifice;
 and He said, Strike the capital (of the pillar)!
 And let the thresholds shake,
 and cut them off, at the top of all of them;
 and what remains of them I will kill with the sword.
 Not one fleeing shall escape, and not one escapee that escapes!
- 2 If they dig into (the) grave / underworld,
 from there My hand will take them;
 and if they ascend (into) the heavens,
 from there I will bring them down.
- 3 And if they should be hidden on (the) top of the Carmel,
 from there I will search and I will take them;

(continued...)

Because windows from the height⁹⁵, ¹⁵ were opened,⁹⁶

⁹⁴(...continued)

and if they should be hidden (synonym) from before My eyes, on the sea's /
ocean's floor,
from there I will command the serpent, and it will bite them.

4 And if they go into captivity before their enemies,
from there I will command the sword, and it will kill them.
And I will place My eyes against them for evil, and not for good!"

Jeremiah 48:43-44, see footnote 87.

We suspect that **Isaiah** is using **Amos's** language, and then **Jeremiah** is using **Isaiah's** language. The meaning is clear. As Young put it, "Capture is sure; there is no escape." (P. 174)

⁹⁵See our end-note 15 for passages in the **Hebrew Bible** where the noun מָרוֹם, "height," occurs. Sometimes it is a synonym for "heaven." Here we think it means the heaven above the earth from which rains come down.

⁹⁶Gray comments that in the last part of **verse 18** through **verse 20**, "The physical phenomena that will accompany or form the judgment [are depicted]: floods will descend from heaven, the foundations of earth will quake, and earth itself will split and crack and sway to and fro and fall to rise no more, like one vast house which cracks, sways, and topples over when its foundations are shaken by an earthquake. Few will survive (**verses 13, 17, 18a, b**), for all this will happen..."

"Strictly speaking, when the earth falls to rise no more, human life should come to an end; but **verse 23** [YHWH reigns in Zion and Jerusalem] and **25:6** [YHWH's great feast for all peoples] show that we are not to take the matter so literally as that." (P. 420)

Here, in the last line of **verse 18**, Isaiah is using the language of the flood-story in **Genesis 7:11 / 8:2**, וַאֲרָבַת הַשָּׁמַיִם נִפְתְּחוּ, "and windows of the heavens were opened," except instead of "the heavens" Isaiah has מִמָּרוֹם, "from (the) height," which we take to be a synonym for "heaven."

Gray comments that "Here a destructive downpour such as was part cause of the flood [in Noah's day] is in the writer's mind; such another downpour will form part of the judgment. Yet not by water can Yahweh again destroy all flesh (**Genesis 9:15**); this time 'the fountains of the great deep' (**Genesis 7:11**) will not break loose; there will be no need of an ark to preserve the remnant; but they must hide themselves from the storm (**Isaiah 26:20**)." (P. 420)

Kaiser calls these verses a description of "The irruption of chaos."

(continued...)

⁹⁶(...continued)

He comments that “Whereas in **24:1ff.** the apocalyptic poet presented us with the picture of a terrible drought, killing vast numbers, he now intensifies the danger that is imminent by looking forward to the dissolution of the whole cosmic order. The sluices in the firmament of heaven which otherwise hold back the heavenly ocean and let through only the rain in the right amount, will be opened (compare **Genesis 7:11; 8:2**). This means a new flood and the abrogation of what Yahweh had created at the beginning of the third day of creation (compare **Genesis 1:9-10**). But this terror is not enough; for at the same time the earth is seized by a continuous earthquake, so that it shakes (compare **Psalm 18:8**^{Heb} / **7**^{Eng},

[And the earth--it quaked, and it shook!
And foundations of mountains quiver!
And they reel / reeled back and forth,
because He has become angry!]

Its foundations, by which it is mysteriously established upon the deep (compare **Jeremiah 31:37; Job 38:4-6**), break into pieces, [and as a result, the world] loses its fixed position and staggers about aimlessly and ungovernably like a drunk man, or sways like a watchman’s hut for temporary occupation, loosely constructed of boughs and branches. Anyone who has ever experienced the irresistible force of onrushing floods and the uncanniness of even a small earthquake will understand what terrors face mankind, according to the expectation of the apocalyptic prophet...

“He does not rest content simply with a prophecy, but points to the cause, which he sees as its criminality, which can of course only mean that of its inhabitants. This lies like a heavy burden upon the earth, causing it to fall...

“It is notable that in this prophecy Yahweh remains completely in the background, and also that the apocalyptic writer applies to the earth the saying which in **Amos 5:2** refers to the fall of Israel. Whereas the previous prophecy of catastrophe left a slight, albeit tiny hope of escaping the Divine judgment, the present prophecy portrays a situation with no escape.” (Pp. 190-92)

⁹⁷Motyer comments that “This external assault [‘from the height’] (so to speak) from above is matched by the unleashing of the forces of the earthquake below. The contrast expresses totality.”

He entitles these last two lines of **verses 18** through **verse 20**, “The earth broken up; moral and spiritual causation.” He states that “The section opens with ‘For’... explaining why the judgment is inescapable (**verses 17-18**). It is like the flood, with the forces of heaven and earth combining (the last two lines of **verse 18**), under which the earth shatters (**verse 19a,b**) and loses its solidity (**verse 19c**), and stability (**verse 20a**,

(continued...)

⁹⁷(...continued)

b). From all this it will never recover (**verse 20d**).” (P. 204)

Oswalt comments on **verses 18b-20** that “Here in a series of images the strong, dependable earth is shown weighed down, broken apart, tottering, and finally collapsed ...The opening image is drawn from **Genesis 7:11**...Here, the use of ‘height’ (מָרוֹם, **marom**) for heaven suggests that the poet’s primary purpose is not to predict another flood, but in conjunction with ‘foundation’ (underneath), to talk about destruction of normalcy both above and below, that is, on every side. Again, over-literalness is not warranted, as though the weight of water somehow shook the foundations.” (P. 453)

Ortlund similarly states that “the pairing of ‘heaven and earth’ indicates total disaster, as in Noah’s flood.” (P. 1283) But in the case of Noah’s flood, the “total disaster” did not mean the end of planet earth, but only its cleansing, following which the earth continued on its way.

This matter of Divine judgment coming in the form of earthquake does not begin here in **chapter 24**. See **Isaiah 13:13**,

Therefore I (YHWH) will cause heavens to shake / quake,
and the earth / land will quake / shake (synonym) from its place,
by YHWH of Armies’ fury,
and in a day of His anger’s burning!

This passage in **Isaiah 13** has to do with the destruction of Babylon, and should not be understood literally of planet earth’s / land’s being shaken out of its orbit, never to return. We think it is obvious that Isaiah’s descriptions of destruction are hyperbole—the use of exaggeration to emphasize a point.

What do you think? Do you think Divinely inspired messages such as Isaiah’s can use hyperbole?

⁹⁸Slotki states that **verses 19-20** depict “The catastrophic manifestations of the day of Divine judgment.” (P. 113)

Alexander translates **verse 19**: “*Broken, broken is the earth; shattered, shattered is the earth; shaken, shaken is the earth.*”

Slotki states that this verse “graphically describes the convulsions of an earthquake.” (P. 113)

Young comments on **verse 19** that “In one of the most striking and tragic utterances of the entire prophecy Isaiah proclaims earth’s destruction.” (P. 176)

(continued...)

פֹּר הַתְּפֹרֶרֶה אֶרֶץ

מוֹט הַתְּמוֹטֵטָה אֶרֶץ:

Breaking,⁹⁹ the earth / land broke itself;
splitting,¹⁰⁰ earth / land split itself;
shaking,¹⁰¹ earth / land¹⁰² shook itself!¹⁰³

⁹⁸(...continued)

We would add **verse 20**, which continues this description of earth's destruction and its fall, "never to rise again."

But it is obvious from the continuation of **chapters 24-27** that this does not mean the final end of planet earth, but only the destruction of evil, and evil's fall—for Mount Zion and Jerusalem continue to exist, just as in the **Book of Revelation** following a depiction of total destruction, the heavenly Jerusalem comes down to earth and the kings of earth enter into it.

Oswalt comments that "Once again the impact of language is used to its fullest. In three couplets of three words each, repetition of sound, word, and idea is used to make the thought emphatic. This world is not the place where ultimate trust should be reposed." (P. 454)

⁹⁹Where our Hebrew text reads רָעָה, "to break," 1QIs^b and one Hebrew manuscript read רָוַע, "badness," "evil." 1QIs^a omits the word.

Young holds that this first verb is a description of "pieces of the earth being broken off...suitable for describing an earthquake or some great convulsion that breaks the earth in pieces." (P. 176) Young's comments seem to us be stretching the text to make it appear as a prediction of the "end of the world."

¹⁰⁰Young thinks that this second of the three verbs is "probably stronger, and suggests that the earth is actually divided by being split through." (P. 176)

¹⁰¹Young holds that this last of the three verbs "denotes a violent or great shaking of the earth...(Isaiah) is pointing to a tremendous shaking of the earth that will come when the punitive judgment of God strikes." (P. 177)

¹⁰²**Rahfs** has the definite article, הַ אֶרֶץ, "the earth."

¹⁰³Three times in this verse the infinitive absolute is followed by its finite verb, giving emphasis to what Isaiah is saying. This same usage occurs in the first line of the next verse.

(continued...)

¹⁰³(...continued)

Tanakh has “The earth is breaking, breaking; The earth is crumbling, crumbling. The earth is tottering, tottering.”

New Jerusalem has “A cracking, the earth cracks open, a jolting, the earth gives a jolt, a lurching, the earth lurches backwards and forwards.” This translation appears to be describing the effects of a massive earth-quake.

Rahfs’ translation of **verse 19** is: παραχῆ παραχθήσεται ἡ γῆ καὶ ἀπορία ἀπορηθήσεται ἡ γῆ, “with trouble the earth will be troubled; and the earth will be perplexed with perplexity.”

Motyer comments that “The whole picture...is of earth once again becoming תִּהְיֶה (see **verse 10**). This is what they chose: a world without the ordering hand of God and this, in faithful Divine justice, is what they got.” (P. 204)

Compare **Jeremiah 4:23-26**, where Jeremiah depicts the coming invasion of Judah by foreign armies:

- 23 I saw the earth / land, and look–formlessness and emptiness! (תִּהְיֶה וְבִהְיוֹתָ,
compare **Genesis 1:2**)
And to the heavens, and their light was not!
- 24 I saw the mountains, and look–quaking / shaking!
And all the hills were shaking themselves!
- 25 I saw, and look–the human being was not!
And every bird of the heavens fled!
- 26 I saw, and look–the Carmel, the wilderness / desert!
And all its cities were pulled down from before YHWH,
from before His anger’s burning!

¹⁰⁴Alexander translates **verse 20**: “The earth reels, reels like a drunken man, and is shaken like a hammock. And heavy upon her is her guilt, and she shall fall and rise no more.”

Oswalt comments on **verse 20**: “Two more images of insecurity are used here: the drunkard (**Isaiah 29:9; Psalm 107:27**) and the hut (**Isaiah 1:8**). Like the drunkard staggering from lamppost to lamppost, or the temporary lean-to of twigs and leaves [temporary lean-to’s are more substantial than that!] being whipped by a high wind, the earth’s end is clear: collapse. Whatever one may believe about the earth’s origins, no one believes that this planet has an infinite duration. It is running down sooner or later, much sooner if humanity handles the nuclear weapon in the same way it has handled every other weapon it has developed. Thus, the question for every human being is whether there is something or Someone infinite to Whom we can leap when the branch

(continued...)

וְהַתְנוּדְדָה כְּמַלְוִינָה
 וְכִבְדַּר עָלֶיהָ פִּשְׁעָה
 וְנִפְלָה וְלֹא־תִסִּיף קוּם:

Tottering, earth / land¹⁰⁵ will totter¹⁰⁶ like the drunken person;¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴(...continued)

upon which we are resting falls, as it must one day. Who would lean on a drunk, or trust a lean-to for protection from a winter gale?” (P. 454)

¹⁰⁵1QIs^a, along with all our English translations have “the earth,” making the verse sound like it is talking about “planet earth,” while in fact it may only be describing something happening to the land of Israel. The Hebrew noun אֶרֶץ is ambiguous, sometimes meaning “earth,” but much more often meaning “land,” specifically the land of Israel.

¹⁰⁶For this double use of the root נוּע, “to totter / reel,” the infinitive absolute followed by the finite verb, compare the “imprecatory” **Psalm 109:10a**,

וְנוּעַ יְנוּעוּ בְנָיו וְשָׂאוּ
 and reeling, his sons will reel, and they will beg.

This is the only other place in the **Hebrew Bible** where the Hebrew root is used in this way.

¹⁰⁷Young comments that “Continuing his description the prophet again speaks of the earth, portraying it as shaking or tottering, swaying to and fro like a drunken man.” (P. 177) For this depiction of the earth / land “tottering like a drunken person,” compare:

Isaiah 19:14,

YHWH poured out into her [Egypt’s] midst a spirit of distortion / confusion,
 and He caused Egypt to go astray by all his work—
 like a drunkard is caused to go astray in his vomit!

Isaiah 29:9,

Make yourselves linger, and be astounded;
 blind yourselves, and be blind;
 they were drunk, and not (with) wine;
 they wandered, and not (from) strong drink.

(continued...)

and it will shake itself like the lodge / hut.¹⁰⁸
And its transgression¹⁰⁹, ¹⁶ will be heavy upon it,¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷(...continued)

Job 12:24-25, Job is speaking of God's greatness, and states,

- 24 He removes heart / mind (from the) chiefs / leaders of the earth's people;
and causes them to wander / go astray in **tohu** / confusion, not (the) way.
25 They grope (in the) darkness, and (there is) no light;
and He causes them to wander / go astray like the drunken person.

Psalm 107:26-27, depicts seafarers in a storm,

- 26 they go up (to the) heavens;
they descend (to the) ocean-depths;
their innermost-being / life in evil / distress melts.
27 They reel and they sway like the drunken person;
and all their wisdom is swallowed up!

¹⁰⁸Young states that "In further picturing this swaying of the earth, Isaiah compares it to a מְלוּנָה, a word which he had used earlier in **1:8** to refer to the hut in the vegetable garden." (P. 177)

Alexander's translation "hammock" is, we think, unsustainable. He himself states that מְלוּנָה "is properly a temporary lodging-place. In **Isaiah 1:8** it was applied to a watch-shed in a melon-field.

"Here it seems to signify something more moveable and something suspended in the air. The latest [mid-nineteenth century] writers are accordingly agreed in retaining the interpretation put upon the word by the [Aramaic] Targum and the [Syriac] Peshito—which makes it mean a cloth or mat suspended between trees or boughs of trees for the use of nocturnal watchers." (P. 410)

These two passages in **Isaiah** are the only two occurrences of this noun in the **Hebrew Bible**. See **1:8** with its footnotes concerning such a fragile construction, meant for workers staying overnight in the produce-laden field ready for harvesting.

Young states that "Such a shelter would be temporary, possibly hastily thrown together, and not able to stand against the strong blowing of the wind." (**Ibid.**)

¹⁰⁹Gray comments that "The cause of all this [Divine judgment] is man's *rebellion* (פְּשָׁע) [our 'transgression']." (P. 420) Young states that the reason for the earth's

(continued...)

and it will fall, and will not again arise!¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹(...continued)

being so shaken “is that her transgression now weighs heavily upon her...As though bearing a heavy burden, the earth now staggers under the load of her own transgression.” (P. 177)

For **Isaiah’s** use of the noun פִּשְׁעָה, see our end-note 16.

¹¹⁰The phrase is וְכִבֵּד עָלֶיהָ פִּשְׁעָה, “and its transgression will be heavy upon it,” that is, upon the earth / land. Whenever the earth or a land transgresses the Divine will, that very transgression become a heavy burden for it to bear; and unless that burden can be disposed of, terrifying consequences await it. This is apparently the only place in the **Hebrew Bible** where transgression is depicted as a heavy burden.

¹¹¹Gray notes that this last line of **verse 20** is “almost verbally from **Amos 5:2**, where it is predicated of Israel.” (P. 420)

Amos 5:2,

She fell; she will not rise up again,
virgin Israel.
She is forsaken upon her ground,
there is no one raising her up!

Isaiah 24:20d,

and she fell,
and she will not rise again.

Understanding the noun אֶרֶץ as referring to “planet earth,” this verse is easily taken as a biblical text affirming the “end of the earth.” Ortlund, for example, comments that “The judgment of the world is a deliberate and final act of God.” (P. 1283)

But the statement in **Amos**, which can easily be understood as YHWH’s final decision concerning Northern Israel (Young, for example, comments that “The judgment is final,” p. 178), is later modified by Amos’ prediction of Israel’s return to their land—see **Amos 9:11-15**.

We think it much more probable that here in **Isaiah 24:20** the prediction means the destruction of a sinful world in rebellion against YHWH, but not the end of planet earth—since Isaiah will go on to depict a wonderful future awaiting YHWH’s people—meaning all humanity, not just Israel—as YHWH brings them to His banquet table on Mount Zion—see **25:6-8**.

(continued...)

¹¹¹(...continued)

However the statement that “it will not again rise” is understood, in the verses that follow Jerusalem and Mount Zion still exist, with YHWH reigning there. The same phenomenon occurs in the **Book of Revelation**, where, in spite of its manifold depictions of judgments of destruction coming upon the earth, at the close of the **Book of Revelation** the heavenly Jerusalem has descended to earth, and earth’s kings are depicted as coming into that heavenly city now come to earth. What do you think?

¹¹²Slotki states that **verses 21-23** predict “the evil powers in heaven and on earth will be vanquished, imprisoned and punished, and God will reign supreme on Mount Zion.” (P. 114)

Motyer entitles **verses 21-23** “The end of waiting: the King shall reign.” He comments that “The waiting (**21:11-12**) is recalled in the words ‘after many days’ (**verse 22**); the darkness of **21:11-12** is banished by brightness (**verse 23**); the long progression of day and night (**21:11-12**) leads to a situation where day (‘sun’) and night (‘moon’) are transcended (**verse 23**); and the king promised to Zion (**14:30, 32**) is in fact the Lord Himself (**verse 23**).” (P. 205)

Ortlund entitles these same verses “The Lord Will Punish,” and comments that “The Lord rules in triumph over His enemies and in glory before His Own people.” (P. 1283)

Gray entitles **verses 21-23** “Judgment on the host of the height and the kings of the earth: Yahweh becomes King in Zion.” (P. 421)

He states that in **verses 21-22**, “Yahweh will at that time judge all His foes both in heaven and on earth, imprisoning both the host of heaven and the kings of the earth, who had opposed Him, till the far off day of their ultimate punishment. This is the last act before the terrors of the end (**verses 1-3, 13, 17-20** and ? **4-12**), which are succeeded by the New Age of Glory for the survivors (**verse 23**). The writer is obviously alluding to ideas which he presupposes as being well known; the best commentary on the passage is to be found in the (earlier parts of the) **Book of Enoch**...

“Much that is there expressed is the suitable and, therefore in all probability, the actual background of the present description—in particular is this the case with the double judgment on the offenders, human and super-human, imprisonment now and punishment at the end of days...

“Not only is much that first appears in **Enoch** as old as this writer, but the fundamental ideas are older still, and to be traced back to Babylonian mythology; but this does not necessarily mean, nor is it probable, that their emergence in Jewish thought, or at least their use in Jewish theology, was also early.” (Pp. 421-22)

The student who reads Gray’s commentary expects to find a great resource in

(continued...)

¹¹²(...continued)

the **Book of Enoch** (evidently Gray is referring primarily to **Enoch Book I, 1-36**, with its introductory visions and parable of Enoch. See James Charlesworth, **The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha I**, pp. 13-29, with its translation by E. Isaac.

However, the student will be greatly disappointed. If **Genesis 6:1-4** was the related text in mind, Gray's evaluation would be more appropriate, as Enoch discusses the fall of angels and their intermarriage with beautiful human women, resulting in the birth of enormous giants, as the origin of sin and evil on earth (instead of **Genesis 1-3** with its placing the responsibility for the origin of evil on humanity (man and woman) itself—a nice “escape mechanism” for our own guilt!).

We think Enoch's work is a much later attempt at a bizarre interpretation of **Genesis 6:1-4**, but of no real value in understanding that difficult text. And we find it of even less value for understanding **Isaiah 24-27**. While it is true that **1 Enoch 10:13-14**, and also **chapters 21-22** depict a double imprisonment of both angelic and human offenders (see), we do not find a trace of Enoch's quotation of, or reference to **Isaiah 24-27**.

So, whereas Gray calls the **Book of Enoch** “the best commentary” on **Isaiah 24-27**, we respond that it is no commentary on this passage at all, and of little or no value in its understanding.

Kaiser entitles **verses 21-23** “The End of all the Kingdoms of the World and the Beginning of the Kingdom of Yahweh.”

He comments that “At least the unknown person who interpolated **24:21-23** in their present position was of the opinion that even though the visitation in **24:18b-20** seems to take the form of a relapse of creation into chaos, the world and history will not really come to an end, but will only then have their true beginning, which will then continue throughout the future...

“As a result the significance of individual prophecies in the apocalypse becomes relative, each in turn bringing particular aspects of the final events into prominence. No attempt is possible, of course, to fit the different statements into a coherent total picture. The present oracle, the bulk of which is a prophecy of warning threatening all cosmic and earthly powers other than or in opposition to Yahweh, is clearly intended from its conclusion to be understood as a prophecy of salvation for Jerusalem and Israel...

“Some of its conceptions are very ancient, such as that of the elders of Israel, who may look upon their God (**Exodus 24:9-11**). It is remarkable that the concept of the meal which is found in **Exodus 24:9-11** is not taken up again until **Isaiah 25:6-8**...

“This has caused commentators to ask what the relationship is between these two passages, and how they came to occupy their present position within the Apocalypse of Isaiah...

(continued...)

¹¹²(...continued)

“No less traditional, and known to us from the **Old Testament**, is the other conception, associated here with that of the sight of God and the covenant meal, of the inauguration of the reign of Yahweh on the occasion of His victory over the forces of chaos and the nations who represent them in history...

“But there are other conceptions here, of which we find only the first stages in the **Old Testament**, such as that of the stars which act as the angels of the nations, their conquest and their long imprisonment.” (Pp. 192-93)

Alexander translates **verse 21**: “*And it shall be in that day that Jehovah shall visit (for the purpose of inflicting punishment) upon the host of the high place in the high place, and upon the kings of the earth upon the earth.*”

He comments that “Interpreters have commonly assumed that the host of the high place is the same with the host of heaven, and must therefore mean either stars (Jerome) or angels (Aben Ezra), or both (Gesenius). Grotius understands by it the images of the heavenly bodies worshiped in Assyria. Gesenius finds here an allusion to the punishment of the fallen angels, and then makes this a proof of recent origin, because the Jewish demonology was later than the time of Isaiah...

“[However,] it may be doubted whether there is any reference to the host of heaven at all. **קָרוֹם** is a relative expression, and although applied to heaven in **verse 18**, is applied to earth, or to human society in **verse 4**. The former sense may seem to be here required by the antithesis of **אֲדָמָה**; but it is not clear that any antithesis was intended, which is the less probable because **אֲדָמָה** is not the customary opposite to heaven...

“The sense may simply be that God will judge the high or lofty, that is, the kings of the land upon the land. But even if there be an antithesis, and even if the host of heaven in the usual sense of the expression be alluded to, the analogy of this whole context would seem to indicate that this is merely a strong figure for different ranks or degrees of dignity on earth...It is altogether natural to understand the words more generally as denoting kings and potentates [monarchs or rulers]...The obvious meaning is that God will judge the principalities and powers of both worlds, in order to accomplish His declared designs...

“Even in the later books of Scripture, how few and incidental and obscure are the allusions to this subject!” (Pp. 410-11)

Slotki explains the “host of the high heaven” as meaning “the mysterious powers of evil to be found in heaven (compare the Satan in the **Book of Job**. Others explain as ‘the patron angels of the nations.’” (P. 114)

(continued...)

יִפְקֹד יְהוָה עַל-צְבָא הַמַּרוֹם בַּמָּרוֹם

וְעַל-מַלְכֵי הָאָרֶץ עַל-הָאָרֶץ:

And it will happen on that day,^{113, 17, 18}

¹¹²(...continued)

Oswalt states that “*the host of the height* is an expression used both for the stars (**Jeremiah 33:22; Nehemiah 9:6**) and for the pagan pantheon, since the Gods were frequently identified with the stars (for example, **2 Chronicles 33:5**). In late **Old Testament** and inter-testamental times the pantheon, as the hosts of heaven, was integrated into Hebrew thought as being rebellious angels who came to constitute the spiritual powers at war with God and with His people (so **1 Enoch 6-10; Matthew 24:29; Romans 8:38; Ephesians 3:10; Colossians 1:13, 16; Revelation 12:4, 9**. Interestingly enough, the Aramaic Targum has ‘the mighty host which dwells in the stronghold,’ apparently avoiding any reference to a heavenly host.)...

“The picturesque qualities of the statement are enhanced by the personalized terms *the Silver One* for the moon and *the Hot One* for the sun. That the sun and the moon were important Deities in the ancient Near East would add to the evocative power of the terms as well. Nothing can stand beside God in His regal splendor, no natural object. God alone is King. The recurrence of emphasis upon God’s Kingship (**Isaiah 30:33; 32:1; 33:17, 22; 41:21; 43:15; 44:7; 52:7**) should come as no surprise in the writings of one whose initiation as a prophet involved a visionary recognition of the absolute sovereignty and majesty of the Almighty (**Isaiah 6:5**).

“In the last day the elders of Judah and Jerusalem will no longer be the objects of God’s wrath (**Isaiah 1:23; 3:14; 9:14^{Heb} / 15^{Eng}**). Now they take part in His coronation (compare also **Malachi 3:3, 4**). Finally, the ancient dream will have come true. God alone will be Israel’s King. The picture in the **Book of Revelation** complements this one nicely (**Revelation 4:4, 9-11**). The elders worship God, casting down their crowns He had bestowed, giving Him the glory...Note the correspondence to the manifestation of God to the elders on Mount Sinai (**Exodus 24:9, 11**). That experience was an earnest of the one being described here and in the **Book of Revelation**...

“In this context, it is not surprising that the figure of the Messiah does not appear, for the Messiah’s kingship is God’s and vice versa. In the consummation of all things God *is* the Messiah (It is not, as Gray argues, that God’s Kingship supersedes the Messiah’s. God’s Kingship includes the Messiah’s). This is again spelled out in **Revelation 4** and **5**. The King and the Lamb are one.” (P. 456)

¹¹³The exact phrase **וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא**, “and it will happen on that day,” occurs some 32 times in the **Hebrew Bible**; see our end-note 17. The phrase is omitted by **Rahfs** in its translation of **verse 21**.

(continued...)

YHWH will visit (to punish)¹¹⁴ an army of the height in the height,¹¹⁵

¹¹³(...continued)

It is obvious from reading all of these occurrences that the phrase is used to point to the future, whether near or far distant, and no one exact meaning can be given to the phrase.

The shorter phrase, **בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא**, “on that day,” occurs much more often, some 208 times, including in **Isaiah** some 35 times. See our end-note 18.

Ortlund comments that “that day” is “the focal point toward which God is leading history, foreseen seven times in **chapters 24-27 (24:21; 25:9; 26:1; 27:1, 2, 12, 13).**” (P. 1283) But, as is seen from the many occurrences given in the related end-notes, this theme did not begin with **chapters 24-27**, nor did it end with these chapters. And, we think, it is a mistake to think that the phrase points to only one specific time in the future, as it is used to point to many different future times, both near and far.

Isaiah, like Jesus, and along with other people of faith in the **Hebrew Bible**, “stands on tip-toe,” looking forward expectantly towards the future, searching for, constantly probing to understand the how and the when evil will be defeated, and YHWH will reign universally and gloriously in Zion. That’s “hope”—and anyone who doesn’t have hope is “hopeless”! We need to get in tune with Isaiah, Jesus and company, in order to find hope!

That hope is found in the belief that this is God’s world, and that God is working out His eternal purpose in the midst of earth’s judgments and trials, to bring all humanity to a glorious future, filled with joy.

Kaiser comments, “That the day of Yahweh is meant is already indicated by the connection between **24:17-18** and the text which underlies it, **Amos 5:18**,

[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!].”

Perhaps—but this is not entirely clear.

¹¹⁴Motyer notes that the Hebrew root **פָּקַד** “has a base meaning, ‘to pay attention to’ and hence to weigh the issues and take appropriate action. This develops in many directions and the verb must always be adjudged contextually. Here the context requires ‘a visitation of judgment.’” (P. 206) We agree.

¹¹⁵The text depicts a future visitation to punish **צְבָא הַמָּרוֹם בַּמָּרוֹם** “an army of the height in the height,” using the noun **מָרוֹם** twice. But what does this mean? Does it mean “an army in heaven” opposed to YHWH? Motyer takes it to be “a

(continued...)

¹¹⁵(...continued)

reference to celestial powers opposed to the Lord. They will be dealt with 'in the height,' i.e., in their own sphere and at their most powerful." (P. 206)

Young similarly states that in this passage we learn that "there are forces, not residing upon this earth but on high (מַרְוָם), who have influenced the rulers on this earth to turn against God and to transgress His laws. The judgment, therefore, will also be visited upon them, for they are partakers of earth's transgression." (P. 178)

Ackerman states that "Elsewhere in **Isaiah**, God's heavenly host is an angelic entourage...but here *host of heaven* refers to astral Deities Who are rivals to the Lord." (P. 988)

H. Wolf says it means "Satan and the fallen angels" (P. 1050) and refers to the **New Testament** passage **Ephesians 6:11-12**:

- 11 Put on / clothe yourselves with the full armor of the God,
towards your being able to stand against the schemes of the slanderer /
accuser.
- 12 Because our fight is not against flesh and blood,
but rather, against the rulers, against the authorities,
against the world-rulers of this darkness,
against the spirits of the evil in the heavenly places.

Gray states that "In view of the parallel *kings of the earth*, the particular reference in the host of the height is to those superhuman beings who had been conceived of as rulers over men or as receivers of men's worship, who had thus rebelled against Yahweh and intruded on His sole sovereign rights [here he refers to a number of **New Testament** passages]...Such superhuman beings might include the sun, moon, and stars, who as 'the host of heaven,' had received men's worship...more particularly...the patron angels...of the nations." (P. 422)

This is a strange procedure in biblical interpretation. Nowhere in **Isaiah** have we found a mention of Satan, or the devil, or the fallen angels. Nonetheless, the interpreter takes a passage from a Greek-writing author almost half a millennium later, to determine the meaning of **Isaiah**! This is similar to what Gray has done, in using **1 Enoch** to interpret **Isaiah**.

Interpreting **Isaiah** on the basis of its own language, we are led to conclude that it is talking about human leaders / authorities, who occupy the "height" of governance--such as high priests and kings in Israel and in Judah who have turned Jerusalem into a "Sodom" in their arrogance and pride, replacing justice with bloodshed, and righteousness with cries of distress, who make unjust laws, oppressing the poor; and such as the proud rulers of Assyria, Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt and Tyre. We wonder if we shouldn't try and understand Paul in the light of

(continued...)

¹¹⁵(...continued)

Isaiah, and see him as struggling against the proud high priests of Judaism, and their counterparts in the high offices of the Roman Empire, who were in fact the world-rulers in the first century.

Watts comments that this phrase, which he translates by “the army in the highlands,” may also be translated “the power in the heights.” But, he insists, “when the entire section is thought to be apocalyptic, this has been understood to refer to Yahweh’s overcoming a Divine force in heaven; but when the passage is understood to be of the same character as the rest of the [**Book of Isaiah**], there is no reason to break out of the framework set by the context. In this sense it is far more fitting to understand this to be a reference to armies in the high plateaus and hill-country of Syria-Palestine. The antithesis refers to the coastal lands of Phoenicia / Philistia and the lower Jordan Valley. Together they include the territory under discussion.” (P. 325)

For occurrences of the noun **גְּרוֹם** in the **Book of Isaiah**, see our end-note 13, where it is clear that oftentimes it refers to high places on earth, not necessarily in heaven.

Kaiser comments that “When the poet mentions not only the visitation upon the kings of the earth, but also visitation of the ‘army of the height in the height,’ a reader familiar with the **Old Testament** quickly recognizes the expression ‘the height’ as a favorite paraphrase in apocalyptic writing for heaven (**Isaiah 24:18; 32:15** and **33:5**)...

“Thus the passage is speaking of the army of heaven, by which, according to **Psalms 33:7; Isaiah 40:26; 45:12; Jeremiah 33:22** and **Nehemiah 9:6** we are to understand the stars which obey Yahweh’s command. But since the visitation upon them assumes their insubordination, let us once recall that the worship of the stars was forbidden in Israel (compare **Zephaniah 1:5; Jeremiah 8:12; 19:13** and **Deuteronomy 4:19**)...

“In the last of these passages we find the strange conception that Yahweh has allotted the stars to the other nations to worship. From this it was only one further step to seeing in the army of heaven, or of the height, in the present passage the astral angels of the nations which we meet in the **Old Testament** in **Daniel 8:3-26** [yes—but these are only symbols for earthly nations, Media, Persia and Greece, and the earthly kingdoms that would in the future arise from them].

“In the **Ethiopian Book of Enoch**, an apocalypse possibly not completed until Christian times, but certainly going back in part to the beginning of the second century B.C.E., we learn more about these angelic beings who guide the course of history from the conquest of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians to the beginning of the final age with the rise of Judas Maccabeus (compare **Ethiopian Enoch 89:65ff., 59**), but are then cast into the lake of fire (**Ethiopian Enoch 90:25**). We also find there the conception of the stars which had left their courses and are now kept prisoner in a

(continued...)

and kings of the ground / land, upon the ground / land.¹¹⁶

24:22¹¹⁷ וְאַסְפוּ אֶסְפָּה אֲסִיר עַל-בּוֹר

¹¹⁵(...continued)

place beyond heaven and earth for ten thousand years (compare **Ethiopian Enoch 18:11ff.**). In **Ethiopian Enoch 18:14** it is implicitly stated that this is also a prison for the army of heaven...

“The present apocalyptic writer does not seem to have elaborated his astral angelology in such detail. That he is thinking of the angels of the nations seems likely from the parallel drawn with the kings of the earth.” (Pp. 193-95)

¹¹⁶Motyer comments that “Isaiah’s assertion of the punishment of every power wherever located is the more impressive by its calm assumption of total Divine sovereignty.” (P. 206)

Ortlund likewise states that this means “All opposition to God everywhere, even angelic (i.e., demonic).” (P. 1283) And Young states that “All, whether on high or on earth, the highest in both spheres, will be subjects of the judging God.” (P. 179)

But we wonder if Young’s distinction between the “two spheres,” i.e., heaven above, and earth beneath, is really accurate. Is it not much more biblically accurate to say there is in fact one sphere—one universe, including heaven and earth, the skies and the ground—in which YHWH is constantly present and over which He rules?

¹¹⁷Slotki comments on **verse 22** that “We apparently have here an echo of apocalyptic thought which is found in a developed form in the **Book of Enoch**. The final judgment of the world will be preceded by God’s contest with the celestial powers of evil and with the earthly dominion of God and Magog (**Ezekiel 39**).” (P. 114)

Alexander translates **verse 22**: “*And they shall be gathered with a gathering as prisoners in a pit, and shall be shut up in a dungeon, and after many days they shall be visited.*”

He comments that “the sense of the first clause evidently is that they shall be imprisoned. The persons meant are of course the principalities and powers of the verse preceding...

“There are two interpretations of the verb פִּקְדוּ [our ‘they shall be visited’]. According to one, it means they shall be punished, or at least brought forth to judgment. This is the sense put upon it by Eichhorn, Rosenmueller, Gesenius, Maurer, Umbreit, and Hendewerk. The other is, they shall be visited in mercy. This explanation is as old as Rabbi Joseph Kimchi, if not as [old as] the [Syriac] Peshito. Calvin seems to favor it, and it is adopted by Hitzig, Henderson, and Ewald. Barnes, who refers these verses to the Jewish priests, gives the verb the specific meaning, shall be mustered, with a view to their return from exile.” (P. 411)

(continued...)

וּסְגְרוּ עַל־מִסְגָּר

וַיִּמְרָב יָמִים יִפְקְדוּ:

And they will be gathered, a gathering of prisoner(s)¹¹⁸ in a pit;¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷(...continued)

We say, the verb simply means they shall be visited, and such visitation sometimes refers to “visitation for punishment,” and sometimes to “visitation for

blessing.” The text is ambiguous as to which sense is meant, and it is best, in our opinion, to leave the translation ambiguous.

Young comments on **verse 22**, that “Isaiah continues his theme, pointing out that the armies of heaven and the kings of the ground will be imprisoned, and then, after many days, will be visited by God in punishment.” (P. 179)

We think it is a mistake to read biblical visions such as this, and attempt to draw up time-tables of the future from them. During my lifetime I have witnessed many ministers and churches attempting to do so, and on the basis of their conclusions, warning that the end of the world is imminent, even giving specific dates—all of which have been mistaken and misleading. Biblical visions such as these in **Isaiah 24-25** are not meant to enable such exact calculations. They are filled with enigma, with puzzle—and are properly used when understood as expressions of faith and hope searching and probing for what the future holds—not as exact, literal depictions or time-tables of future events.

¹¹⁸The Hebrew noun אֲסִיר, “prisoner,” is omitted by 1QIs^a, and also by **Rahlfs** and the Aramaic Targum. Watts notes that this omission has led some interpreters to conclude that the noun “is a later addition, not original. The verse reads well without it.” (P. 324)

¹¹⁹Gray comments that “Rebellious angels and rebellious human beings alike, Yahweh will imprison in a great subterranean prison the pit...If we had no other evidence of the belief in the imprisonment of superhuman beings, such as we have, we should be bound to infer it from this passage.” (Pp. 422-23)

Young comments that “There thus appears a history of heavenly powers, paralleling that of earth. Heavenly powers have rebelled against their Creator and have stirred up earthly rulers to make war against the Lord and against His anointed.” (P. 179)

Compare **Isaiah 14:15**, which states, in a taunt song against the King of Babylon:

Surely to *sheol* / the grave / underworld you will be brought down,

(continued...)

¹¹⁹(...continued)

to sides / far reaches of a pit / cistern / well.

But the pit / cistern / well is a synonym for *sheol*, grave / underworld. There is no need to read mythological ideas into this word as Gray does.

For this matter of “Tartarus” and “Gehenna” as a deep, subterranean pit, see in the New Testament, **2 Peter 2:4**,

For if the God did not spare angels / messengers who sinned,
but rather handed them over in ropes / chains of darkness...

Literally, “Tartarusing them, keeping them for judgment...” Here, Peter uses a verb that comes from the noun Tartarus, in Greek thought a subterranean place lower than Hades where Divine punishment was supposed to be meted out. The noun does not occur in our canonical **Bible**, but was taken up in extra-biblical literature, especially in **1 Enoch** and the **Sibylline Oracles**:

1 Enoch 10:4-5,

- 4 And secondly the Lord said to Raphael,
Bind Azazel [one of the fallen angels] hand and foot (and) throw him into
the darkness!
- 5 And he made a hole in the desert which was in Dudael,
and cast him there;
he threw on top of him rugged and sharp rocks [to await the coming judgment].

1 Enoch 10:9, 12-13, the Lord tells Gabriel,

- 9 Proceed against the bastards and the reprobates
and against the children of adultery;
and destroy the children of adultery
and expel the watchers...
- 12 Bind them for seventy generations
underneath the rocks of the ground
until the day of their judgment
and of their consummation,
until the eternal judgment is concluded.
- 13 In those days they will lead them into the bottom of the fire—
and in torment—
in the prison (where) they will be locked up forever...

Sibylline Oracles 2, 287-306,

(continued...)

¹¹⁹(...continued)

The angels of the immortal, everlasting God will punish terribly from above with whips of flame,

having bound them [the wicked] around with fiery chains and unbreakable bonds.

Then, in the dead of night, they will be thrown under many terrible infernal beasts in Gehenna,

where there is immeasurable darkness.

But when they have inflicted many punishments on all whose heart was evil, then later a fiery wheel from the great river will press them hard all around, because they were concerned with wicked deeds.

Then they will wail here and there at a distance in most piteous fate, fathers and their infant children, mothers and weeping children at the breast.

They will not have their fill of tears, nor will their voice be heard as they lament piteously here and there,

but in distress they will shout at length below dark, dank Tartarus.

In places unholy they will repay threefold what evil deeds they committed, burning in much fire.

They will all gnash their teeth,

wasting away with thirst and raging violence.

(Also **4, 186**, where Tartarus is mentioned.)

Isaiah has no such excruciating descriptions here—just the bare mention of a בּוֹר, “pit / cistern / well,” and a מִסְגֵּר, “dungeon,” where sinners will be held until judgment. And we are reminded of the language of **1 Peter 3:18-20** concerning spirits in prison, who were disobedient in the days of Noah, and to whom Jesus, having died, went to proclaim, —“good news,” according to **1 Peter 4:6**, enabling them to live in the spirit.

For this latter noun, see:

Isaiah 42:7b, YHWH’s servant is sent

to bring forth from a dungeon a prisoner / prisoners,
from a house of confinement those dwelling (in) darkness.

(This is not a reference to an underground dungeon, but rather to those who have been held captive in Babylonia.)

Psalms 142:8a, the prisoner prays,

Bring my innermost-being forth from (the) dungeon,
to give thanks to Your name!

(continued...)

and they will be shut up in a dungeon / shutting up place;¹²⁰
and after a great number of days¹²¹ they will be visited.¹²²

¹¹⁹(...continued)

We think this is a very slim basis upon which to build “a history of heavenly powers paralleling that of earth” (Young). The **Book of Daniel**, with its visionary depiction of angelic representatives of human counterparts, and the **Book of**

Revelation with its symbolism of heavenly war would be a better basis for such a view, but hardly the **Book of Isaiah!**

¹²⁰Kaiser comments that “The present poet seems in fact to be thinking only of the great cistern in the underworld (compare **Isaiah 14:15** [where it is said to the king of Babylon, ‘You are brought down to Sheol / the grave / underworld, to the far reaches of the pit’], the kingdom of the dead under the earth. There all who possessed cosmic and earthly power were to wait until they were brought for final judgment, a conception which reminds us of **Ethiopian Enoch 18:16**, but also of **Revelation 10:2-3**, and clearly envisages something like an intermediate Messianic kingdom preceding the last judgment.” (P. 195)

¹²¹Young states that “To stress the idea that there is no possibility of escape it is stated that the prisoners will be shut up in...a prison...After an abundance of days, they will be visited (for punishment [the text states they will be visited, but does not state the purpose of the visitation])...”

“(Concerning the exact time of these “many days”) there are two principal views. On the one hand it is held that the beginning of (them) is coincidental with the raging of the enemies of God. On this interpretation the enemies are conceived as storming against God for many days, and then they will be visited in judgment...”

“A second view (with more in its favor) is to take the beginning of the ‘many days’ as coinciding with the imprisonment of the enemies of God. On this view their imprisonment lasts for ‘many days’ until finally the last judgment reaches them. It is this interpretation that is supported by the **New Testament (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Revelation 20:1-6** also presents the same theme from a different aspect...”

“In what the Scripture teaches concerning the final doom of the evil one and his hosts there is much of mystery. His doom is sure, yet, during the ‘many days’ our only hope and consolation is to fly for refuge to the wounds of our Lord, where alone one may be safe from the fiery darts of the wicked one who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour [using the language of **1 Peter 5:8**].” (P. 181)

Isaiah’s vision is certainly enigmatic, as we would expect from YHWH’s statement in **Numbers 12:6-8** and the humble acknowledgment of Paul in **1 Corinthians 13:9-12**. And in this light, we think it is irresponsible for interpreters to take such admittedly mysterious and enigmatic, puzzling visions, and attempt to

(continued...)

¹²¹(...continued)

construct out of them a time-table of the future, such as is being done by speculation concerning these “many days,” and such as is constantly being attempted in the interpretation of **Daniel** and the **Book of Revelation**.

We agree with Young that the **Bible** clearly and unambiguously teaches that the doom of evil is sure. But to go beyond this, taking such statements in prophetic visions as accurate materials to be subjected to chronological analysis, is unwise, leading to all sorts of bizarre, speculative views. Is it not much wiser, to confess along with YHWH (**Numbers 12**) and Paul (**1 Corinthians 13**) that we human beings simply do not have access to such information, and that our prophetic statements concerning the future are always limited, puzzling, and inadequate for such dogmatic certainties?

Translations of the last line of **verse 22** vary:

King James, “and after many days shall they be visited.”

Tanakh, “But after many days they shall be remembered.”

New Revised Standard, “and after many days they will be punished.” **New International**, closely similar

New Jerusalem, “and, after long years, punished.”

Rahlfs, διὰ πολλῶν γενεῶν ἐπισκοπή ἔσται αὐτῶν, “through / after many generations a visitation will be theirs.”

Watts, “and after sufficient days have their fate decided.”

¹²²H. Wolf, in commenting on **verse 22**, simply refers to **Revelation 20:2** and **7-10**, calling upon the student of **Isaiah** to determine its meaning from a Greek-writing author centuries later.

These passages in **Revelation 20** describe a heavenly messenger / angel descending to earth, taking hold of the dragon / serpent / devil / Satan, and throwing him into a bottomless pit for a thousand years, following which he releases him for a little while—during which he deceives all the nations of the earth, leading them into battle against the set-apart people of God. But he is defeated by fire from heaven, and then is cast into the lake of fire to be tormented endlessly.

What do you think? Is this a valid way of interpreting the centuries earlier **Book of Isaiah**? We suspect that the author of **Revelation** is dependent on **Isaiah’s** language here in **24:22**, and that this is a possible way of interpreting and applying the text of **Isaiah**.

The **Book of Revelation** is, we think, describing the imprisonment and punishment of “kings” in the first century, in a document in which code-language involving monsters and dragons is used for the Roman rulers who are facing certain defeat according to the author of **Revelation**. Unfortunately, **Revelation 20** has been made the basis for all sorts of speculations concerning the “millennium,” creating divisions among believers, and leading to doubt as to the truth and relevance of the

(continued...)

¹²²(...continued)

Bible—just as have these chapters, **Isaiah 24-27**,

¹²³Watts entitles **24:23-25:8** “Yahweh of Hosts Reigns on Mount Zion.”

He comments that “The scene implied in the last lines of [24:14-22] takes shape before our eyes. Attention turns to Jerusalem. The vision of **chapter 6** is recalled. The dire prediction of an empty and desolate land has been fulfilled. We return to the throne-room for matters of great moment.

“The throne room of Yahweh is portrayed on Mount Zion. It is the second of such scenes in the [Book of Isaiah]. **Chapter 6** features the giving of Yahweh’s word to His messenger. This scene presents a banquet to announce Yahweh’s great deed...

“The throne scene has three elements: Yahweh’s appearance on His throne in glory before His elders (**24:23**), the announcement of a banquet for all peoples (**25:6**), at which a heroic deed will be announced (**25:7-8**). The mighty deed will effect an end to the long chain of vengeance and curse that has plagued the land and all its peoples—an end to the reign of ‘the death’ in the land.” (P. 329)

Alexander translates **verse 23**: “*And the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, for Jehovah of hosts is King in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His elders there is glory.*”

He comments that “Before the splendor of Jehovah’s reign all lesser principalities and powers shall fade away...It was not merely when Jehovah reigned, but because He reigned, that all inferior luminaries were to be eclipsed...”

“The simple meaning of the verse appears to be that Jehovah’s reign over His people shall be more august [respected and impressive] than that of any created sovereign.” (P. 411)

Gray comments that **verse 23** depicts “Yahweh’s reign in glory on Mount Zion.” (P. 423) He comments that “The white *moon* and the glowing *sun*, such is the force of the poetical terms here used. Compare **Isaiah 30:26**,

And (the) light of the moon will be like (the) light of the hot sun;
 and (the) light of the hot sun will be seven times (brighter),
 like (the) light of seven of the days—
 on a day (when) YHWH binds up His people’s brokenness,
 and (the) severe wound of His striking, He will heal!

They will pale before the coming manifestation of Yahweh’s glory. So well known was

(continued...)

ובוֹשָׁה הַחֲמָה
 כִּי־מַלְךְ יִהְיֶה צְבָאוֹת בְּתֶרֶם צִיּוֹן
 וּבִירוּשָׁלַם
 וּנְגַד זְקֵנָיו כְּבוֹד:

And the white one / moon¹²⁴ will be ashamed¹²⁵

¹²³(...continued)

the idea, that the writer does not need to state the cause so explicitly as in **60:19-20** [YHWH will replace both sun and moon].” (P. 423)

Young states that in this verse “The prophet now sets forth the end result of the judgment. All powers of this world will be removed, and the eternal kingdom of God will be established in Jerusalem. This truth is taught by means of symbolical language.” (P. 181)

Again, in such a comment, it is apparent that Young is attempting to draw chronological results from Isaiah’s enigmatic, visionary statement—here concerning the time of the establishment of God’s kingdom, which he understands to be somewhere in the future, although in this verse the phrase מַלְךְ יִהְיֶה is “YHWH reigned,” a perfect / past tense, not an imperfect, future tense.

¹²⁴**Rahfs** reads ἡ πλίυθος, “the brick,” reflecting a Hebrew text with הַלְבֵנָה, “the white one.”

¹²⁵Slotki’s translation has “the moon shall be confounded,” and Slotki comments that “God’s glory will outshine the celestial lights, the moon and the sun paling into insignificance.” (P. 114)

Watts translates by “May the moon be ashamed.” He comments that “In comparison with the glory of Yahweh, the sun and moon must recognize their meaninglessness. The phrase may be a formality used in announcing the throne appearance.” (P. 330)

and the hot one / sun¹²⁶ will be embarrassed (synonym);¹²⁷

¹²⁶**Rahfs** reads τὸ τεῖχος, “the wall,” reflecting a Hebrew text with הַחֹמָה, “the wall.”

Ackerman comments that “The sun and moon are two Gods of the heavenly host,” referring to **Deuteronomy 4:19** and **7:13**. (P. 989)

¹²⁷**Rahfs** reads δοξασθήσεται, “will be glorified.”

Ortlund states that “The moon and sun are outshined by the glory of the Lord of Hosts, reigning in triumph forever from His city, Jerusalem on Mount Zion.” (P. 1283)

Motyer comments that in these two lines, “Isaiah uses...not the astronomical words for *moon* and *sun* but the poetic equivalents, calling attention to their inherent brightness. *Moon* is הַלְּבָנָה (‘the white one’; compare **Isaiah 30:26**; **Song of Solomon 6:10**) and *sun* is הַחֹמָה (‘the hot one’; compare **Job 30:28**; **Psalms 19:6**^{Heb} / **7**^{Eng}).

“They will be abashed and ashamed, hanging their heads in shame at being such poor things by comparison!” (P. 206)

For this theme, see the earlier passage **Isaiah 13:10**, which states concerning the fall of the king of Babylon on the “day of YHWH”:

Because stars of the heavens and their constellations will not flash their light;
the sun was dark in its going forth,
and moon will not shine its light.

Kaiser comments that “The further statement that the moon and the sun will be confounded seems not to refer to the terror of the two heavenly bodies which give light to the earth at the mighty appearance of God, after His victory over the powers in heaven and earth opposed to Him and ultimate enthronement in triumph as King in Jerusalem and on Zion in His temple (compare **Ethiopian Enoch 102:2** as well as **Psalms 47:9**; **93:1**; **98:10**; **97:1**; **Zechariah 14:9**). The meaning is literally that the splendor of His light, manifesting His presence, His *kabodh* [‘glory’] (compare **Ethiopian Enoch 43:4**; **10:8ff.**; **1:4ff.**) shines so bright that not only the holy city but the whole earth is lit by it, and the light of the sun and the moon grows pale and is superfluous (compare **Isaiah 60:19**; **Zechariah 14:7** and **Revelation 21:23**; **22:5**)...

“Just as Yahweh once revealed Himself on Sinai before the elders of His people in the whole fulness of His light when the covenant was made (compare **Exodus 24:3ff.**, **9-10**, He will once again show Himself to the elders of Israel in order, needless to say, to ratify this covenant for all time...

(continued...)

¹²⁷(...continued)

“Note that in the ‘Apocalypse of Isaiah’ there is not a single word about the Messiah, King of the time of salvation. When Yahweh Himself begins to reign over His people, the Messiah no longer seems to be needed, but only the elders, who represent the people before God.” (P. 195)

Kaiser adds, “It is easy nowadays to be somewhat bewildered by the certainty of the faith that lies behind these colorful religious ideas, drawn from many sources. But it is right to ask whether we can cheerfully live and grow old without the central hope of this text, that God will one day call to account all the rulers of this world, and make an end to all evil, and nothing will any longer be able to separate man from God (compare **Romans 8:38-39**).” (P. 196)

How will you answer Kaiser’s question? We think it is a silly, superficial way to comment on this text. Multitudes of people all over the earth live and grow old without any knowledge of this text or its view that all the rulers of this world [is not the text talking about “heavenly rulers”?] will be called to account before God.

¹²⁸The Hebrew text has כִּי־מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, “because YHWH of Armies reigned,” using the qal perfect / “past” tense. However, our English translations insist on translating this as an imperfect / “future” verb: **King James**, “the LORD of hosts shall reign”; **Tanakh** and **New Revised Standard**, “the LORD of Hosts will reign”; **New International**, “the LORD Almighty will reign”; **Gray**, “For Yahweh will have become King” (P. 423). **New Jerusalem** has the present tense: “Yahweh Sabaoth is king.” Compare:

Micah 4:7, where YHWH states concerning the good times coming:

And I will make the lame person into a remnant,
and the one removed afar into a strong nation.
And YHWH will reign over them on Mount Zion,
from now and until long-lasting time.

(Here the reign of YHWH is predicted as a reign beginning in the time of the writer, and continuing on into the long-distant future.)

Psalms 146:10, YHWH, Who created heaven and earth, and Who has guarded true-faithfulness throughout human history, executing justice for the oppressed, giving food to the hungry, setting prisoners free, opening blind eyes, lifting up those bowed down, loving righteous people, watching over temporary residents, widows and orphans, and bringing to ruin wicked people, will continue that benevolent reign into the future:

YHWH will reign into long-lasting time,
your God, Zion, to generation and generation!
Praise Yah!

(continued...)

¹²⁸(...continued)

(If you asked this psalmist when the reign of YHWH began, he would answer, YHWH has always reigned! And that reign will never end!)

Isaiah 52:7,

How lovely upon the mountains, feet of one bearing tidings--
causing Peace! to be heard,
bearing tidings of good--
causing Salvation! to be heard,
saying to Zion, your God reigned!
(Yes, even in the midst of their Babylonian captivity, YHWH has been in charge!)

Daniel 7:14, Daniel sees in a night vision one like a son of man coming to the Ancient of Days,

And to him was given dominion and honor and a reign / kingdom;
and all the peoples, the nations, and the languages to him will pay
reverence;
his dominion a dominion of perpetuity, which will not pass away;
and his reign / kingdom, one which will not be destroyed.
(The Messiah's reign is looked forward to in the future—but YHWH's kingdom has reigned throughout the past, as is made clear from the stories concerning Daniel and the Babylonian rulers.)

See additionally:

Daniel 2:44, prediction of a future kingdom;

Daniel 3:33^{Aramaic} / **4:3**^{Eng}, a Divine long-lasting kingdom and a dominion that continues from generation to generation, at the very time of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom;
Daniel 4:31^{Aramaic} **34**^{Eng}, same;

Daniel 5:21, Daniel reminds Belshazzar that his father Nebuchadnezzar had to learn that the Most High God rules [שְׁלִיטָה, Aramaic adjective for having mastery / ruling / domineering] over the kingdom of human beings);

Daniel 6:27^{Aramaic} / **26**^{Eng}, The Persian emperor Darius proclaims that Daniel's God is the living God, Whose kingdom endures to long-lasting times and His dominion till the end;

Daniel 7:27,

And the reign / kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms
beneath all the heavens were given to a set-apart people of Most High.

(continued...)

and in Jerusalem,¹³⁰
and before His officials / elders, glory / honor!¹³¹

¹²⁸(...continued)

His reign / kingdom--a reign / kingdom of perpetuity;
and all the dominions to him will pay reverence, and will listen
(obediently).

We think that these passages reflect the conviction that not only will YHWH reign in the future, but that He has reigned in the past, whether recognized or not (as the Hebrew text of **Isaiah 25:23** states), and is reigning in every present (so, **New Jerusalem**).

What do you think? Do you think translators and interpreters have the right to “play fast and loose” with the tenses of the **Hebrew Bible**? We believe that YHWH will reign in the future; but we also believe that according to the **Hebrew Bible**, YHWH has reigned from the beginning of creation until the present, and that His reign will never end.

Watts translates by the present tense, “reigns,” and states that this means “that He is holding court.” (P. 330) We think this is an arbitrary definition of “reigns,” which simply means to hold royal office—with many other duties and responsibilities than simply “holding court.”

¹²⁹For YHWH’s reign on Mount Zion, see footnote 121.

¹³⁰Young comments that “The seat of the reign is Zion and Jerusalem. As an **Old Testament** prophet, Isaiah uses the figures that were known to him to depict the spiritual salvation of the **New Testament** and the eternal age. His meaning is not that the reign will be held on the actual physical Zion that was known to him: both Zion, and Jerusalem are rather figures of the seat of the eternal kingdom...In this reign the Church will be glorified...” (P. 182)

In so interpreting Isaiah’s language, Young reads **New Testament** theology into this pre-Christian document. Isaiah says “Zion and Jerusalem,” but according to Young, he means something else—not the physical Zion and Jerusalem, but the “spiritual salvation of the Church of Jesus Christ.”

What do you think? Is this a fair interpretation of Isaiah’s words? Did he say one thing, but really mean something else? We say that Isaiah’s vision is limited, and filled with enigma, and that ultimately his somewhat puzzling vision was embodied and fulfilled through Jesus Christ and His Church, in a way that went far beyond what Isaiah envisioned.

¹³¹Where our Hebrew text has כְּבוֹד, “honor,” “glory,” **Rahlfs** has δοξασθήσεται, “He (the Lord) will be glorified.”

(continued...)

¹³¹(...continued)

Ortlund notes that YHWH's "elders lead His redeemed people, once unfaithful (**3:14; 8:14-15**), but now replaced by faithful ones (**52:7; 60:19-20**)." (P. 1283)

Gray comments that "As once on Mount Sinai...Yahweh will manifest His glory to *His elders*, i.e., the elders of His people. Thus this writer finds no place for a Messiah or for any other king than Yahweh Himself." (P. 424)

Young responds to Gray at this point, stating that "It is true that the Messiah is not mentioned in this verse, but that is not sufficient reason for the assumption that no room is here found for the Messiah...To say that this emphasis [on YHWH's kingship] excludes the Messianic work is without warrant. The prophet mentions the Messiah when it is necessary to show that the Messiah is the One whom God employs to accomplish the work of redemption and to establish His kingdom." (P. 183)

We respond to both Gray and Young, by asking, What did you expect in an enigmatic prophetic vision? Absolute clarity? No inconsistencies? A detailed chronological road-map for the future? Isaiah's visions point clearly to YHWH's kingship, and to His promise of a Messiah, with differing aspects of that hoped for future mentioned in differing ways in differing passages, but never in an organized, detailed, consistent manner.

Young states that "In this reign the Church will be glorified, a truth which is expressed by the words, 'before His elders glory.' The elders are His, i.e, God's, and they represent the government of His people, the Church...At Sinai the Lord had once manifested His glory (**Exodus 29:9-11**); so now, in the eternal kingdom that glory will ever be before His elders. Of this same scene John speaks: 'And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crown of gold.' (**Revelation 4:4**)." (Pp. 182-83)

We say to Gray that it is noteworthy that in **Revelation 4** there is no mention of the Messiah, but the vision of **chapter 4** is followed by the vision of **chapter 5**, which is centered in the Little Lamb (Messiah). Why cannot Isaiah have done similarly—seen a vision centered first in YHWH, and then other visions centered in the Branch Messiah?

We say to Young that while from a Christian standpoint, we can see how Isaiah's visions find marvelous fulfillment in Christ and His Church, it is not at all clear that Isaiah was describing the Church with its government in his vision.

Motyer comments that in these last three lines, the particle **כִּי**, "because" or "for," "explains the unparalleled brightness of 'that day'—it is attributable to the mere [? What is 'mere' about YHWH's reign?] fact of the Divine reign..."

"Isaiah here looks back to **Exodus 24:9-11**. The Sinai covenant was

(continued...)

¹³¹(...continued)

consummated by a Theophany, with the Lord among the elders of Israel. There, they saw but His feet; here, they will see His glory. Thus Isaiah sees the Zion-to-be as the fulfilment of all that the covenant implied...Isaiah's Hebrew is exclamatory: 'and before His elders, glory!' (compare **Isaiah 4:5**)." (Pp. 206-07)

We disagree with Motyer in his understanding of **Exodus 24:9-11**:

- 9 And Moses went up, and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy from Israel's
 officials / elders;
 and they saw Israel's God;
 and beneath His feet, like work of brick, the sapphire;
 and like substance of the heavens for the purity.
- 10 And to Israel's children's chiefs He did not send forth His hand;
 and they saw / envisioned the God;
 and they ate and they drank.

The passage does not say "they saw but His feet." Rather, it says "they saw Israel's God," and "they saw / envisioned the God." It gives the limited detail about what was beneath His feet, but no details about God's personal appearance. But still, it says they "saw God."

(continued...)

1. Occurrences of the Verb נָבַל, “to Sink / Droop” in the Book of Isaiah

1:30 Because you people will be like an oak-tree—its leaf withering,
and like a garden whose water(s) it no longer has.

24:4 It mourned, it sunk, the land / earth;
it languished, it sunk, (the) world;
they languished—height / highest people of the land / earth.

28:1 Ha! / Alas! crown of majesty of (the) drunkards of Ephraim!
and withering flower of his beauty,
which (is) upon (the) head of (the) Valley of Fatnesses,
of those struck down (by) wine! **28:4**, same.

34:4 And they will rot away, all the heavens’ army;
and the heavens will roll away like the scroll;
and all their army will wither like a leaf from a garden withers;
and like one withering (feminine singular participle) from a fig tree!

40:7 It was dry—green grass,
it withered—a blossom,
because YHWH’s Spirit / wind blew upon it.
Surely grass (is) the people!

40:8 It was dry—green grass,
it withered—a blossom.
And our God’s word will stand for long-lasting time!

64:5^{Heb}, **3**^{Eng}
And we became like the unclean (thing), all of us—
and like a garment (stained with) menstrual bloods, all our right-
relationship!

¹³¹(...continued)

And we withered like a leaf, all of us—
and our iniquities, like the wind, will lift us up (for destruction)!

2. **Occurrences of the Noun תִּבְלָה, “world,” in Isaiah**

13:11, And I will visit (to punish) evil upon (the) world,
and upon wicked people their iniquity!
And I will cause to cease (the) exultation of insolent people,
and (the) pride of terror-striking people, I will lay low / humiliate!

14:17, (The King of Babylon) placed / made (the) world like the desert,
and its cities he threw down;
and his prisoners—he did not open (their prison, to go) to their home!

14:21, Prepare for his sons / children a slaughtering-place,
for the iniquity of their fathers;
lest / so that they will not arise and dispossess earth / land,
and will fill earth’s surface (with) cities!

18:3, All who inhabit (the) world, and those dwelling (in the) land / earth,
when a signal is raised (on the) mountains, look!
And when a ram’s horn is blown, listen!

24:4b, it languished, it sunk—(the) world...

26:9b, Because just as Your judicial decisions (are) for the land / earth,
they learned right-relationship—(the) world’s inhabitants!

26:18, We conceived, we twisted (with labor-pains);
when we gave birth—wind!

Deliverances / salvations we did not make (for the) land / earth;
and (the) world's inhabitants will not fall!

27:6, The ones coming will put down root;
Jacob will blossom,
and Israel will bear fruit.
And they will fill (the) world's surface (with) fruit / produce!

34:1, Draw near, nations, to listen!
And peoples, pay attention!
The land / earth will hear,
and its fulness—(the) world,
and all offspring!

All of these occurrences are in the first half of **Isaiah**, with no occurrences in **chapters 40-66**.

3. The Phrase **בְּרִית עוֹלָם**, “Covenant of Long-Lasting Time”
in the Hebrew Bible

Genesis 9:16, the long-lasting covenant of the rainbow;

Genesis 17:7, 13, the long-lasting covenant of circumcision with Abraham and his descendants;

Genesis 17:19, God's long-lasting covenant with Isaac's offspring;

Exodus 31:16, the long-lasting covenant with Israel to observe the sabbath day-of-rest;

Leviticus 24:8, the long-lasting covenant of the sabbath day-of-rest incense offering;

2 Samuel 23:5, YHWH's long-lasting covenant with David and his household;

Isaiah 24:5, here, a long-lasting covenant, being broken, has caused the world to suffer judgment;

Isaiah 55:3, YHWH invites the hungry and thirsty to enter into a בְּרִית עוֹלָם חֶסְדֵי

הַנְּאֻמִּים: דָּוִד "long-lasting covenant—steadfast loves of David."

(But what does this mean? Is it referring to David's deep and continuing steadfast love for YHWH, or YHWH's continuing forgiveness and expressions of love for David? **Psalms 89** makes it definite that it is YHWH's steadfast love for David that is meant.)

Isaiah 61:8, to the returning exiles YHWH promises:

Because I YHWH—One Who loves justice,
Who hates robbery with injustice,
and I will give their recompense in true-faithfulness,
and a long-lasting covenant I will cut for them!

Jeremiah 32:36-40,

36 And now therefore, in this way YHWH God of Israel spoke to this city,
of which you people are saying It is given into (the) king of Babylon's
hand,

with the sword and with the famine and with the pestilence.

37 Look at Me—I am gathering from all the lands
where I thrust them in My anger and in My rage, and in great wrath;
and I will return them to this place,
and I will cause them to dwell in safety / security.

38 And they will be for Me for a people;
and I, I will be for them for a God.

39 And I will give them one heart / mind, and one way—
to fear / revere Me all the days,
for good to them and to their children after them.

40 And I will cut for them a covenant—a long-lasting one,
from which I will not turn from (following) after them—to do good to them.
And My fear / reverence I will place in their heart / mind,
so as to not turn away from Me!

Jeremiah 50:5, in the good days coming,

the people of Israel and the people of Judah,

in tears shall seek YHWH their God,
Zion, they will ask (for) a way—
there their faces—Come!
And we will be joined to YHWH—
a long-lasting covenant will not be forgotten!

Ezekiel 16:60, YHWH says to His prostitute daughter / wife,

And I will remember, I—My covenant with you in days of your youth;
and I will cause to stand for you a covenant—a long-lasting one!

Ezekiel 37:26, In the good times coming, with the new David as their king, YHWH promises,

And I will cut for them a covenant of peace / welfare;
a covenant, a long-lasting one it will be with them;
and I will give them [so], and I will increase / multiply them;
and I will give My set-apart place / sanctuary in their midst for long-lasting
time.

Psalms 105:8-11,

He (YHWH) remembered for long-lasting time His covenant,
a word He commanded to a thousand generation(s)--
which He cut with Abraham,
and His oath to Isaac.
And he caused it to stand for Jacob, for a statute,
for Israel, a covenant, a long-lasting one,
saying, To you I will give Canaan-land,
a territory for your inheritance! **1 Chronicles 16:17**, same.

4.

Amos 9:7

Amos 9:7 depicts YHWH as asking the people of Northern Israel,

Are you people not like the people of Ethiopia to Me,
O people of Israel? –It is a saying of YHWH!
Did I not bring up Israel from the Land of Egypt--
and the Philistines from Crete,
and Syria from Qir?”

Andersen and Freedman ask, “In what way is [Amos] trying to say that the Israelites are just like the Ethiopians / Cushites, as far as Yahweh is concerned? No stories are told of Yahweh’s dealing with this nation [but consider the impartation of divine grace to Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian as described in **Jeremiah 38-39**], which seems to be the remotest of all known peoples. The following question...lines the Cushites up with the nearer and better-known Philistines and Aramaeans [Syrians], all of whom have been moved around and settled into their lands by the same God and on the same basis.” (P. 869)

Mays notes that there is no other passage in the entire **Jewish Bible** that is quite like **Amos 9:7** in its unique, pointed challenge to normal Jewish thought. (P. 156) Indeed, Mays calls its implications “radical and perplexing.” This fact alone ought to stir our interest!

Why does Mays consider this passage so radical and perplexing? Because it claims that Israel is no better in YHWH’s eyes than Ethiopia, and claims in addition that YHWH has been active in the history of the hated Syrians and Philistines in the same manner that He has been active in the history of Israel! If this seems radical and perplexing to us, does this not indicate that our view of God and His relation to other nations is inadequate?

What would you think if Amos came to us today with a modernized version of his proclamation, stating that America is no better than Iran or North Korea, and that YHWH has been just as active in their histories as He has been in ours? What if Amos claimed that YHWH God has been the moving force in the Communist Revolution in Russia, China, Cuba and Hugo Chavez’s Venezuela, just as He was in the American Revolution? Would you agree with him, or would you call for his deportation? Why? Why not?

Is the God you worship only the God of the Christians, and of the democratic nations of the earth, but not of the Communists, not of the Muslims, not of the far-east? How big is your God?

This is not just Amos’ question—Amos tells us it is YHWH’s! And it is “rhetorical in nature—that is, no answer is really expected. There is a divine affirmation lying behind this question. It is that the people of Northern Israel (or, we can add, we Christians in North America) are no more God’s “creatures,” or “children” than are the poor famine-stricken inhabitants of the Darfur region of the Sudan, or the inhabitants of

Ethiopia!

Wolff holds that the “Cushites” or “Ethiopians” are mentioned simply as representatives of foreign and remote peoples who live on the outermost periphery of the known world in Amos’ day. “If Israel is the same as they in the sight of Yahweh, then Israel cannot claim any privileged position. Precisely this is what those who rejected the threats of Amos must have done. Having considered themselves foremost of the noblest nations (**6:1**), they must now suffer being equated with a people from the remotest part of the world.” (P. 347)

We conclude that in Amos’ view, the Northern Israelites (and Christian Americans as well, we add), do not “belong” to YHWH any more than do the far off “strangers” of another skin color and language and nationality and religion! How humbling it is to be told by the spokesperson of YHWH that we Christian Americans are no more God’s children or “chosen people” than are the bush-people of Australia, or any other people on earth—regardless of their class, their customs, or their creeds! Such seems to be the meaning of this Divine question. What do you think? How will you answer YHWH’s question?

But isn’t this really what the first book in the **Bible** teaches so emphatically, in its depiction of the entire human race as descended from one common pair of parents (**Genesis 1-3**)? Is this not exactly the teaching of **Genesis 10**, with its “table of 70 nations,” in which all of the nations of the earth are related directly to God as His children, and in which there is no “chosen nation”? Is this not also the meaning of YHWH’s claim that “all the earth is Mine” when in **Exodus 19:5** He is pictured as calling Israel to become His “priestly” people in the world? What are “priestly people” supposed to do—tell everyone else they are unwelcome, unwanted by YHWH, or lead them in worship, teaching them about YHWH, telling them they are in fact YHWH’s children?

Andersen and Freedman state that “Just where and what Qir was have not been determined, but there is no reason to doubt that there was such a place in the days of Amos (compare **Amos 1:5**) or that the Aramaeans had come from that region centuries before. The common view is that it lay to the east of the classic territory of Aram, and there seems to be no good reason to doubt this claim, but how far and in what particular region seems beyond recovery at the present time, especially because the place-name has so far not appeared in cuneiform or alphabetic sources.” (P. 875)

This is another “rhetorical question” which implies its answer even before the answer is given. Yes, YHWH has acted in Israel’s history—that’s a summation of the **Torah**, the **Five Books of Moses**--especially the **Book of Exodus**! YHWH “brought Israel up” from the land of Egypt. Israel can rightly be proud and thankful for this fact, and give thanks to YHWH for it.

But the divine question affirms that YHWH has also been active in the history of Israel’s most hated enemies—in the national history of the Philistines, and as well in the national history of the Syrians. It is YHWH Who “brought up” the Philistines from their original home on the Island of Crete (or, perhaps, in southern Asia Minor, in “Cappadocia”); it is also YHWH Who “brought up” the Syrians from their native home in

Qir (somewhere in central Mesopotamia) to inhabit Aram, the Land of Syria.

Andersen and Freedman state that “Yahweh brought them all from one place to another. The comparison with Israel is explicit and deliberate. So the various implications and overtones that we associate with the exodus [of Israel from Egypt] must be present with regard to the Philistines and the Aramaeans.” (P. 874)

The question implies that YHWH God is not the “tribal god” of one people or of one geographical area. YHWH is God of all the nations on the whole earth; He is the “Universal God” of all peoples, the One Who is active in the entire human story, both in judgment and in salvation!

That is why Israel must never draw the conclusion that she is a “special,” “privileged” people to the exclusion of everybody else on earth, just because YHWH has acted in her history in wondrous, saving ways. That YHWH has acted in Israel’s history does not mean that He has not acted similarly in the life and history of other nations and peoples! Israel was prone to draw such conclusions; and oftentimes Christians have drawn similar conclusions because of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

Mays comments that “This basic (fact) of Yahweh’s historical relationship with Israel is neither denied or robbed of emphasis by its expansion to include the Philistines and (Syria). What is denied and shattered is a theology based on that (fact)—that Yahweh’s act in the exodus established Israel in a special status (over against) the other nations [we say, Israel is a special people, but only in the sense that she has been chosen to proclaim God’s love and truth and teaching to all the other nations of earth]...

“Of course the understanding that Israel’s election was the action of a world God, not a national god, is no invention of Amos. It is fundamental to the structure of the Yahwist’s (by which Mays means one strand of the stories in **Genesis**) portrayal of Israel’s history from creation to conquest; it comes to clear expression in sentences like **Exodus 19:5** (‘You shall be My Own possession among all the peoples; for all the earth is Mine’). But never before had this sovereignty of Yahweh been read in such radical fashion...(Amos) stands within the theological tradition of Israel, but understands it in such a way as to leave no place for the way his audience understood it.” (Pp. 158-59)

Andersen and Freedman hold that the reason for Amos’ view of the authority of YHWH over the nations as expressed in **chapters 1-2**, is suggested here in this passage. “Notice is taken of God’s action in bringing Israel from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Arameans from Qir. Just as Yahweh’s claim to and demand on Israel is based on His act of unmerited kindness and grace in bringing them out of Egypt, so He has acted in comparable fashion by bringing the Philistines to Palestine from Caphtor (perhaps Crete or another Aegean location) and the Arameans from Qir...

“The implication of the passage is quite clear; the relationship is essentially the same one of grace. Because He has acted on behalf of Philistines and Arameans, He

has the right to impose demands and to insist on compliance with rules and requirements, just as in the case of Israel. The difference, and it is not a small one, is that these nations obviously are unaware of that all-important truth. They have their own Gods and explain their history in a different fashion, no doubt; but Amos insists that the truth is as he has stated it. Whether the nations are aware of the action of divine grace in bringing them out of one place to another and establishing and providentially guiding their history, they are not less responsible because of their ignorance...

“We may assume that Amos would make the same claim and the same argument about the rest of the nations on the list: that Yahweh brought them to their present territory and has overseen their historical experience. They are answerable for their behavior to Him primarily because He is their benevolent Sovereign. This doctrine is unusual, especially because it emphasizes divine grace in the lives of other peoples—not that it reduces Israel to the level of common humanity but that it raises others to the level of Israel’s special status...

“All have received the grace of God and all are answerable to Him, each in accord with the measure of grace received and acknowledged...” (P. 352)

Is this not directly in line with what Isaiah is saying here in **chapter 24**?

5. **Biblical Statements Concerning YHWH's Burning Enemies**

Exodus 22:24, If the Israelites mistreat temporary residents, widows, or orphans, YHWH's wrath will burn against them, and He will kill them.

Exodus 32:10-11, YHWH threatens His wrath to burn hot against the Israelites who have built the golden calf.

Numbers 11:1-3, At a place named "Taberah," "Burning," YHWH's fire burned among the Israelites because of their complaining.

Numbers 24:22, Balaam predicts the burning of the Kenites when Israel is taken away by the Assyrians.

Deuteronomy 32:22, YHWH says concerning the idolatrous Israelites:

Because a fire was kindled in My anger,
and it burned as far as grave / underworld beneath;
and it ate land / earth and its produce,
and it set ablaze foundations of mountains!

Joshua 7:1, YHWH's anger burned against the Israelites because of Achan's theft.

Joshua 7:26, following Achan's punishment, YHWH's turned away from His burning anger.

Job 1:16, fire from heaven fell upon Job's sheep and servants, consuming them.

Psalms 69:25^{Heb} / 24^{Eng}, a prayer of imprecation for YHWH's burning anger to overtake enemies.

Psalms 79:5, a question: How long will YHWH's jealousy burn? **89:47^{Heb} / 46^{Eng}**, same.

Isaiah 1:31,

And the strong person will be for (inflammable) tinder,
and his work(s) / doing(s) for a spark;
and they will burn, (the) two of them together,
and there is no one quenching (the fire).

Isaiah 4:4,

If my Lord washed (away) Zion's daughters filth / excrement,
and Jerusalem's bloods / blood-guilts He should rinse from her midst,
with a Spirit of justice,
and with a Spirit of burning [then a new creation will begin].

Isaiah 6:13, following YHWH destructive judgment on Judah,

And still within it its tenth-part (remains),
and He / it will return, and it will be for burning,
like the terebinth and like the oak,
which when cut down, a stump (is) in them—
a set-apart seed—its stump!

Isaiah 9:18^{Heb} / 19^{Eng},

By YHWH of Armies fury (the) land / earth was scorched;
and the people became like fuel (for) a fire.
No one will spare his brother.

Isaiah 10:16-17,

16 Therefore the Lord YHWH of Armies will send forth with His stout ones leanness;
and beneath His glory will be kindled a burning, like a burning of fire.
17 And the Light of Israel will become a fire,
and his Set-apart One a flame,
and it will burn and it will devour its thorn-bushes and its thorns,
in one day.

Isaiah 27:4,

Heat / rage—there is none for Me!
Who will give Me thorn(s and) thorn-bushes?
In the war I will march against it / them,
I will burn it / them all together!

Isaiah 30:27,

Look—YHWH's name, coming from afar,
His anger burning, and heaviness (of) an uplifted (cloud);
His lips were filled (with) fury,
and His tongue like a devouring fire!

Isaiah 33:12,

And peoples will be burnings of lime,
thorns cut down, in the fire they will be burned!

Isaiah 33:14,

Sinners were afraid in Zion;
trembling took strong hold of Godless / profane people.
Who will be for us a temporary resident (of / in) devouring fire?
Who will be a temporary resident for us (in) a long-lasting burning mass?

Isaiah 34:9,

And her wadis will turned into pitch,
and her dust into brimstone;
and her land / earth into burning pitch!

Jeremiah 4:4,

Be circumcised for the YHWH, and remove (the) foreskins of your hearts,
man of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem!
To avoid My rage's going forth like the fire,
and it will burn, and there is none quenching (it),
(the) evil of your deeds!

Jeremiah 7:20,

Therefore, in this way my Lord YHWH spoke:
Look—My anger and My rage being poured forth to / on this place,
upon the human-being(s) and upon the animal(s),
and upon (the) tree(s) of the field, and upon (the) fruit of the ground.
And it will burn, and will not be quenched!

Jeremiah 15:14,

And I will cause your enemy to pass through in a land you did not know,
because a fire was kindled in My anger—
against you people it was kindled!
(See the many differences in translation in our **English Bibles**, and see **17:4**,
where many of these differences originate.)

Jeremiah 21:12,

House of David, in this way YHWH spoke:
Enact justice for / in the morning!
And deliver one robbed from (the) hand of (the) oppressor!
So that My rage like the fire will not go forth,
and it will burn, and there is no one quenching (it),
from before (the) evilness of your deeds!

Hosea 8:5a,

He rejected your calf, Samaria;
My anger burned against them!

Malachi 4:1,

Because look—the day is coming, burning like the oven / furnace;
and all insolent people and all doing evil will become stubble / chaff,
and the coming day will set them ablaze,
said YHWH of Armies

Who will not leave for them a root and a branch!

Matthew 3:11-12,

I (John) indeed immerse you people in water for repentance;
but then the one coming after me is stronger than me,
whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.
He will immerse you people in Set-apart Spirit and in fire;
whose winnowing fork (is) in his hand,
and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor;
and He will gather the grain of his into the storehouse;
but then the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

John 15:6,

If anyone should not remain / abide in Me, he was thrown outside,
like the vine-branch, and it withered;
and they gather them and they throw them into the fire,
and it is burned up.

Revelation 8:7-8,

And the first (trumpet) sounded;
and there came hail and fire having been mixed with blood;
and it was thrown into the earth.
And the third (part) of the earth was burned up,
and the third (part) of the trees was burned up,
and all green grass was burned up.
And the second messenger / angel sounded.
And (something) like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into
the sea,
and the third (part) of the sea became blood.

Revelation 16:8,

And the fourth (messenger / angel) poured out the bowl of his upon the sun;
and it was given to him / it to burn the people with fire.

Revelation 18:8,

For this reason in one day her (Babylon's) plagues will come—
death, and mourning and famine;
and she will be burned up with fire,
because strong (is) Lord, the God, the One judging her!

Revelation 19:20,

And the beast was taken / seized,
and with it the false prophet,
the one doing the signs before him,
by which they deceived those receiving the mark of the beast,
and those worshiping his idol.
Alive the two were thrown in the lake of the fire that burns with brimstone.

Revelation 21:8,

But then for the cowardly and faithless
and detestable and murderers and sexually immoral
and sorcerers and idolaters and all the liars,
their part (is) in the lake, the one burning with fire and brimstone,
which is the death, the second one.

No, Isaiah is not alone in depicting a fiery destruction for evil doers!

6. **The Party's Over—Judgment Has Come!**

Isaiah 5:12-14,

- 12 And there will be lyre and guitar, tambourine and flute, and wine of their
banquets;
and YHWH's work, they will not observe;
and (the) work of His hands they did not see!
- 13 Therefore My people went into exile, from lack of knowledge
and its glory—men of famine,
and its multitude parched (with) thirst!
- 14 Therefore grave / underworld widened / enlarged its appetite,
and opened its mouth wide beyond measure.
And its splendor went down, and its multitude,
and its noisy crowd and jubilant (people) with it / into it.

Isaiah 16:10, which describes the coming destruction of Moab:

And gladness and rejoicing are gathered / removed from the orchard / garden;
and in the vineyards it is not shouted, not a shout is uttered.
Wine in the wine-vats is not treaded;
the one treading (with a) shout I caused to cease!

Isaiah 32:9-14, which describes the coming judgment on the women of Judah /
Jerusalem:

- 9 Women at ease, arise!
Listen to my voice!
Daughters (who are) trusting / complacent,
give ear to my speech!
- 10 (Just) days above a year,
you trusting / complacent ones will quake / shudder;
when grape-harvest is ended,
gathering (of grapes) will not come!
- 11 Tremble, women at ease!
Quake / shudder, trusting / complacent (daughters)!
- Strip, and make yourself bare--
and girdle your waists!
- 12 Upon breasts wailing / lamenting
over pleasant fields,
over a vine making fruit!
- 13 Over my people's ground
thorn (and) thorn-bush (synonym) grow up!
Because over all houses of rejoicing / exultation,
of a city of jubilation--
- 14 Because a citadel / palace was forsaken,
a noisy crowd of a city deserted;
- hill and watch-tower,

became useful as caves for long-lasting time,
rejoicing of wild donkeys,
a pasture for flocks.

Joel 1:10-12,

- 10 Field was destroyed,
ground mourned,
because grain was destroyed,
new wine was dried up,
fresh oil languished.
- 11 Be ashamed, tillers of the soil,
howl vineyard-tenders,
Over (the) wheat and over (the) barley,
Because (the) harvest of (the) field perished!
- 12 The grape-vine is dried up,
and the fig-tree languished / withered;
pomegranate, also palm and apple-tree(s),
all trees of the field dried up / withered,
because / so that rejoicing is put to shame from humanity's children!

7. Occurrences of the Adjectival Noun תְּהוֹ / *tohu* in the Hebrew Bible

Genesis 1:1-2, depicting the original condition of the earth, before God's spoken commands bringing order and life to the earth:

- 1 In beginning / at first God created the heavens and the earth.
And the earth was תְּהוֹ וְבִהוּ / *tohu wabohu* [King James, "without form and void"; Tanakh, "unformed and void"; New Revised Standard and New Jerusalem, "a formless void"; New International, "formless and empty"; Greek, ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, 'unseen and unformed']
- 2 and darkness (was) upon deep ocean's surface;
and God's Spirit / wind hovering upon the water(s)' surface.

Deuteronomy 32:10,

He found him (Jacob) in a wilderness land, and in תְּהוֹ / *tohu* [howling waste [King James, 'the waste howling wilderness'; Tanakh, 'an empty howling waste'; New Jerusalem, 'the howling expanses of the wastelands']; He will surround him, He will attentively consider him, He will guard him like (the) apple / pupil of His eye.

1 Samuel 12:21, Samuel tells the people to serve YHWH with all their heart,

and you shall not turn aside, after the תְּהוֹ / *tohu* [King James, 'for then should ye go after vain things'; Tanakh 'to follow worthless things'; New Revised Standard, 'after useless things'] which will not profit; and will not deliver, because they (are) תְּהוֹ / *tohu* [King James, 'vain'; Tanakh 'useless'; New Revised Standard 'worthless'].

Isaiah 24:10a,

broken in pieces, a city of תְּהוֹ / *tohu* [King James, 'The city of confusion'; Tanakh, 'Towns are broken, empty'; New Revised Standard, 'The city of chaos'; New International, 'The ruined city'; New Jerusalem, 'The city of nothingness'].

Isaiah 29:21,

Those bringing a human being into condemnation with a word,
and for the one reproving in the gate they lay a snare,
and they thrust aside a rightly-related person into the תְּהוֹ / *tohu* [King James, 'for a thing of nought'; Tanakh, 'by falsehood'; New Revised Standard, 'without grounds'; New International, 'with false testimony'; New Jerusalem, 'groundlessly'].

Isaiah 34:11, concerning the land of Edom,

And pelican and porcupine will possess / inherit it,
and owl and raven will dwell in it.

And He will lift up over it a line / string of תְּהוֹ / *tohu* [**King James & New Revised Standard**, ‘the line of confusion’; **Tanakh**, ‘a line of chaos’; **New International** and **New Jerusalem**, ‘the measuring line of chaos’],
and stone weights of בְּהוֹ, [**King James** ‘stones of emptiness’; **Tanakh**, ‘weights of emptiness’; **New Revised Standard**, ‘the plummet of chaos’; **New International**, ‘the plumb line of desolation’; and **New Jerusalem**, ‘the plumb line of emptiness’].

Isaiah 40:17a,

All the nations (are) like nothing before Him;
less than nothing and תְּהוֹ / *tohu* [**King James**, ‘less than nothing and vanity’; **Tanakh**, ‘less than nothing’; **New Revised Standard**, ‘less than nothing and emptiness’; **New International**, ‘worthless and less than nothing’; **New Jerusalem**, ‘nothingness and emptiness’]

Isaiah 40:23, YHWH is:

The One giving rulers to nothing;
judges of earth He made like תְּהוֹ / *tohu* [**King James**, ‘as vanity’; **Tanakh** and **New Revised Standard**, ‘as nothing’; **New International**, ‘to nothing’; **New Jerusalem**, ‘to mere emptiness’].

Isaiah 41:29, YHWH says concerning human-made idols,

Look! All of them, trouble / sorrow / wickedness!
Their works—nothing!
Wind and תְּהוֹ / *tohu* [**King James**, ‘wind and confusion’; **Tanakh** ‘naught and nil’; **New Revised Standard**, ‘empty wind’; **New International**, ‘wind and confusion’; **New Jerusalem**, ‘wind and emptiness’].

Isaiah 44:9,

Those forming an idol / image—all of them, תְּהוֹ / *tohu* [**King James**, ‘vanity’; **Tanakh** ‘to no purpose’; **New Revised Standard & New International**, ‘nothing’; **New Jerusalem**, ‘nothingness’],
and their desires, will not profit.
And their witnesses, they will not / do not see,
and they will not / do not know, so that they are put to shame.

Isaiah 45:18-19,

- 18 Because in this way YHWH spoke:
One creating the heavens, He (is);
the God forming the earth and making it, He (is);
the One establishing it, not *tohu* He created it
[**King James**, ‘not in vain’; **Tanakh**, ‘a waste’; **New Revised Standard**, ‘a chaos’; **New International**, ‘to be empty’; **New Jerusalem**, ‘to be chaos’]
for the habitation / dwelling He formed it–
I, YHWH—and there is not Another!
- 19 Not in the secret place did I speak;
in a place, a land of darkness, I did not speak (synonym).
To Jacob’s seed / descendant(s)—Seek Me *tohu*! [**King James** and **New International**, ‘in vain’; **Tanakh**, ‘in a wasteland’; **New Revised Standard** and **New Jerusalem**, ‘in chaos’]
I, YHWH am speaking,
declaring right-relationship(s), upright things!

Isaiah 49:4a,

And I, I said, For emptiness I toiled / grew weary!
For *tohu* and a vapor / breath, I used up my strength! [**King James**, ‘for nought’; **Tanakh**, ‘for empty breath’]; **New Revised Standard** and **New Jerusalem**, ‘for nothing’; **New International**, ‘in vain’]

Isaiah 59:4,

There is no one calling out in / with righteousness,
and there is no one judging in / with true faithfulness.
(They are) trusting upon *tohu* [**King James**, ‘vanity’; **Tanakh**, ‘emptiness’; **New Revised Standard**, ‘empty pleas’; **New International**, ‘empty arguments’; **New Jerusalem**, ‘empty words’]
and speaking emptiness / vanity;
conceiving trouble, and giving birth (to) wickedness / sorrow!

Jeremiah 4:23, Jeremiah sees a reversal of creation as in **Genesis 1**:

I saw the earth / land,
and look—*tohu wabohu*; [**English Bibles** translate here as at **Genesis 1:1-2**, except **New Revised Standard** has “waste and void,” and **New Jerusalem** has ‘a formless waste’]
and to the heavens,
and their light was not / was gone!

Psalms 107:40, YHWH (is)

One Pouring contempt upon noble people,
and causes them to go astray in *tohu*—no road / way.

[**King James**, 'in the wilderness'; **Tanakh**, 'in deserts'; **New Revised Standard** and **New Jerusalem**, 'in wastes'; **New International** 'a waste']

Job 6:18,

Travelers / caravans turn aside their way / path,
they went up into **tohu**, and they perished! [**King James**, 'to nothing';
Tanakh, 'into the desert'; others, 'into the waste / wastelands'].

Job 12:24, Job says that God

Takes away removes (the) heart of (the) heads of the land's people,
and cause them to go astray into **tohu**, not (the right) way / road. [**King James**, ' a wilderness *where there is no way*'; **Tanakh** and others, 'in a trackless waste'].

Job 26:7,

He stretches out (the) north upon **tohu** [**King James**, 'the empty place'; **Tanakh**, 'chaos'; **New Revised Standard**, 'the void'; **New International**, 'empty space']
hanging earth / land upon nothingness.

8. Passages Using the Root גלה for Going into Exile / Captivity

Judges 18:30b, in Laish, now Dan, there were idol-priests

עַד־יּוֹם גְּלוֹת הָאָרֶץ:

until (the) day of the land's captivity.

(גלה is qal infinitive construct of the verb גלה.)

2 Kings 17:23b,

וַיֵּגַל יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַל אֲדָמָתוֹ אֲשׁוּרָה עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:

And Israel went into exile / captivity from upon its land / ground, to Assyria,
until this day.

2 Kings 25:21b,

וַיֵּגַל יְהוּדָה מֵעַל אֲדָמָתוֹ:

And Judah went into exile / captivity from upon its land / ground.” **Jeremiah**
52:27b, same.

Isaiah 5:13a,

לְכֹן גָּלָה עַמִּי מִבְּלִי־דַעַת

Therefore My people went into exile / captivity from lack of knowledge.

Jeremiah 1:3b, the word of YHWH came to Jeremiah

עַד־גְּלוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִישִׁי:

until Jerusalem's going into exile / captivity in the fifth month (of Zedekiah's rule).

Ezekiel 12:3, in acted symbolism, Ezekiel is commanded,

וַאֲתָהּ בֶן־אָדָם עֲשֵׂה לְךָ כְּלֵי גוֹלָה

וּגְלָה יוֹמָם לְעֵינֵיהֶם

וּגְלִיתָ מִמְּקוֹמְךָ אֶל־מְקוֹם אַחֵר לְעֵינֵיהֶם

and you, son of a human, make for yourself vessels of exile / captivity;

and go into exile by day before their eyes;

and you shall go into exile from your place, to another place, before their eyes.

Ezekiel 39:23,

And the nations will know that by their iniquity Israel's household went into exile /
captivity,
because they acted faithlessly against Me,
and I hid My face from them.
And I gave them into their adversaries' hand,
and all of them fell by the sword.

Amos 1:5b,

וּגְלוּ עַם־אַרָם קִירָה אָמַר יְהוָה:
and (the) people of Aram / Syria will go into exile / captivity to Qir, said YHWH.

Amos 5:5b,

כִּי תִגְלַגֵּל גִּלְגַּל יִגְלֶה,
because the Gilgal will surely go into exile / captivity...
(A remarkable use of similar sounding words in Hebrew: **hagilgal galoh yigleh**).

Amos 6:7a,

Therefore (those at ease in Zion / Samaria) will now go into exile / captivity
at (the) head of those going into exile / captivity.

Amos 7:11, the priest Amaziah tells King Jeroboam that Amos is saying,

Israel will surely go into exile / captivity from upon its ground / land! **Amos**
7:17b, same.

Lamentations 1:3a,

Judah went into exile / captivity from / out of / because of affliction and great
servitude;
she dwelt among the nations,
she did not find rest.

9. Isaiah 24:14-16 in the Greek Translation and the Aramaic Targum

The Greek Translation (**Rahlfs**)

- 14 οὔτοι φωνῆ βοήσονται
οἱ δὲ καταλειφθέντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
εὐφρανθήσονται ἅμα τῇ δόξῃ κυρίου
ταραχθήσεται τὸ ὕδωρ τῆς θαλάσσης
These will cry out in / with a voice;
but then the ones having been left behind upon the earth
will rejoice together at the glory of (the) Lord.
The water of the sea will be troubled.
- 15 διὰ τοῦτο ἡ δόξα κυρίου ἐν ταῖς νήσοις ἔσται τῆς θαλάσσης
τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου ἔνδοξον ἔσται
κύριε ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ
Through this the glory of (the) Lord will be in the islands of the sea;
the name of (the) Lord will be glorious—
O Lord, the God of Israel.
- 16 ἀπὸ τῶν περὺγων τῆς γῆς τέρατα ἠκούσαμεν
ἐλπὶς τῷ εὐσεβεῖ
καὶ ἐροῦσιν οὐαὶ τοῖς ἀθετοῦσιν
οἱ ἀθετοῦντες τὸν νόμον
From the wings of the earth we heard wonders / signs—
hope for the godly / devout one;
and they will say, Woe to the ones setting aside,
the ones setting aside the law / teaching!

The Aramaic Targum of Jonathan

- 14 They shall lift up their voice,
they shall praise on account of the Word of the Lord:
they shall rejoice as they rejoiced on account of the mighty works
which were done for them by the sea.
- 15 When light shall come to the righteous
they shall glorify the Lord:
in the islands of the sea they shall laud and bless the name of the Lord,
the God of Israel.

10. **YHWH's יְהוָה Exaltation / Majesty in the Hebrew Bible**

Exodus 15:7, in the song of Moses following the crossing of the Sea of Reeds, Moses sings:

And by (the) greatness of your exaltation / majesty You will throw down those
standing against You;
You will send forth Your burning anger.
It will devour them like the chaff!

Leviticus 26:19a, in the curses for disobedience, YHWH declares

And I will break the exaltation / majesty / pride of your strength!

Isaiah 2:10, the sinful people of Judah are advised:

Enter into the rock, and hide yourself in the dust / dirt,
from before YHWH's dread, and from His exaltation's / majesty's
splendor! **2:19, 21**, similar.

Isaiah 4:2,

On that day YHWH's branch (Messiah?) will be for beauty / honor and for glory;
and the land's fruit for exaltation and for beauty (synonym) for Israel's
escaped ones.

Isaiah 13:11,

And I will visit (to punish) evil upon (the) world,
and upon wicked people their iniquity.
And I will cause (the) exaltation / majesty of insolent people to cease,
and (the) majesty / pride (synonym) I will lay low / humiliate!

Isaiah 13:19,

And it will become--Babylon's beauty / honor of kingdoms,
beauty (synonym) of exaltation / majesty of Chaldeans--
like God's overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah!

Isaiah 14:11, Isaiah's "taunt song" against the King of Babylon states:

Your exaltation / majesty was brought down to (the) grave / underworld,
(the) sound / music of your guitars.
Beneath you was laid worm(s),
and your coverings worm(s) (synonym!

Isaiah 16:6,

We heard (of) Moab's exaltation / majesty--
exceedingly proud!
His majesty / pride (synonym), and his exaltation, and his arrogance / fury--
his empty talk is not right! **Jeremiah 28:29**, same.

Isaiah 23:9,

YHWH of Armies counseled / advised it / her,
to defile / pollute exaltation / majesty of all beauty / honor,
to bring contempt / dishonor (to) all those honored of the land / earth!

Isaiah 24:14, YHWH's exaltation / majesty proclaimed by voices from the regions /
coasts.

Isaiah 60:15, YHWH promises Zion,

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!

Jeremiah 12:5, YHWH asks Jeremiah,

If it takes a land without drought for you to exhibit trust (in Me),
then what will you do in the [exaltation / majesty] thicket of the Jordan?
(That is, much tougher times are coming for Jeremiah.) **49:19 and 50:49**, a lion
coming up from the thicket of the Jordan.

Jeremiah 13:9b, YHWH declares,

I will destroy Judah's exaltation / majesty,
and Jerusalem's exaltation / majesty, the great one!

Ezekiel 7:20,

Judah / Jerusalem took pride in beautiful ornaments, making them symbols of
exaltation / majesty.

Ezekiel 7:24b, YHWH says, **וְהַשְׁבִּיתִי גִּבּוֹר עֲזִים**,

And I will cause (the) exaltation / majesty of (the) strong people to cease.

Ezekiel 16:49, YHWH describes the guilt of Sodom:

Look—this was your sister Sodom’s iniquity / guilt:
exaltation / majesty, plenty of bread / food,
and east of quietness was hers and her sisters.
And (the) hand of (the) afflicted and needy she did not take strong hold of.

Ezekiel 16:56,

And was not Sodom your sister (the) gossip in / of your mouth
in (the) day of your exaltation / majesty?

Ezekiel 24:21b, YHWH tells the people of Jerusalem,

Look at Me—defiling / polluting My set-apart place / temple,
(the) exaltation / majesty of your eyes,
(the) desirable object of your eyes,
and (the) object of compassion of your innermost-beings!

Ezekiel 30:6b, YHWH says concerning Egypt,

וַיֵּרֶד גְּאוֹן עֵזָה,
and (the) exaltation / majesty of her strength will come down.

Ezekiel 30:18, similarly,

וְנִשְׁבַּת-בָּהּ גְּאוֹן עֵזָה
and exaltation / majesty of her strength will cease in her!

Ezekiel 32:12b, other nations will come against Egypt,

וְשִׁדְדוּ אֶת-גְּאוֹן מִצְרַיִם
and they will destroy Egypt’s exaltation / majesty.

Ezekiel 33:28, YHWH tells Israel,

וְנִשְׁבַּת גְּאוֹן עֵזָה
and (the) exaltation / majesty of her strength will cease.

Hosea 5:5a,

וְעֵנָה גְּאוֹן-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָנָיו
And Israel’s exaltation / majesty will answer / testify in his face. **7:10,** same.

Amos 6:8b, YHWH swears that

מִתְאָב אֲנִכִּי אֶת־גְּבוּרַת יַעֲקֹב

I loathe / abhor Jacob's exaltation / majesty.

Amos 8:7,

YHWH swore by Jacob's exaltation / majesty,
I will not forget for perpetuity all their deeds!

Micah 5:3a, It is said concerning the predicted ruler from Bethlehem:

And he shall stand, and he will shepherd by YHWH's strength,
by (the) exaltation / majesty of YHWH his God's name.

Nahum 2:3,

Because YHWH returned / is returning Jacob's exaltation / majesty,
like Israel's exaltation / majesty.
Because those laying waste laid them waste,
and they spoiled their branches.

Zephaniah 2:10,

This (plundering by the Israelites) will be theirs because of their exaltation /
majesty;
because they reproached and made themselves great,
against YHWH of Armies' people.

Zechariah 9:6,

And a bastard (people) will dwell in Ashdod,
and I will off (the) exaltation / majesty of Philistines!

Zechariah 10:11, when the dispersed Israelites are returned,

and Assyria's exaltation / majesty will be brought down.

Zechaiah 11:3,

A voice on the shepherds' howling,
because their glorious cloak is devastated.
A voice of young lions' roaring,
because the Jordan's exaltation / majesty / thicket / jungle is devastated.

Psalm 47:5^{Heb} / 4^{Eng},

He (YHWH) will choose for us our inheritance,
Jacob's exaltation / majesty which He loved. Selah.

Psalm 59:13^{Heb} / **12**^{Eng},

Sin of their mouth--speech of their lips;
and they were taken captive by their exaltation / majesty;
and from (the) cursing and from (the) falsehood they speak!

Job 35:12, Elihu tells Job concerning the wild animals and birds,

There they cry out,
and He (God) does not answer,
from before / because of exaltation / majesty of wicked people.
(This is a very ambiguous statement. Who is crying out? The poor people, or the animals and birds? Who are the wicked people with exaltation / majesty? Is it the poor people, or the animals and birds, or the wealthy who refuse to help the poor?)

Job 37:4, the sound of thunder is the

קוֹל גְּאוֹנוֹ
voice / sound of His (God's) exaltation / majesty.

Job 38:11, YHWH asks Job if he was present when He commanded the sea,

גְּאוֹן גְּלִיךָ
(the) exaltation / majesty of your waves (will stop).

Job 40:11, YHWH challenges Job,

Adorn yourself now / please, (with) exaltation / majesty and height / haughtiness!
And dress (yourself with) splendor and honor!

Proverbs 8:13, Lady Wisdom says,

Pride and exaltation / majesty and an evil way,
and a mouth of perversities, I hated!

Proverbs 16:18,

Before breaking / crushing, exaltation / majesty;
and before stumbling, a haughty spirit!

A synonym is גְּאוֹרָתָא, which occurs at:

Isaiah 9:17^{Heb} / 18^{Eng},

Because wickedness burned like the fire;
it will consume briars and thorns.
And it set on fire in thickets of the forest;
and it rolled up (?) a majesty of smoke.

Isaiah 12:5,

Make music / sing (to) YHWH, because He did majestic things!
This is made known in all the earth!
(English translations, apart from **King James**, change to “Let it be made known.”)

Isaiah 26:10,

A wicked person, shown compassion
did not learn righteousness.
In a land of upright things he will act wrongfully,
and he will not see YHWH’s majesty.

Isaiah 28:1,

Ah! (The) crown of majesty of Ephraim’s drunken ones,
and (the) withering blossom of its beauty’s honor
which (is) upon (the) head of a valley of fatnesses,
those struck down (by) wine.

Isaiah 28:3,

With two feet they will be trampled--
crown of majesty of Ephraim’s drunkards!

Psalms 17:10,

Their fat they closed;
their mouth spoke with majesty.
(King James), “They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.”
Tanakh, “Their hearts are closed to pity; they mouth arrogance.”
New Revised, “They close their hearts to pity; with their mouths they speak arrogantly.”
New International, “They close up their callous hearts, and their mouths speak with arrogance.”
New Jerusalem, “Engrossed in themselves they are mouthing arrogant words.”
Greek, τὸ στέαρ αὐτῶν συνέκλεισαν τὸ στόμα αὐτῶν ἐλάλησεν ὑπερηφανίαν, “The fat of theirs shut / enclosed their mouth; it spoke

arrogance / haughtiness.”

Psalm 89:10,

You (are the) One Ruling over the sea's majesty / raging;
when its waves lift up, You will still them!

Psalm 93:1,

YHWH reigned!
Majesty, He put on!
He put (it) on, YHWH (did).
He belted Himself (with) strength.
Also He will establish (the) world;
It will not be moved!

11. **יָם וְאֶרֶץ**, “Coasts / Regions of the Sea(s),” in the Hebrew Bible

Isaiah 11:11, in the good times coming, YHWH will recover the remnant of His people from coasts / regions of the sea.

Isaiah 24:15,

Therefore in the lights / flames, honor / give honor to YHWH;
in coasts / regions of the sea, (the) name of YHWH, God of Israel!

Ezekiel 26:18,

Now the coasts / regions will tremble (on the) day of your (Tyre's) fall;
and the coasts / regions which are in the sea will be disturbed
from / because of your going forth!

Esther 10:1,

And the King Ahasuerus placed a forced service upon the earth and coasts / regions of the sea.

For the word **יָם** “coast / region” by itself in **Isaiah**, see:

Isaiah 20:6a,

“...one dwelling the coast / region” (evidently, Israel and its neighbors on the Mediterranean.)

Isaiah 23:2,

Be silent, those inhabiting a coast / region!
A merchant of Sidon, crossing over (the) sea, filled you.
(Sidon's merchants traveled by ship throughout the Mediterranean coast-lands, establishing colonies and delivering merchandise to the ports of every Mediterranean country.)

Isaiah 40:15b,

Look—coasts / regions like (something) thin / small / fine He (YHWH) will lift up!

Isaiah 41:1,

Be silent to / before Me, coasts / regions!
And peoples, let them renew strength!
Let them draw near—then / at that time they will speak together!
Let us draw near for the justice / judgment!

(It is a Divine invitation to the coasts / regions to come into the Divine presence for communication and judgment—reminiscent of **Isaiah 1:18**.)

Isaiah 41:5,

Coasts / regions saw and they were afraid;
ends / extremities of the earth / land will tremble;
they drew near, and they came!

Isaiah 42:4, (YHWH says that His servant)

He will not grow dim / faint, and will not run,
until he will place justice / judgment in the land / earth;
and for his **torah** / teaching / guidance coasts / regions will wait.

Isaiah 42:10, (It is a command for universal worship of YHWH:)

Sing to the YHWH a new song,
His praise from the earth's end / extremity--
those going down (to) the sea and its fulness,
coasts / regions and those inhabiting them!

Isaiah 42:12,

Let them (peoples of many nations) place / give to the YHWH honor,
and His praise in the coasts / regions, let them declare!

Isaiah 42:15,

I will dry up mountains and hills,
and all their vegetation I will make dry (synonym).
And I will place rivers for the coasts / regions,
and I will dry up pool / marshes.

Isaiah 49:1, YHWH's servant says:

Listen to me, coasts / regions!
And pay attention, peoples from afar!
YHWH called me from (the) womb,
from my mother's inwards, He remembered / mentioned my name!

Isaiah 51:5, (YHWH speaks:)

My righteousness (is) near;
My deliverance / salvation went forth;
and My arm will judge peoples!
To / for Me coasts / regions wait / will wait;
and to / for My arm they will they will await!

Isaiah 59:18b,

to the coasts / regions He will repay recompense

Isaiah 60:9a,

Because for Me coasts / regions will wait. Compare **51:5c**.

Isaiah 66:19,

YHWH will send survivors to the nations, including the coasts / regions, to declare His glory.

12. **Occurrences of the Noun צְבִי Where It Means Not “Gazelle,”
but “Beauty,” “Honor,” or “Ornament” in the Hebrew Bible**

2 Samuel 1:19a, in the opening words of his song of lament over Saul and Jonathan, David exclaims,

The beauty / honor of Israel, upon your high places, pierced!

Isaiah 4:2, in the coming destruction of Jerusalem and Judah,

On that day YHWH’s branch (Messiah) will be for beauty / honor and for glory;
and the land’s fruit for exaltation and for beauty (synonym) for Israel’s
escaped ones.

Isaiah 13:19,

And it will become--Babylon’s beauty / honor of kingdoms,
beauty (synonym) of exaltation / majesty of Chaldeans--
like God’s overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah!

Isaiah 23:9,

YHWH of Armies counseled it (against Tyre),
to pollute (the) exaltation / majesty of all beauty,
to bring contempt / dishonor (to) all honored ones of (the) land / earth.

Isaiah 24:16, Isaiah and his companions hear songs from afar saying

beauty to the righteous one / Righteous One.

Isaiah 28:1,

Ah! (The) crown of majesty of Ephraim’s drunken ones,
and (the) withering blossom of its beauty’s honor
which (is) upon (the) head of a valley of fatnesses,
those struck down (by) wine.

Isaiah 28:4,

And it will happen (to the) fading flower of beauty,
its beauty (synonym) which (is) upon (the) head of (the) valley of
fatnesses:
like its first-fruit before summer,
which the one seeing it will see,
while it is still in his hand, he will swallow it!

Isaiah 28:5,

On that day YHWH of Armies will be
for a crown of beauty,
and for a diadem of beauty (synonym),
for a remnant of His people.

Jeremiah 3:19, Jeremiah quotes YHWH as saying,

And I, I said, How gladly I would place you among the children,
and I would give to you a desirable land,
an inheritance—a beauty of beauties of nations.
And I said, My Father you / they will call to Me;
and they will not turn back from following after Me.

Ezekiel 7:20,

And they placed His beautiful ornament for exaltation / majesty;
and images of their abomination, their detestable things, they made of it.
Therefore I gave it to them for impurity.

Ezekiel 20:6, YHWH is speaking to Israel about the time when He chose them:

On that day I raised My hand to them (in oath),
to bring them forth from (the) land of Egypt,
to a land which I sought out for them,
flowing milk and honey--
it (is) beautiful to / above all the lands.

Ezekiel 20:15,

similar to **20:6**, but now in the wilderness YHWH takes oath to not let them enter
that beautiful land.

Ezekiel 25:9,

a certain section of Moab is said to be **צְבִי אֶרֶץ**, “a beautiful land.”

Ezekiel 26:20, YHWH says He will bring Tyre down to the underworld,

and I will place / give beauty in (the) land of (the) living.

Daniel 8:9, In vision, Daniel sees a little horn that grows great

to / towards the beauty / beautiful (land).

Daniel 11:16, an opponent shall come,

and he will stand in a land, the beauty / beautiful one, and destruction in his hand.

Daniel 11:41,

the phrase “in a land, the beauty / beautiful one” occurs again.

Daniel 11:45a, a conqueror will come,

and he planted / will plant his tents of his palace / armory between seas to / toward a mount of beauty-set-apartness.

13. **The Phrase, וְאֵי, “Woe to Me!” (or “to You, or to Us,” etc.) in the Hebrew Bible**

Numbers 21:29, (the ballad singers say), “Woe to you, Moab!” **Jeremiah 48:46**, same.

1 Samuel 4:7-8, (when the Philistines hear the shout of Israel’s camp, and realize that YHWH’s ark of the covenant had been brought to the Israelite camp, they shouted) “Woe to us!” and “Who can fight against a mighty God like this?”

Isaiah 3:9, 11, Isaiah utters woe to Judah and Jerusalem, because they have become like Sodom.

Isaiah 6:5, Isaiah says “Woe to me,” acknowledging his uncleanness.

Isaiah 24:16, again Isaiah says “Woe to me,” because of those acting faithlessly.

Jeremiah 4:13, Jeremiah sees an enemy coming like a storm out of the desert, and says “Woe to us, because we are destroyed!”

Jeremiah 4:31, Jeremiah hears the cry of the daughter of Zion in labor-pains, saying

Woe now to me,
because my innermost-being fainted before murderers!”

Jeremiah 6:4, as enemies come to destroy the daughter of Zon, a voice is heard saying:

Woe to us, because the day has turned,
because shadows of evening are lengthening!
(Whose voice is it? That of the enemies, or that of the people of Jerusalem?)

Jeremiah 10:19, Jeremiah says, in the face of Judah / Jerusalem’s going into captivity,

Woe to me, because of my breaking / crushing!
My wound is made sick!
And I, I said, Surely this is a sickness,
and I will bear it.

Jeremiah 13:27, Jeremiah says to Jerusalem,

Your sexual immoralities and your neighing (for sex),
(the) wickedness of your prostitution upon (the) hills;
in the field I saw your detestable things.
Woe to you, Jerusalem!
You will not be clean after how long still?

Jeremiah 15:10, Jeremiah says concerning himself,

Woe to me, my mother, that you gave me birth--
a man of contention,
and a man of strife to all the land / earth!
I did not lend, and they did not lend to me--
all of it (the land)--they are cursing me!

Jeremiah 45:3, YHWH tells Jeremiah,

You said, Woe now to me!
Because YHWH added grief to my pain!
I grew weary with my sighing / groaning,
and I did not find rest!

Ezekiel 16:23, YHWH says to His prostitute daughter / wife,

And it happened after all your wickedness,
Woe, Woe to you!
It is a saying of my Lord YHWH.

Hosea 7:13, concerning Ephraim (Northern Israel) YHWH says,

Woe to them!
Because they wandered away from Me!
Devastation / ruin to them!
Because rebelled / transgressed against Me!
And I, I would redeem / ransom them,
and they spoke lies against Me!

Hosea 9:12, YHWH says of Ephraim,

Even if they bring up their children--
and I will bereave them of everyone!
Because also woe to them,
when I turn aside from them!

Proverbs 23:29, a proverb concerning too much wine:

To whom Woe?
To whom Oh?
To whom strifes / contentions?
To whom complaint(s)?
To whom bruises for nothing?
To whom dullness of both eyes? (The answer is, to the drunkard.)

Lamentations 5:16,

Our head's crown fell / has fallen.

Woe now to us, because we sinned!

14. **The Phrase יושב הארץ, “One Inhabiting the Land / Earth,”**
in the Hebrew Bible

Genesis 34:30a,

And Jacob said to Simeon and to Levi,
You troubled me, to cause me to stink among the land’s inhabitant,
among the Canaanites and among the Perizzites!

Genesis 50:11a,

And the land’s inhabitant saw—the Canaanite—
the mourning (for Jacob)...

Exodus 34:12, YHWH is driving out some six nations from the land which Israel is entering, and therefore YHWH tells Moses to command the people,

Guard / keep yourself (singular) so as not to cut a covenant with the land’s inhabitant! **34:15,** same.

Numbers 14:14a, Moses tells YHWH that if He destroys the Israelites, the Egyptians will speak to the this land’s inhabitant...(i.e., the nations living there before Israel).

Joshua 24:18a, Joshua tells the Israelites,

And YHWH drove out all the peoples and the Amorites,
inhabitant of the land, from before us...

Judges 11:21b, Jephthah tells the Ammonites the story of Israel’s past, including the statement:

and Israel dispossessed all (the) land of the Amorite,
this land’s inhabitant.

2 Samuel 5:6b, David and his men went to Jerusalem, to fight against

the Jebusite, the land’s inhabitant.

Isaiah 24:17,

Dread and the pit and the trap (are) upon you, the land’s inhabitant!
(Here there is nothing in the context to tell us if a non-Jewish population is meant, as is the case in the preceding passages.)

Isaiah 26:21,

Because look—“YHWH is going forth from His place,
to visit (in punishment) iniquity of the land’s inhabitant upon him!
(Again, there is nothing in the context indicating a non-Jewish population is
meant.)

Jeremiah 47:2, YHWH said concerning the soon-coming destruction of the Philistines,

Look—waters are arising from (the)north;
and they will become a wadi / river overflowing;
and they will overflow a land and its fullness,
a city and those inhabiting / dwelling in it;
and the human being(s) will cry out, and wail,
every inhabitant (of) the land.”
(Here it is the Philistines that are meant.)

Ezekiel 7:7, Ezekiel announces the end that has come upon Jerusalem, and he
addresses the people of Jerusalem as being **יֹשֶׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ**, “the land’s
inhabitant.” Here the phrase so commonly used before of non-Jews, is applied
to the apostate Jews in Jerusalem.

15. **Passages in the Book of Isaiah Where the Noun מְרוֹם, “Height,” Occurs**

Isaiah 22:16, Shebna has cut out a tomb for himself on the height (Mount of Olives?). **Rahlfs** has ἐν ὑψηλῷ, “in a high (place).”

Isaiah 24:4, עִם־הָאָרֶץ מְרוֹם, “a height of people of the land / earth.” **Rahlfs** has οἱ ὑψηλοὶ τῆς γῆς, “the high / tall ones of the earth.”

Isaiah 24:18, “windows from height,” i.e., where the rains come from. **Rahlfs** has θυρίδες ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, “windows out of the heaven.”

Isaiah 24:21, the phrase צְבָא הַמְרוֹם בַּמְרוֹם, “a host / army of the height in the height.” Translations vary from “the host of the high ones *that are* on high,” to “The host of heaven in heaven,” to “the host of heaven in heaven,” to “the powers in the heavens above,” to “the armies of the sky above,” to **Rahlfs’** τὸν κόσμον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, “the world of the heaven.” The phrase is contrasted with “the kings of the earth on the earth.”

Isaiah 26:5, הַשָּׁחַ יִשְׁבֵי מְרוֹם קָרְיָה נִשְׁגְּבָה, (YHWH) laid low those dwelling (on) a height, a city exalted.” **Rahlfs** has τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας ἐν ὑψηλοῖς πόλεις ὀχυρὰς, “the ones dwelling in high / tall (places) (dative plural); cities, strong ones (You bring down) (accusative plural).”

Isaiah 32:15, “until the Spirit is poured upon us from a height,” probably meaning “from heaven.” **Rahlfs** has ἀφ’ ὑψηλοῦ, “from a high / tall place.”

Isaiah 33:5, YHWH dwells “on a height,” probably meaning “in heaven,” but possibly meaning “on Mount Zion.” **Rahlfs** has ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, “in high places.”

Isaiah 33:16, said of the truly righteous person הוּא מְרוֹמִים יִשְׁכֵן מְצֻדוֹת מְשֻׁנְבוֹ, literally, “he, high / tall places he will dwell; strongholds of cliff, his secure height / retreat.” **Rahlfs** has οὗτος οἰκήσει ἐν ὑψηλῷ σπηλαίῳ πέτρας ἰσχυρᾶς, “This one will live in a high / tall cave of strong rock.”

Isaiah 37:23, talking about YHWH Whom Sennacherib reviled, וַתִּשָּׂא מְרוֹם עֵינֶיךָ, “and you (Sennacherib) raised your eyes high / (on) a height,” meaning on YHWH’s dwelling place, “in heaven,” or possibly “on Mount Zion.” **Rahlfs** has καὶ οὐκ ἤρας εἰς ὕψος τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου εἰς τὸν ἅγιον τοῦ Ἰσραήλ, “and you did not raise to a height your eyes, to the Set-apart One of Israel.”

Isaiah 37:24, speaking of Sennacherib:

And you said, with a multitude of my chariot(s) I went up (on the) height of mountains, extreme parts of Lebanon;
and I cut down (the) height / tallest of its cedars, its choice cypresses / firs;

and I came to (the) end of its height, (the) forest of its garden!

Rahfs has: “For you said, with the multitude of the chariots, I, I went up into (the) height of mountains, and into the last (parts) of the Lebanon; And I cut down the height of its cedar (trees), and the beauty of the cypress; And I entered into (the) height / highest parts of the forest.”

Isaiah 38:14, as a part of Hezekiah’s lament, he states,

דָּלּוּ עֵינַי לְמָרוֹם

my eyes hung low / languished for the height!

Translations vary from

“mine eyes fail *with looking upward*” (**King James**),

“As my eyes, all worn, looked to heaven” (**Tanakh**),

“My eyes are weary with looking upward” (**New Revised Standard**),

“My eyes grew weak as I looked to the heavens” (**New International**),

“my eyes have grown dim from looking up” (**New Jerusalem**),

“For the eyes of mine failed from the seeing into the height of the heaven to the Lord.” (**Rahfs**)

Isaiah 40:26, the prophet calls upon the exiles in Babylon, to

שִׂאוּ-מָרוֹם עֵינֵיכֶם וּרְאוּ

lift up (to the) height your eyes and see,”

meaning look at the stars in the heavens.

Rahfs has “Look up into (the) height your eyes and see.”

Isaiah 57:15, where the One Who is high and lifted up says,

מָרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ אֶשְׁכֵּן

(In the) height and set-apart I will dwell...

Rahfs has “But then these things says Lord, the Highest, the One in high places dwelling the age, Set-apart One among set-apart ones, a name to Him, Lord Most High among set-apart one taking rest.” It is difficult to tell exactly how the Greek translator rendered this phrase in Hebrew.

Isaiah 58:4b,

לֹא-תִצְוֹמוּ כִּיּוֹם לְהִשְׁמִיעַ בְּמָרוֹם קוֹלְכֶם:

You (plural) will not fast / go without food like today, to cause your voice(s) to be heard on the height / in heaven / Mount Zion.”

Rahfs has “For what reason will you fast / go without food like today? To be heard in / by clamor / outcry your voice?” (With nothing corresponding to the

Hebrew word **בְּמִרְוֹם**, “on the height.”

16. **Isaiah's Use of the Noun פְּשָׁע, "Transgression."**

Isaiah 24:20b,

"and her (earth / land) transgressions will be heavy upon her."

Isaiah 43:25,

I, I (am) He Who is blotting out your transgressions for My sake,
and your missings-of-the-mark / sins I will not remember.

Isaiah 44:22,

I blotted out your transgressions like the cloud,
and like a cloud your missings-of-the-mark!
Return to Me,
because I redeemed / acted as next of kin to you!

Isaiah 50:1,

In this way YHWH spoke:
Where (is) this certificate of divorce of your (plural) mother,
with which I sent her away?
Or who from among my creditors, to whom I sold you people?
Look--by the iniquities of yours you were sold;
and by your transgressions your mother was sent away!

Isaiah 53:5,

And he was pierced / wounded because of our transgressions,
crushed because of our iniquities.
Discipline / chastening for our peace (was) upon him,
and by his stripe it was healed for us.

Isaiah 53:8,

As a result of coercion and as a result of judicial decision he was taken,
and his generation--who will think / tell?
Because he was cut off from (the) land / earth of living people;
as a result of transgression of my people--a stroke for him.

Isaiah 57:4,

Against whom will you (plural) mock?
Against whom will you open wide your mouth, stick out a tongue?
Are you people not children of transgression,
seed / descendant(s) of falsehood?

Isaiah 58:1,

Cry out with a throat / loudly! Do not hold back!
Like the ram's horn, raise (high) your voice!
And declare to My people their transgression,
and to Jacob's household their missing-of-the-mark / sin!

Isaiah 59:20,

And a redeemer / next of kin will come to Zion,
and to those turning away from transgression—
(it is) a saying of YHWH.

17. **The Phrase וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, “And It Will Happen On That Day,”
in the Hebrew Bible**

Isaiah 7:18, a time of national invasion of Israel as a whole,

Isaiah 7:21, a time of scarce population,

Isaiah 7:23, a time when briars and thorns replace farmed land.

Isaiah 10:20, a time of the return of Israel’s and Jacob’s remnant,

Isaiah 10:27, a time when the Assyrian yoke will be broken.

Isaiah 11:10, the time of “Jesse’s root,” whose resting-place will be glorious,

Isaiah 11:11, a time when the remnants of YHWH’s people will return from many lands.

Isaiah 17:4, a time when the glory of Jacob will be brought low.

Isaiah 22:20, a short time distant, when Shebna will be replaced by Eliakim.

Isaiah 23:15, a time when Tyre will be forgotten for 70 years.

Isaiah 24:21, here, a time of YHWH’s punishment on high and low.

Isaiah 27:12, a time when YHWH will glean the people of Israel one by one,

Isaiah 27:13, a time when those lost in Assyria and Egypt will return home to Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 4:9, a time when all of Judah’s leaders will lose their courage.

Jeremiah 30:8, a time when YHWH of Armies will break the yoke from Jacob’s neck.

Ezekiel 38:10, a time when Israel has returned to her land, and Gog and his allied armies make a plan to destroy Israel.

Ezekiel 38:18, a time when YHWH’s wrath will be raised against Gog,

Ezekiel 39:11, a time when Gog with all his troops will be buried in the Valley of Hamon Gog.

Hosea 1:5, a day of Divine judgment, when Israel’s bow will be broken in the Valley of Jezreel.

Hosea 2:18, a day when Northern Israel will no longer call YHWH “My Baal.”

Hosea 2:23, a time when Northern Israel's fortunes are reversed.

Joel 4:18, a future of "good times" for Judah and Jerusalem.

Amos 8:9, a time of darkness for Northern Israel.

Micah 5:9, a time of devastating Divine judgment on disobedient nations.

Zephaniah 1:10, a time of devastating Divine judgment on the earth, specifically on Judah and Jerusalem for their idolatry in the time of Josiah.

Zechariah 12:3, a time of great battle for Jerusalem.

Zechariah 12:9, a time when YHWH will grant Jerusalem and Judah great victory.

Zechariah 13:2, a time when the names of the idols will be forgotten in Judah.

Zechariah 13:4, a time when the spokespersons / prophets will be ashamed and removed.

Zechariah 14:6, a day when there will be no light, cold or frost.

Zechariah 14:8, a time when living water will flow out from Jerusalem, to the Dead Sea and to the Mediterranean.

Zechariah 14:13, a time when Judah's enemies will be filled with panic.

18. **The Shorter Phrase, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, “On That Day,” in the Book of Isaiah**

Isaiah 2:11, a day when haughty looks are brought low, and only YHWH is exalted.
2:17, same.

Isaiah 2:20, a day when people will throw away their idols.

Isaiah 3:7, a day when people stop making unsubstantiated claims for themselves.

Isaiah 3:18, a day when YHWH removes the finery of the women of Zion.

Isaiah 4:1, a day when seven women will latch onto one man.

Isaiah 4:2, a day of the “Branch (Messiah) of YHWH’s” being exalted (and Jerusalem is cleansed).

Isaiah 5:30, a day of destruction for Judah, as her enemies come like lions growling over her.

Isaiah 7:18, a day of devastating destruction for Judah by foreign invasions,

Isaiah 7:20, as YHWH “shaves” Judah by His “razor,” the King of Assyria,

Isaiah 7:21, a day when the population of the land is greatly diminished,

Isaiah 7:23, a day when briars and thorns will replace vineyards.

Isaiah 10:20, a day when the remnants of Israel and Jacob lean on YHWH in truth.

Isaiah 10:27, a day when the burden of the Assyrians will be lifted from Israel and Jacob.

Isaiah 11:10, a day when the “Root of Jesse” (the Messiah) will be a signal for peoples and nations, and his resting-place will be glorious.

Isaiah 11:11, a day when the remnants of both Northern Israel and Judah are gathered to return.

Isaiah 12:1, 4, a day when those returning will give thanks to YHWH for His mercy.

Isaiah 17:4, a day when the glory of Jacob is brought low.

Isaiah 17:7, a day when people will look to the Set-apart One of Israel.

Isaiah 17:9, a day when there will be desolation in the land.

Isaiah 19:16, a day when the Egyptians will be like fearful women.

Isaiah 19:18, a day when five cities in Egypt speak the language of Canaan (i.e., Hebrew) and swear allegiance to YHWH.

Isaiah 19:19, a day when an altar and pillar for YHWH are built in the land of Egypt.

Isaiah 19:21, a day when YHWH will make Himself known to the Egyptians, who will worship YHWH.

Isaiah 19:23, a day when a highway will be built from Assyria to Egypt, and the two nations will worship YHWH together.

Isaiah 19:24, a day when Israel will be a third alongside Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the earth's midst.

Isaiah 20:6, a day of hopelessness for Egyptians and Ethiopians.

Isaiah 22:8, a day when Jerusalem looked to her armory (for deliverance)

Isaiah 22:12, a day when YHWH called for mourning (and repentance).

Isaiah 22:20, a day when Eliakim will take the place of Shebna.

Isaiah 22:25, a day when Shebna's honor will fall to the ground.

Isaiah 23:15, a day when Tyre will be forgotten for 70 years.

Isaiah 24:21, a day when Divine judgment comes on high and low.

Isaiah 25:9, a day when God / YHWH will be praised for Divine deliverance / salvation.

Isaiah 26:1, a day of singing the praises of YHWH in Judah.

Isaiah 27:1, a day when YHWH punishes / destroys Leviathan.

Isaiah 27:2, a day when a song goes up to YHWH concerning His pleasant vineyard.

Isaiah 27:12, a day of YHWH's gleaning His people, one by one.

Isaiah 27:13, a day when a great trumpet calls the lost from Assyria and Egypt to come and worship in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 28:5, a day when, as Divine judgment is visited on Ephraim and Jerusalem, YHWH of Armies is a crown of beauty and glory to the remnant of His people.

Isaiah 29:18, a day when the deaf shall hear the words of a scroll / book, and the blind

eyes shall see.

Isaiah 30:23, a day of rain and rich produce.

Isaiah 31:7, a day when the children of Israel cast away all their idols.

Isaiah 52:6, (only one occurrence in **chapters 32-66!**), a day when YHWH's people know that it is He Who is speaking to them.