

Isaiah Chapter 25, Hebrew Text with Translation and Footnotes
A World-wide Song of Praise to YHWH, the Purposing God,
Who Cares for the Poor, and
Whose Ultimate Plan Is to Swallow Up Death and All Its Signs Forever
for All Peoples and Nations!--
but Still Divine Judgment Continues in History¹

¹**Chapter 25** has seven end-notes: (1) Occurrences of the Noun פּלֵא in the Hebrew Bible; (2) Occurrences of the Phrase “From Afar” in the Hebrew Bible; (3) Passages With the Verb, “Fear,” “Reverence,” with God / YHWH As the Object; (4) Biblical Passages Referring to YHWH As a Place of Refuge; (5) Occurrences of the Greek Verb Καταπίνω, “Drink Down” or “Swallow Up” in the Greek Bible; (6) Occurrences of the Verb יָקַו, “Wait” in the Hebrew Bible; and (7) “Dung,” “Dung-hill”

Alexander states that **chapter 25** “consists of three distinguishable parts. The first is a thanksgiving to God for the destruction of Babylon and the deliverance of the Jews (**verses 1-5**). The second is a promise of favor to the Gentiles and the people of God, when united on mount Zion (**verses 6-10**). The third is a threatening of disgraceful ruin to Moab (**verses 10-12**.” (P. 412)

But as we read the chapter, we do not find any mention of Babylon, nor of the deliverance of the Jews. Neither do we read anything concerning the Gentiles and the people of God being united on Mount Zion; rather, all we find is the mention of “all peoples” and “all nations”—but we do find the mention of Moab in **verse 10**. Alexander wants to make things much more specific than this chapter makes them.

Young states that “As a song of praise [in **chapter 12**] followed the description of the fall of the world power and the establishment of God’s kingdom given in **chapters 10 and 11**, so also after the prophecy of God’s great judgment in **chapter 24**, Isaiah inserts another song of praise [here in **chapter 25**].”

He adds that here, “Isaiah now reverts to the thought of **24:14**, where he had depicted the people as singing God’s praises. In **24:16-23** he gave the reason why the people sang, namely, the fact that God had triumphed over His enemies and that He reigns eternally. Isaiah himself now joins in glorifying the Name of his God.” (P. 184)

Motyer entitles **Isaiah 25:1-12**, “The world rejoicing in salvation: the blessings of Mount Zion.”

He comments that “In this song, as in **12:1, 4**, the individual voice (**verses 1-5**) becomes a communal voice (**verses 9-10a**). This enables us to see a world-wide pilgrimage entering the gates of Zion one by one (each with a song of deliverance) but

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within Zion's walls becoming the company of the saved with a common testimony." (P. 207)

But again, as we read the chapter, we do not find depicted "a world-wide pilgrimage entering the gates of Zion," or anything about their "becoming the company of the saved." This language, so important to Motyer, is not found in the chapter.

Oswalt entitles **25:1-12** "God's Feast." He comments that "**Chapter 25** forms the response to the announcement of the destruction of the Earth-City. As such, it is in three parts. The first, **verses 1-5** is a song of thanksgiving for God's faithfulness in caring for and delivering His people. It is as though this song is presented as part of the festivities mentioned in **24:23**...and resumed in the second part of this chapter, **verses 6-8**. In this second part, the announcement of the feast is accompanied by the triumphant word, as in **verse 1**, that God's purpose is the redemption of the earth from the pall [a cloth spread over coffin, or tomb] of death which has always hung over it. **Verses 9-12** return to the theme of joy among God's people, because He has delivered them from their enemies, here typified in Moab." (P. 459)

Watts entitles the section from **Isaiah 24:23-25:8** "Yahweh of Hosts Reigns on Mount Zion."

He comments that "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. A song of praise and thanks (**25:1-5**) adorns the throne scene.

²Slotki describes **verses 1-5** as "A psalm of praise and thanksgiving for the providential deliverance of Israel and the downfall of His enemies." (P. 115) But in fact, Israel is not mentioned in these verses, nor in the entire **chapter 25**.

Motyer entitles **verses 1-5** "Joy in the Lord," and comments that "In the imagery Isaiah is using, the pilgrims to Zion move through a ruined world, and their song dwells on the marvel of their rescue and the power of the Lord over all the power of the enemy." (P. 207) But where is there a mention of "pilgrims to Zion, moving through a ruined world? Surely Motyer is getting this chapter mixed up with **Isaiah 2:2-3!**

Gray holds that those singing this song in **verses 1-5** are "the Jewish community, which is now poor and hard pressed by some undefined oppressing power. Yahweh's wonderful deeds, which are the subject of the song, will have been wrought in accordance with His counsels formed long ago; the wonderful deliverance of His people will not only call forth their praise, but will so impress the mightiest people and city of

(continued...)

אַתָּה אֶרְוַמְךָ
אוֹדָה שְׁמֶךָ
כִּי עָשִׂיתָ פֶּלֶא
עֲצוֹת מִרְחוֹק

²(...continued)

the world that they, too, will do homage to Yahweh and become His worshippers.” (P. 425) But the verses say nothing concerning “the Jewish community,” and the song is the song of an unnamed individual, not the song of a community.

Oswalt comments on **verses 1-5** that “Like **chapter 12**, which follows the similar announcements of destruction of enemies in **chapters 10** and **11**, this song breathes with an intensely personal air. God’s goodness has been vindicated as well as His power, and the writer is expressing for himself and for his people the feelings of attachment for God that this recognition has created. Young rightly expresses the vantage point of the prophet. Older commentaries perhaps too easily put him in the future looking back...

“The writer believes that God’s mighty acts of judgment and deliverance will result in an outpouring of praise on the part of God’s people and a humble recognition of His power on the part of those who had fiercely exulted over God’s people...The singer here was a person steeped in the Scriptures. Numerous similarities to the **Psalms** and **Prophets** can be shown...

“Both Duhm and Cheyne believed that the songs in **chapters 24-27** were intrusive literary pieces which were drawn from other settings and inserted into this one. Recent study, following the lead of Rudolph, Lindblom, and Fohrer, has increasingly abandoned that view...There has been the growing conviction that the hymns were specifically composed with the surrounding setting in mind...The present hymn is a case in point. The congruencies with **chapter 24** are too direct for the piece to have been merely inserted. Some of these are references to the city and to the song, both of which are prominent in **chapter 24**...

“What is the function of the piece here between **24:23** and **25:6-8**? Surely it is to say again that the response to God’s acts is as much a part of the process of redemption as are the acts themselves. He may display His power and have Himself crowned King as often as He wishes, but that is not what He wants. The appropriate effect for those causes is people responding to Him in love and joy. That is what He wants and that must be why this song is precisely here.” (Pp. 459-60)

Alexander translates **verse 1**: “*Jehovah my God (art) Thou; I will exalt Thee; I will praise Thy name; for Thou hast done a wonder, counsels from afar off, truth, certainty.*”

אֱמוּנָה אֱמֶן:

YHWH my God,³

³Ortlund comments on Isaiah's statement that YHWH is "my God," "Though worldwide in scope, redemption is personal." (P. 1283)

Oswalt likewise states that "This intensely personal affirmation sets the tone for the whole song. In place of the raucous drinking songs whose purpose was forgetfulness and the loosening of inhibitions with the result that the worst side of humanity was revealed, this is a song of heightened awareness and true freedom in commitment. Compare:

Psalm 30:3^{Heb} / **2**^{Eng},

YHWH, My God,
I cried to You for help, and You healed me!

Psalm 31:15^{Heb} / **14**^{Eng},

But / and I, upon You I trusted, O YHWH!
I said, You (are) my God!

Psalm 40:6^{Heb} / **5**^{Eng},

Many / great (things) You did,
You—YHWH my God--
Your wondrous acts and Your thoughts / plans for us!
There is none to compare to You!
I will declare, and I will tell (them)--
they were too many to recount!

Psalm 118:28,

My God (are) You, and I will confess / praise You;
my God, I will exalt You!

Psalm 145:1,

I will exalt You, my God, the King,
and I will bless Your name, to long-lasting time and as far as / future time!

"The personal note here is a helpful reminder that although God did deal with His people as a group, every individual in that group counted because God related to the groups as an individual. Thus instead of the person being lost in the group, the group became a person and the importance of persons was safeguarded." (P. 460)

(continued...)

You—I will exalt You!⁴
I will confess / praise⁵ Your name,

³(...continued)

We are reminded here of Westermann's commentary on **Isaiah 40-66**, where he shows in passage after passage the deep indebtedness of those chapters to the **Book of Psalms**. We think the same thing is true here in **Isaiah 25**, as the poem affirms YHWH as his / her God, and vows to exalt YHWH.

⁴Young confusingly states that “When Weber asserts that Christ is meant we can agree with him,” but then goes on to say that “He makes a solemn profession of monotheism. The God whom the prophet worships, Yahweh, is his God, and He alone is the One Whom Isaiah confesses as God...Emphasis falls upon the word *Yahweh*. It is God as covenant God, as God of Israel, as the Deliverer, who is to receive the praises that the prophet utters.” (P. 185)

We have often seen commentators like Young identifying exactly what is meant by the use of the Divine name YHWH, as if it had some specific theological meaning. However, we think this is largely arbitrary and baseless.

Obviously the hymn is about YHWH, not about Christ—and it is this kind of interpretation that causes great harm as Christians seek to reach out to Israel and share with them in serious biblical study. Neither is the hymn a “solemn profession of monotheism.” The teaching of monotheism will be found powerfully advanced in the **Book of Isaiah**, but not in this chapter—and we say, Why introduce such theological ideas in a passage that doesn't mention them? Nor does the hymn mention the “word” of YHWH.

What it does mention is YHWH's wondrous plans made long ago, and His actions in history, overthrowing an oppressive, unnamed, city or “foreigners.” That is, Divine plans are being enacted in human history; YHWH is in charge; and evil oppressors are going down! This is the nature of YHWH that Isaiah sees revealed in his enigmatic visions. It is faith in just such a God that gives believers hope for the future!

⁵The 1st person singular, hiphil imperfect verb **יָדַח**, **Yodheh**, is from the root **יָדַח**, which means literally, “throw.” In the hiphil tense, as here, it means “to give thanks,” “to praise,” and also “to confess,” that is, the name of God, as if the worshiper is “throwing” thanks, praise and confession to God. This same affirmation is found in the passages from the **Psalter** mentioned in footnote 3.

Alexander comments that **יָדַח** “strictly means *I will acknowledge or confess*.”

(continued...)

because You did a wonder / marvelous thing—^{6, 1}

⁵(...continued)

The whole phrase may either mean, I will acknowledge Thy goodness toward me, or I will confess Thee to be what Thy name imports, I will acknowledge Thy acts to be consistent with the previous revelations of Thine attributes.” (P. 412)

See the article on this root in **Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament V**, pp. 427-43, by G. Mayer, A. Bergman and W. von Soden. Mayer states that “The verb **הִתְרַחֵם** occurs in the hiphil and hithpael, and conveys two ranges of meaning. The first is ‘praise, sing a hymn’; the second is ‘confess.’ Thanksgiving is a form of praise.” (P. 428) From this verb comes the noun **תִּתְרַחֵם**, **todhah**, “thanksgiving.”

“The noun **פְּלִא** means “wonder,” or “marvel,” implying that it is something hard to be understood, something extraordinary. Motyer holds that it is plural in meaning, “Marvelous things”—“acts which bear the mark of the ‘supernatural world.’” (P. 208) But by what right does Motyer say the singular noun is “plural in meaning”? The **Hebrew Bible** knows and uses the plural, **פְּלִיאִים**, **pela'iym**, and if the author meant the plural, why not use it here?

We suspect that the introduction of the word “supernatural” into the definition is non-biblical, since it presumes a modern distinction between a natural world and a supernatural world, and in biblical thought there is only one world—YHWH’s / God’s world. We think the noun means “an act which bears the mark of God, and which cannot be explained otherwise.”

Alexander states that “What wonder is especially referred to, the next verse explains.” (P. 412)

For occurrences of the noun **פְּלִא** in the **Hebrew Bible**, see our end-note 1. And notice there how often it occurs in the **Book of Psalms**. See again footnote 3.

Oswalt comments that “The biblical faith is rooted in the concept of a God Who is not captive to the normal. He is able to do the remarkable things, and does, in order to save His people. Modern religion has stripped God of His miraculous powers...That kind of God neither excites nor deserves the kind of ecstatic praise recorded here” (P. 460)

We certainly agree that the God of the **Bible** is a God of “wonders,” Who acts in ways that are unexplainable by natural processes—such as creation from nothing (similar to the modern view of the “black hole,” and the “big bang”), and resurrection of the dead.

⁷Where our Hebrew text has עֲצוֹת, counsels, plans, 1QIs^a apparently has עֲצִית (so, Millar Burrows), but it may well be that the manuscript had a waw, the lower part of which has become illegible. Both the *waw* and the *yodh* are easily mistaken for one another in hand-written manuscripts.

⁸Young comments that this means “His counsels have been from afar, i.e., devised long ago....What He does is not precipitate nor rash, but is the outworking of His eternal purpose and decrees.” (P. 186)

Slotki’s translation has “of old,” and Slotki states that this means “from the days of the covenant with Abraham (**Genesis 15**).” (P. 115)

Oswalt comments that the phrase “things planned long ago” expresses “a thought which is especially Isaianic. God’s wonders, His amazing acts, are not ‘off-the-cuff.’ They are part of the Divine purpose in the universe...Isaiah knows a God Who, at the right moment, does something which from one point of view is utterly new, but from another is consistent with plans formed before the universe began. This is the only Being into Whose hands it makes sense to entrust oneself from Isaiah’s point of view. No other plan is worth anything.” (P. 461)

In the **Book of Isaiah**, see occurrences of the noun עֲצָה, “counsel,” “advice” along with the verb יַעֲזֵר, “advise,” “counsel” in such passages as:

14:24, 26-27,

- 24 YHWH of Armies swore, saying:
Did it not, just as I thought / planned—so it happened?
And just as I counseled,
it will stand / be fulfilled...
- 26 This—the counsel which was counseled upon all the earth,
and this—the hand, the one stretched out over all the nations.
- 27 Because YHWH of Armies counseled—and who will frustrate (it)?
And His hand (is) the one stretched out, and who will return it?

Isaiah 23:8-9, speaking of the fall of Tyre, asks:

- 8 Who counseled / purposed this,
against Tyre, the crown-bestower,
whose traveling merchants (are) princes,
her Canaanites / traders / merchants honored ones of the earth?

(continued...)

⁸(...continued)

- 9 YHWH of Armies counseled / purposed it,
to pollute / defile (the) exaltation of all beauty,
to make light of / dishonor all the earth's honored ones.

The noun עֲצָדָה, “advice, counsel,” and the verb יַעֲצֵהוּ, “advise, counsel,” which are so prominent in these two passages, occur oftentimes throughout the **Book of Isaiah**. Isaiah depicts a world that is filled with Divine advice or counsel, and points to YHWH Who is bringing His advice, counsel, plan or purpose to fulfillment in human history, over against human advice and human purposes.

What do you think? Is there “advice,” “counsel,” to be given and received in all that we humans do? Are we surrounded by “plans” and “purposes,” many of them beyond our knowledge or grasp? For example, when a farmer learns how to plow and prepare the ground for planting, in order to harvest and bring forth produce from the earth, is he in fact learning Divine plans and purposes implanted in all of nature? Compare **Isaiah 28:23-29**. Or, when with modern geneticists we begin to understand the DNA code, written into every cell in our body, must we not agree with Isaiah?

We say this is true in every form of productive work, and is true in all of our lives. It is true in the rise and fall of nations, and it is true in every home and in every human relationship, indeed in all of nature. YHWH God is a “planning, purposing God, Who has implanted His plans and purposes in all His creation.” We are products of His planning. We need to attune our lives to His purpose!

For this occurrences of this phrase, “from afar,” see our end-note 2.

⁹The last three lines are given varying translations:

King James, “for thou hast done wonderful *things*; thy counsels of old *are* faithfulness and truth.”

Tanakh, “For You planned graciousness of old, Counsels of steadfast faithfulness.”

New Revised Standard, “for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.”

New International, “for in perfect faithfulness you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago.”

New Jerusalem, “for you have accomplished marvels, plans long-conceived, faithfully, firmly.”

Rahfs, ὅτι ἐποίησας θαυμαστά πράγματα βουλήν ἀρχαίαν ἀληθινὴν γένοιτο κύριε, “because You did marvelous things--an ancient, true counsel / purpose--let it happen, O Lord!

Slotki comments that “God faithfully and truly fulfilled the promise made to the patriarch. The phrase may be translated ‘in perfect faithfulness.’” (P. 115)

(continued...)

⁹(...continued)

Gray states concerning the last two nouns, אֱמוּנָה אֱמוּן, that the “two synonyms...are combined to give a superlative force.” He adds that this means, “plans long since formed are now actually performed and thereby proven faithful.” (Pp. 425-26)

Alexander likewise states that “אֱמוּן and אֱמוּנָה are cognate [having the same linguistic derivation; from the same original word or root] forms, both denoting truth or certainty, and here combined, according to a very common Hebrew idiom, for emphasis.” (P. 413)

The noun פֶּלֶא is singular, and Isaiah identifies the “wonder” or “marvelous thing” in what follows. It consists of “counsels / plans from afar.” Compare **Isaiah 14:24-27**, quoted in the preceding footnote.

Do you agree with Isaiah? Do you think Divine purposes are being brought to fulfillment in world history in our 21st century, in such events as the “Arab Spring,” events we would not have imagined just a few years earlier?

What about in the world of nature that surrounds us? Are there not plans and purposes actively coming to pass which originated long before our birth or knowledge? What about in the depths of the oceans, in strange life-forms that seem impossible to us before we see them? What about in the galaxies hurtling out into space, far beyond our ability to observe?

When you consider the birds, the animals, the insects, the cosmos, the galaxies, DNA, sun and moon and stars; when you hear the “music of the spheres,” the mathematical and physical laws that are followed throughout the universes; when you look at your own physical body and its gifts that enable life, etc. etc., can you not agree with Isaiah there is, and we are, a “wonder”?

Check this out on the Internet: “A Grain of Sand: Nature’s Secret Wonder [slide show].”

And in terms of the preceding footnote, would you not agree with Isaiah that those Divine plans / counsels are steadfast / reliable / trustworthy, even though unknown to us and mysterious? And whatever your faith, do you not have to agree that the laws that govern our universe are dependable? Isaiah calls his readers to put their trust into the keeping of this God, believing that He will finish what He has planned, despite our own limited knowledge and ignorance.

¹⁰But there is much more—not only has YHWH created the universes, filling them with intricately designed marvels—He has also acted in human history in powerful,

(continued...)

קָרִיָּה בְּצוּרָה לְמַפְלָה
 אֶרְמוֹן זָרִים מֵעִיר
 לְעוֹלָם לֹא יִבְנָה:

Because You placed / transformed (it)--¹¹ from a city¹² to the heap (of ruins);¹³

¹⁰(...continued)

decisive ways, overturning powerful centers of wickedness, as **verse 2** describes.

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 2**: “For Thou hast turned (it) from a city to a heap, a fortified town to a ruin, a palace of strangers from (being) a city; for ever it shall not be built.”

“According to Rosenmueller, *city* is here put for cities in general, and the verse contains a promise or prophetic description of the golden age when fortifications should no longer be needed, as Virgil says of the same ideal period, that there shall then no more be *oppida muris cincta* [‘towns surrounded by walls’]. Most interpreters, however, are agreed that it refers to a particular city...Samaria... Jerusalem...Nineveh...Babylon.” (P. 413)

Oswalt comments that “This verse explains what God’s plans were that have now been executed. They were to humble all the works of human pride and oppression, here typified as the walled *city* and the *fortified town*. The usage here is the same as in **chapter 24**, in that no specific city is intended. This city is all those arrogant bastions of power that have crushed the righteous through all of time. But the prophet says that their power will not avail them in the end (**9:3-4^{Heb} / 4-5^{Eng}**). God will triumph, and it has been planned so from the beginning.” (P. 461)

¹¹Notice the two prepositions, מִן, “from,” followed by לְ, “to.”

Alexander comments that the verb שָׂמַתְּ, *samta* (from the root שָׂם, qal perfect, 2nd person masculine singular, “You placed”) “means strictly Thou hast placed, but is often used with [the preposition] לְ to denote the conversion of a thing into something else.” (P. 413)

Brown-Driver-Briggs agrees with this, and cites the following passages as examples of this usage:

Joshua 6:18,

(continued...)

¹¹(...continued)

וּרְקַאתֶם שְׁמֵרוּ מִן־הַחֲרֵם
כִּן־תִּחְרִימוּ וְלִקְחֶתֶם מִן־הַחֲרֵם
וְשִׂמַתֶּם אֶת־מַחֲנֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְחֲרֵם
וְעִכְרֶתֶם אוֹתוֹ:

And / but you (masculine plural), keep (yourselves) from the thing(s) devoted to destruction,
so that when you devote (them) to destruction, and you will take some of the (things) devoted to destruction,
and you will place / transform Israel's camp into a thing devoted to destruction;
and you will bring trouble on it!

Micah 1:6a,

וְשִׂמַתִּי שְׁמֵרוֹן לְעֵי הַשָּׂדֶה

And I will place / transform Samaria into a ruin of / in the field...

Genesis 21:13a,

וְגַם אֶת־בֶּן־הָאֵמָה לְגֹי אֲשִׁימֵנוּ

And also the hand-maid's son I will place / transform into a nation...

Genesis 21:18b,

כִּי־לְגֹי גָדוֹל אֲשִׁימֵנוּ

because into a nation, a great one, I will place / transform him!

Micah 4:7a,

וְשִׂמַתִּי אֶת־הַצִּלְעָה לְשֹׂאֲרֵית

וְהִנְהִלְאָה לְגֹי עֲצוּם

And I will place / transform the lame woman into a remnant;
and the woman cast off into a strong nation!

¹²Where our Hebrew text reads מֵעִיר, "from a city," making the verse descriptive of the fall of a single city, the Greek translation in the opening lines of **verse 2** makes it descriptive of the fall of cities, in the plural:

(continued...)

(from) a fortified city¹⁴ to a ruin;¹⁵

¹²(...continued)

ὅτι ἔθηκας πόλεις εἰς χῶμα

πόλεις ὀχυρὰς τοῦ πεσεῖν αὐτῶν τὰ θεμέλια

because You placed / made cities into a mound (of earth);
strong cities—(You caused) their foundations to fall!

Slotki states that “a city” refers to a city “of the enemy. This may be a reference to Babylon. According to others the noun has a collective meaning, ‘many cities.’” (P. 115)

Ackerman notes that “It is unclear whether this is a specific city; if so, it cannot be identified.” (P. 989)

Young states that “Whatever be the precise force of the words ‘city’ and ‘village’ in this verse, we may be sure that it is not speaking of Jerusalem. It is unlikely that he would praise God for the destruction of his own city, the city in which God’s dwelling was located.” (P. 187) But see **Isaiah 22:1-14** where Jerusalem as the “Valley of Vision” is portrayed as being destroyed by enemy forces. We think Isaiah could well be speaking of the destruction of wicked Jerusalem.

See **Isaiah 24:10** with its footnote 51 discussing the “city of confusion / chaos.”

¹³Where our Hebrew text reads לְהַגְלִיל, “to the heap,” **Rahfs** has εἰς χῶμα, “into a mound,” reflecting a Hebrew text with לְהַגְלִיל, “to a heap.” Compare **Isaiah 37:26**,

Have you not heard from afar,
I made it from days of old, and formed it?
Now I brought it, and it became heaps of ruins,
ruins (synonym) of fortified cities.

¹⁴Young translates the noun קְרִייהַ by “village,” but this noun is used for both Damascus and Jerusalem, which were “cities.” We think it is simply a synonym for עִיר, “city,” “town.”

¹⁵Here the noun is מַפְלֵה, “ruin.” It occurs elsewhere only at:

Isaiah 17:1,

An Oracle of Damascus:

Look—Damascus is being turned aside from (being) a city,
and it will become a ruin heap (?), a ruin.

(continued...)

a citadel / fortress of foreigners,¹⁶ from a city--
to long-lasting time it will not be (re-)built!¹⁷

¹⁵(...continued)

Isaiah 23:13,

Look—land of Chaldeans!
This, the people was not.
Assyria founded it for desert-dwellers.
They erected its siege-towers;
they laid bare its citadels,
he / He placed it for a ruin.

Young comments that Isaiah's language is reminiscent of the boasts made by the Assyrian conquerors. See James B. Pritchard's **Ancient Near Eastern Texts**, pp. 265-317. One example from among many, is from Shalmaneser III:

(I am) Shalmaneser, the legitimate king, the king of the world, the king without rival, the 'Great Dragon,' overlord of all the princes, who has smashed all his enemies as if (they be) earthenware, the strong man, unsparing, who shows no mercy in battle...I fought with them (a coalition of kings) assisted by the mighty power of Nergal, my Leader [a Deity worshiped throughout Mesopotamia (Akkad, Assyria and Babylonia) with the main seat of his worship at Cuthah], by the ferocious weapons which Ashur, my Lord [an East Semitic God, and the Head of the Assyrian pantheon in Mesopotamian religion] has presented to me, (and) I inflicted a defeat upon them. I slew their warriors with the sword, descending upon them like Adad [the storm and rain God in the Northwest Semitic and ancient Mesopotamian religions] when He makes a rainstorm pour down. In the moat (of the town) I piled them up, I covered the wide plain with the corpses of their fighting men, I dyed the mountains with their blood like red wool...I erected pillars of skulls in front of his town, destroyed his (other) towns, tore down (their walls) and burnt (them) down. (Pp. 276-77)

¹⁶Where our Hebrew text reads זָרִיִּים, **zariym**, "strangers," **Rahlfs** has τῶν ἀσεβῶν, "of the Godless," "impious people." Gray translates by "The palace of the 'presumptuous'..."

Verse 5 is quite different in **Rahlfs**: εὐλογήσουσίν σε ὡς ἄνθρωποι ὀλιγόψυχοι διψῶντες ἐν Σιων ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων ἀσεβῶν οἷς ἡμᾶς παρέδωκας, "They will bless You like faint-hearted people thirsting in Sion, from (because of?) Godless people to whom You handed us over." And we wonder what Hebrew text was the Greek translator using?

¹⁷Ortlund comments that "Every bastion of foreign invasion and occupation disappears forever." (P. 1283)

(continued...)

¹⁷(...continued)

Compare **Isaiah 24:20**:

Tottering, earth / land will totter like the drunken person;
and it will shake itself like the lodge / hut.
And its transgression will be heavy upon it,
and it will fall, and will not again arise!

¹⁸Alexander translates **verse 3**: “*Therefore a powerful people shall honor Thee, a city of terrible nations shall fear thee.*” He comments that “the destruction of Babylon, and the fulfillment of prophecy thereby, shall lead even the boldest and wildest of the heathen to acknowledge Jehovah as the true God. It is usual to apply the terms of this verse specifically to the Medes and Persians as the conquerors of Babylon...”

“There seems to be no need of applying the verse to a cordial voluntary recognition of Jehovah. It may just as well denote a compulsory extorted homage, fear being taken in its proper sense. The verse will then be an apt description of the effect produced by Jehovah’s overthrow of Babylon on the Babylonians themselves. There is still another explanation, namely that which understands the verse more indefinitely as descriptive of an effect produced upon the nations generally.” (P. 414)

But Babylon is not mentioned in the verse, nor is anything specific said about the conquerors.

Rahfs translation of **verse 3** is,

διὰ τοῦτο εὐλογήσει σε ὁ λαὸς ὁ πτωχός
καὶ πόλεις ἀνθρώπων ἀδικουμένων εὐλογήσουσίν σε
For this cause the poor people will bless You,
and cities of people being mistreated will bless You.
(without any mention of “strong people” or “terrible nations”)

Oswalt comments on **verse 3**, asking “What will be the result of God’s judgment? The *therefore* opening this verse makes it plain that the result is specified here. As elsewhere (**Isaiah 17:7-9; 19:19-20; 23:18**) the prophet makes it plain that recognition of God will be the effect. Compare:

Psalm 31:9^{Heb} / **8**^{Eng},

And You did not shut me up in an enemy’s hand / power;
You caused my feet to stand in the broad / roomy place!

Psalm 40:4^{Heb} / **3**^{Eng},

(continued...)

קִרְיַת גּוֹיִם עֲרִיצִים יִרְאֹנֶה:

¹⁸(...continued)

And He placed in my mouth a new song--
praise to our God!
Many will see, and will fear / revere;
and they will trust in the YHWH!

Psalm 47:8-9^{Heb} / 7-8^{Eng},

8/7 Because God is King [over] all the earth--
make melody [with a] song of wisdom!
9/8 God reigned over [the] nations!
God sat down upon his set-apart throne!

Psalm 67:5, 6, 8^{Heb} / 4, 5, 7^{Eng},

5/4 They will be glad, and they will giving ringing shouts of joy--peoples!
Because you judge peoples (with) uprightness,
and you lead them in the earth!
6/5 Peoples will give praise-filled thanks to you, O God,
they will give praise-filled thanks to you--peoples, all of them!
8/7 God blesses us,
and all earth's farthest ends will tremble in awe before him!

Psalm 87:9,

All nations which You made will come,
and they will worship before You, my Lord,
and they will give honor to Your name!

Psalm 97:7-10,

7 Give to YHWH, tribes of peoples,
give to YHWH glorious radiance and strength!
8 Give to YHWH glorious radiance (for) His name!
Bring an offering, and enter into His courts!
9 And bow down to YHWH, in (the) beauty of His set-apartness!
Dance before Him, all the earth!
10 Say among the nations, YHWH reigned as King!
Surely He establishes (the) world--it will not be shaken!
He will judge peoples with standards of uprightness!

“Why should destruction be necessary to cause such honor? Perhaps it is because we human beings do not recognize anything but power...When the situation is hopeless, then we are likely to look to God and recognize Him as the only remaining Help.” (P. 461)

For this reason a people of strength will honor You;¹⁹

¹⁹Slotki comments on the Hebrew text that “Not only the weak but even the strong will glorify the Lord.” (P. 115)

Motyer holds that neither their respect or fear “require us to understand that these people have come to faith in the Lord.” (P. 208) But such a view is difficult to uphold. The two verbs are **יִכְבְּדוּךָ**, “they will honor You,” and **יִירָאוּךָ**, “they will fear / reverence You.” We think that honoring and fearing YHWH are synonyms for having faith in YHWH. What do you think?

For the piel verb **יִכְבְּד** with God as the object, see:

1 Samuel 2:30,

Because one who honors Me, I will honor,
and those despising Me will be lightly thought of.

Isaiah 24:15,

“in the lights / east, **כִּבְדוּ יְהוָה**, “honor YHWH!” (Piel imperative)

Isaiah 25:3, here, “a strong people will honor You.”

Isaiah 43:20a

They will honor me—
wild animals of the field, jackals (dogs / wolves / coyotes) and ostriches.

Psalm 22:24,

Those who fear / reverence YHWH, praise Him!
All seed / descendant(s) of Jacob, honor Him!
And dread / be in awe from before Him, all seed / descendant(s) of Israel!

Psalm 50:15,

And call to Me in a day of distress;
I will deliver you (singular),
and you will honor Me.

Psalm 50:23,

One sacrificing a thank offering will honor Me;
and he will place a way.

(continued...)

a city²⁰ of nations²¹ of terror-striking (people)²², will fear / revere You!²³, ³

¹⁹(...continued)

I will cause him to see God's salvation.

Proverbs 14:31,

One who oppresses a weak person reproached his Maker;
and the one honoring Him shows compassion (to the) person in want.

Young comments that "As a result of the catastrophic changes wrought by the Lord, the carrying out of His wondrous counsels, a strong people will honor Him and a city of awe-inspiring nations will fear Him...When the world cities are overthrown, they see the power and wondrous counsels of the Lord, and honor Him in a religious sense." (P. 188)

We are reminded of the great world-wide reaction at the close of World War II, with the fall of the great world-cities of Berlin and Tokyo, and the great wave of religious fervor that swept through the United States following that victory. A great number of Americans sensed the presence of God in history, leading to the defeat of evil dictators, and great thankfulness and praise resulted.

²⁰Where our Hebrew text has the singular קְרִייתָ, "city of," **Rahfs** has the plural πόλεις, "cities."

²¹Alexander states that "there is something unusual in the expression *city of nations*. It must either be explained as implying a plurality of subject nations, or גוֹיִם, **goyim** [peoples / nations] must be taken in its secondary sense of *gentiles, heathen*, as applied to individuals or to one community."

²²The masculine plural absolute adjective עֲרִיזִים means "awe-inspiring ones" or "terror-striking ones," something like our modern "terrorists." The adjective occurs some 20 times in the **Hebrew Bible**, and is used once for YHWH. See **Jeremiah 20:11a**,

וַיְהוּה אֹתִי כְגִבּוֹר עֲרִיזִים
עַל-כֵּן רָדַפְנִי יִכְשְׁלוּ וְלֹא יִכְלֹוּ

And YHWH (is) with me like a mighty, awe-inspiring / terror-striking man;
therefore those pursuing me will stumble and will not prevail.

²³Gray comments that "The mighty and terrible nation which oppressed the poor Jews, when it has experienced the judgment of Yahweh...will recognize in Him a mightier than themselves, acknowledge His glory, and become His worshipers." (P. 426) But again we note that the text does not mention "Jews."

(continued...)

²³(...continued)

Orlund states that “The destruction of human tyranny clears the way for the vindication of God...The once *ruthless nations*, formerly united against God, come to fear Him properly.” (P. 1283) Young, similarly, p. 188.

Motyer holds that “Isaiah is referring to the ‘city of meaninglessness’ of **24:10**, the city which stands for the world structured without reference to God. The citizens of this world city are one ‘people’ though composed of many *nations*...As a result of the mightiness of His power, evidenced in the overthrow of their system, they ‘respect’ and ‘fear’ this mighty God.” (P. 208)

For the verb, “fear,” “reverence,” with God / YHWH as the object, see our end-note 3.

Do you agree with Motyer that fearing / reverencing God does not imply conversion? We think that genuine fear / reverence of God does imply conversion, and much more!

²⁴Motyer states that in **verses 4-5**, “The two sides of salvation are...brought together: what the Lord is to His people (**verse 4a-d**); the overwhelming threat from which He rescued them (**verse 4e-f**); and the consummate ease with which He performed this work (**verse 5**).” (P. 208)

Oswalt comments on these verses that they “continue the causal connection by expanding upon the reason for honoring God. He is to be honored not merely because He destroys the citadels of the proud, but also because He does so for the sake of the oppressed. In so doing, He becomes a refuge for them. All of this indicates that God’s reason for attacking pride is not merely that it is false in view of His Own incomparability (**Isaiah 40:6-26**), but also because of what it does to other human beings. Human pride and human well-being are incompatible and God is committed to human well-being.” (Pp. 461-62)

Slotki states that **verse 4** depicts “The Divine protection of Israel.” (P 115)

But the verse does not mention Israel—it only mentions the poor and the needy. Slotki holds that the “poor and needy” means “Israel oppressed by mighty neighbors.” (**Ibid.**) But we ask, Are there not “poor and needy” outside of Israel? And we insist that this passage depicts Divine blessings given to all people and nations—not just to Israel!

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 4**: “*For Thou hast been a strength (or stronghold) to the poor, in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible (or of the tyrants) was like a storm against a wall...The nations shall reverence Jehovah, not merely as the Destroyer of Babylon, but as the Deliverer of His people, for whose sake that catastrophe was brought about.*” (P. 414) But where does the text mention “Babylon”?

(continued...)

מְעוֹז לְאֲבוֹן בְּצֶרֶל־לוֹ
 מְחִסָּה מִזֶּרֶם
 צֶל מִחָרֵב
 כִּי רוּחַ עֲרִיצִים
 כְּזָרָם קִיר:

²⁴(...continued)

Ortlund comments that “The redeemed have in God something better than the ‘fortified city’ of man (**verse 2**). Easily, silently—like *the shade of a cloud*—God defends His oppressed people until His final triumph. *The song of the ruthless* is their pompous boasting.” (P. 1284)

Ackerman notes that “Apocalyptic destruction has removed the ruthless from the earth, leaving an environment in which only the righteous—here identified as the *poor* and *needy*—will live.” She refers to **Isaiah 14:28-32**:

- 28 In (the) year of the King Ahaz’ death,
 this (is) the oracle (that) came:
- 29 You (feminine) shall not rejoice, Philistia, all of you,
 that (the) rod striking you is broken.
 Because from (the) root of a serpent will go forth a snake (synonym),
 and its fruit a fiery flying serpent!
- 30 And first-born ones of poor / weak people will graze,
 and poor / needy people will lie down in security / safety.
 And I will put to death with the sword your root,
 and your remainder it / He will kill
- 31 Wail, gate!
 Cry out, city!
 Philistia melted away, all of you!
 Because from (the) north smoke is coming,
 and there is no one straggling in his appointed places / ranks!
- 32 And what will (anyone) answer a nation’s messengers?
 That YHWH founded Zion,
 and in it will seek refuge (the) poor / afflicted of His people!

Again we note that Ackerman finds the reference to this material in **Isaiah** in the first part of the **Book**, not in its **chapters 55-66**, to which she claims this material is most closely related.

Because You were a Place of Safety²⁵, ⁴ for the lowly (weak poor people);
a Place of Safety for the needy (poor people)²⁶ in their tight place;²⁷
a place of refuge from a downpour,
a shade from heat / drought!²⁸

²⁵Alexander states that מַעֲוֹן, **ma(oz)** “is not merely strength in the abstract, but a strong place or fortress.” (P. 414) We understand the word to mean “a place or means of safety and protection.”

Oswalt comments that “The theme of God as a refuge is a favorite one in Scripture, especially in the hymnic literature.” (P. 462) See end-note 4 for biblical passages in which YHWH is described as a refuge.

Oswalt adds that “The genius of Hebrew religion is its capacity to weld together an almighty, transcendent Creator with an imminent, personal Father. Neither one of these alone will do, but no other religion has been successful in holding the two together. Without both of them, God is our Refuge and Strength (**Psalm 47:2**^{Heb} / **1**^{Eng}) [religion] is a mockery.” (P. 462)

²⁶Alexander comments that דַּל, **dal**, “lowly,” and אֶבְיֹן, **ebhyon**, “needy,” “are epithets [names] often applied to Israel considered as a sufferer.” (P. 414) Yes, but that doesn’t mean that every time either of these two words is used it means Israelites; and in fact, Israel is not mentioned in this chapter.

²⁷For this matter of YHWH’s providing a place of safety for the poor and needy, see our end-note 4.

²⁸Alexander comments that “The two figures of extreme heat and a storm of rain are combined to express the idea of persecution or affliction.” (P. 414) YHWH is a place of safety from these adverse elements.

What will cause the nations of the world to give honor and reverence to YHWH? Isaiah’s answer is: the fact of His offering help and a place of refuge to the poorest and lowliest peoples of the earth. People of all nationalities and languages recognize genuine goodness to and care for the least deserving—and that is exactly what they can see in YHWH! That is why they will come to worship Him in His set-apart mountain.

And we ask, what religion is it that truly cares for the lowly and the poor—for widows and orphans, and people who have no standing before the law? When we look at the depiction of Jesus’ ministry in the **Gospels**, we see demonstrated just such a care for the unwanted. In His train have gone out loving followers all across planet earth, building nurseries and hospitals for the suffering people of the earth, giving food to the hungry, clean water to the thirsty, homes for the homeless, churches with wide-open doors, schools for the unlearned, orphanages, homes for the elderly, hospices for

(continued...)

Because (the) breath / spirit / anger²⁹ of terror-striking people--³⁰

(is) like a downpour (against) a wall--³¹

25:5³² כְּחֶרֶב בְּצִיּוֹן

²⁸(...continued)

the dying. What do you think? Is that kind of religion true religion? Do modern-day followers of Jesus always practice that kind of religion? Do they have an exclusive hold on caring for the poor?

Isaiah contrasts the dangers that confront the poor. On the one hand there is the down-pour / flood, and on the other hand heat, the hot weather that dries up growth and produces drought. As Motyer notes, “the contrasting dangers express totality: the Lord is sufficient for every threat.” (P. 208)

²⁹The noun here is רוּחַ, **ruach**, which we so often read in the context of YHWH’s “Spirit.” But here it is in the phrase רוּחַ עֲרִיצִים, “spirit of awe-inspiring / terror-striking people.” Alexander comments that “רוּחַ, **ruach**, does not directly denote *wrath*, but *breath*, and here a violent breathing, as indicative of anger.” (P. 414)

³⁰The plural noun עֲרִיצִים means “awe-inspiring / terror-striking people.”

³¹Motyer comments that “With breath (רוּחַ, ‘blast [of wind]’) Isaiah is still thinking in storm images and brings us to the moment when the threatening storm actually breaks and the protecting wall shakes under the impact [note that Isaiah means a wind that comes from terror-striking people]. But even if the ruthless come as close as this to victory it will be snatched from them.” (P. 208)

Alexander states that “The Hebrew phrase naturally signifies precisely what the **English Version** has expressed, to wit, *a storm against a wall*, denoting the direction and the object of the violence, but not its issue. As a storm of rain beats upon a wall, so the Babylonian persecution beat upon the captive Jews.” (P. 414)

But again we note that neither Babylon nor “the captive Jews” are mentioned, either in this verse or in this chapter.

³²Slotki states that **verse 5** depicts the “suppression of Israel’s enemies. As the heat of the day, however fierce, is abated by the shadow of a cloud, so will God subdue the arrogant clamor or triumphant song of the most violent oppressors. The second part of the verse is an amplification and interpretation of the first part.” (P. 116)

However, not a word is said in the text concerning “Israel’s enemies”; rather, the text only depicts the noise of strangers being subdued, and the song of terrible ones

(continued...)

שִׁאוֹן זָרִים תִּכְנִיעַ
 חָרֵב בְּצֶל עָב
 זְמִיר עֲרִיצִים יִעֲנֶה:

like heat / drought in parched (land).³³

³²(...continued)

being brought low. This can certainly be understood of those who oppress the poor and the needy, regardless of nationality; and in fact Israel is not mentioned.

Translations of **verse 5** vary considerably, especially the Greek:

King James, “Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; *even* the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.”

Tanakh, “The rage of strangers like heat in the desert, You subdued the heat with the shade of clouds, The singing of the tyrants was vanquished.”

New Revised Standard, “the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.”

New International, “and like the heat of the desert. You silence the uproar of foreigners; as heat is reduced by the shadow of a cloud, so the song of the ruthless is stilled.”

New Jerusalem, “Like heat in a dry land you calm the foreigners' tumult; as heat under the shadow of a cloud, so the song of the pitiless dies away.”

Rahlfs (quite differently), εὐλογήσουσίν σε ὡς ἄνθρωποι ὀλιγόψυχοι διψῶντες ἐν Σιων ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων ἀσεβῶν οἷς ἡμᾶς παρέδωκας, “They will bless You, like faint-hearted people thirsting in Zion, from / because of Godless people, to whom You delivered us.”

Alexander, “*As heat in a drought (or in a dry place), the noise of strangers wilt Thou bring down; (as) heat by the shadow of a cloud, (so) shall the song of the tyrants be brought low.*”

Alexander comments that “The sufferings of Israel under oppression shall be mitigated and relieved as easily and quietly as the intense heat of the sun by an intervening cloud. The noise mentioned in the first clause is probably the tumult of battle and conquest, and the song in the last clause the triumphal song of the victorious enemy.” (P. 415) But again we note, Israel is not mentioned in the text.

³³We take this first line of **verse 5** to be the completion of **verse 4**. The double phrase כְּחָרֵב בְּצִיּוֹן is “like dryness / drought / heat in dryness / parched land.” The last element, בְּצִיּוֹן, “in dryness / parched land,” is found again in the **Hebrew Bible** only at **Isaiah 32:1-2**:

(continued...)

An uproar of foreign peoples,³⁴ You will subdue / humble,³⁵
(like) heat / drought in a cloud's shade,³⁶

³³(...continued)

- 1 Look—for righteousness a king will reign;
and for princes—for justice they will rule.
- 2 And each one will be like a hiding-place (from the) wind / blast;
and a covering / hiding place (in) a downpour;
like channels of water(s) in dryness / parched land;
like a shade / shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

That is, the ideal king and his fellow-rulers will furnish the protection that YHWH gives according to **25:4**.

In an unpointed Hebrew text—such as pre-masoretic (before the 7th to 10th centuries C.E.) Hebrew texts were—it is impossible to tell the difference between **בְּצִיּוֹן**, “in dryness / parched land,” and **בְּצִיּוֹן**, “in Zion.” In those unpointed texts, both phrases are identical, i.e., **בְּצִיּוֹן**.

³⁴Where our Hebrew text has **זָרִים**, “foreigners,” “strangers,” **Rahlf**s has **ὀλιγόψυχοι**, “faint-hearted, discouraged people,” reflecting a Hebrew text with **זָרִים**. Anyone who reads Hebrew knows how easy it is to mistake a **resh** ר for a **daleth** ד, especially in hand-written texts!

³⁵Motyer comments that in **verse 5**, “Reality replaces metaphor...the *uproar of foreigners* against the Lord’s weak (*poor*; **verse 4**) and resourceless (*needy*; **verse 4**) people and their triumphal song.” (Pp. 208-09) He translates this verse by:

Like heat in an arid land,
You subdue the uproar of foreigners—
heat by the shadow of a cloud—
the song of the ruthless is humbled. (P. 209)

We take the first line of this verse to be the completion of **verse 4**, but understand how Motyer has understood it. In fact, it makes little difference for the meaning however this first line is understood.

³⁶This line is omitted by **Rahlf**s.

Even in the midst of intense heat and drought, the intervention of a cloud between the sun and the earth will give some relief, so it is with YHWH—knowledge of / faith in YHWH intervenes between the poor / needy people and the storm of uproar / the song of the terror-striking, imparting comfort, relief.

(continued...)

a song of terror-striking people will be bowed down / lowered.³⁷

³⁶(...continued)

Oswalt comments that the statement “As parching heat in the shadow of a cloud” shows “how quickly and silently God can overcome the mighty. Just as a cloud slipping between the earth and the sun produces moments of blessed coolness, so God interposes Himself in hopeless situations so that life can go on.” (P. 462) Compare:

Psalm 17:8,

Guard / keep me, like a pupil, daughter of an eye!
In (the) shadow of Your wings, You will hide me...

Psalm 36:8^{Heb} / 7^{Eng},

How precious (is) Your steadfast-love, O God!
And children of humanity will find refuge in (the) shadow of Your wings!

Psalm 57:2^{Heb} / 1^{Eng},

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful!
Because in You my innermost-being took refuge,
and in Your wings shadow I will take refuge,
until destruction passes by / over.

Psalm 63:8^{Heb} / 7^{Eng},

I would dwell temporarily in Your tent of long-lasting-times;
I would take refuge / shelter in Your wings' covering / secrecy! Selah.

Psalm 91:1,

One dwelling in (the) hiding place of (the) Most High,
in (the) shadow of Shaddai he will lodge / spend the night.

Psalm 121:5-6,

5 YHWH (is) your (singular) Keeper;
YHWH (is) your Shade over / upon your right hand!
6 By day, the sun will not strike you,
and / or (the) moon in the night!

³⁷Yes, the song of the terror-striking is still there, and can still be heard. But its tone is lowered, it is greatly diminished by the knowledge of YHWH's presence and aid.

³⁸Ackerman comments on **25:6-10a** that it is “Like **25:1-5**, a poem celebrating the time of redemption that will follow the apocalypse, in particular, and the joyous celebratory banquet that God will host...In Canaanite mythology, the storm God Baal hosts a banquet to celebrate His defeat of the God of chaos water (the sea God Yamm) and His enthronement as King of the Gods.” (P. 989)

Ackerman refers to the Divine invitation given in **Isaiah 55:1-13** [in the latter half of the **Book**], where everyone who is thirsty is invited to come and participate fully in the Divine waters, wine, milk, and rich food [the word מִשְׁתֵּה, “drinking-banquet” or “feast” is not used in **chapter 55**] whether they have money or not.

We agree, and think that the two passages should be studied together, with their emphasis on the Divine food and drink given freely to all humanity or “everyone who thirsts.”

Slotki comments on **verses 6-9** that “A great banquet will be prepared for the nations. Death will cease and tears be wiped from all faces. This perhaps symbolizes the recognition of the true God by all the peoples of the earth and the abolition of evil which culminates in mortality.” (P. 116)

Perhaps...but there is nothing said about “recognition of the true God” or about “the abolition of evil.” What is said is that YHWH will make a sumptuous drinking-feast for all the peoples on Mount Zion, and swallow up death forever! That is, this is YHWH’s ultimate purpose, His goal—which He will achieve!

Gray comments on **verses 6-8** that “As a feast formed part of the ceremonial of the coronation or solemn recognition of a king...so, after His accession to universal sovereignty in Jerusalem (**24:23**), Yahweh gives a feast to all His subjects—not only to the Jews, but to all the peoples...[The author] thinks of the incorporation of all nations in the new and universal kingdom which will have its center in Zion (compare **Psalm 87**), and of Yahweh’s gracious and tender care of all those of whatever nation who had suffered under other kings...than Himself.” (Pp. 428-29)

But nothing is said in **chapters 24** or **25** about a “ceremonial of the coronation or solemn recognition of a king.” This is all being read into the text by Gray. And nothing is said in the text about the Jews being at the feast—it is a feast for all peoples and nations, and the Jews are not even mentioned as among those participants, although the feast is centered in Zion.

However, Gray’s reference to **Psalm 87** is appropriate, with its depiction of non-Jews—Rahab (probably meaning Egypt), Babylon, Philistia, Tyre and Cush / Ethiopia (that farthest away, mysterious people of Africa) as having been born in Zion, the City of God!

(continued...)

³⁸(...continued)

Motyer entitles **verses 6-8** “Blessings in Zion.” We agree with that title, and include in those blessings the following:

1. Divine nourishment—the best of foods and wines—for all peoples—at YHWH’s drinking banquet!
2. The removal of all signs of death and mourning—mourning shrouds and tears—with the swallowing up of death for all peoples and nations.
3. The removal of reproach for His people from the earth.

Oswalt comments on **verses 6-8** that “The focus of attention returns here to the banquet, the atmosphere having been heightened by the hymn of praise in **verses 1-5**. The inaugural banquet seems to have been customary in the Near East when a king was crowned. It was a time when the king bestowed favors and sought to establish a favorable tone for his reign. That seems to be the picture here. The subjects come from all over the world (**2:2**) to the mountain of the Lord (**24:23; 2:2, 3; 4:5; 11:9; 65:25**). There they receive the gifts which only God can bestow: the destruction of death and the removal of the sorrow which accompanies it. This is the key to the richness of the feast—it is the food and drink of life (**John 4:13-14; 6:35, 58; 7:37-38**).” (Pp. 462-63)

But we must ask Oswalt, What banquet or feast is being returned to? Nothing is said in **chapter 24** about any **מִשְׁתֵּה**, **mishteh**, “drinking-banquet” or feast that could be returned to. The only other use of this noun in the entire **Book of Isaiah** is at **5:12**, and there it is not a banquet or feast given by YHWH, but rather, the human feasts at which there is no regard for the deeds of YHWH, no seeing the works of His hands.

No, this drinking-banquet in **chapter 25** is unique for the **Book of Isaiah**—it has not been mentioned in the preceding chapters, nor will it be mentioned in the chapters to follow, unless **chapter 55** with its invitation to eat and drink without money or price is a reference to such a banquet without using the noun **מִשְׁתֵּה**.

Oswalt calls the banquet “an inaugural banquet,” meaning a feast / banquet given on the occasion of a king’s “inauguration,” his installation into royal office. But where is anything said about an “inauguration of a king or any other figure” in the text? Oswalt says “that seems to be the picture here”—but there is not one mention of an inauguration in the text.

Oswalt refers to other passages in **Isaiah** about people coming from all over the world to the mountain of the Lord, but the passages he refers to, **Isaiah 24:23** does not mention people coming from all over the world to Mount Zion, and **Isaiah 2:2-3**, while depicting the nations coming to Mount Zion, says nothing about the nations sharing in a

(continued...)

³⁸(...continued)

feast or banquet—that passage only depicts the peoples as learning from YHWH. **Isaiah 4:5** says nothing about a feast or banquet—only that Mount Zion will have a canopy of protection over it. **Isaiah 11:9** says nothing about a feast or banquet; and **Isaiah 65:25** mentions the wolf and the lamb grazing, and the lion eating straw like an ox, but not a word concerning a drinking-banquet or feast for all nations.

As we have observed before, Oswalt often piles up scriptures to prove his point—but sometimes, as here, the scriptures he refers to do not prove his point.

Oswalt refers to the **Gospel of John--4:13-14; 6:35, 58; 7:37-38**—passages which depict Jesus offering his hearers the water and bread of life. As Christians, we can well understand Jesus as inviting all humanity to come to the feast that imparts life. But that is a centuries-later fulfillment of the hopes of the **Hebrew Bible**, and hardly constitute a proof of what Oswalt is saying about “returning to a feast / banquet.

Alexander translates **verse 6**: “*And Jehovah of hosts will make, for all nations, in this mountain, a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things, full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.*”

He comments that “Jerusalem, hitherto despised and oppressed, shall yet be a source of attraction, nourishment and exhilaration to mankind [but Jerusalem is not so much as mentioned in the verse, and certainly not as being a “source of attraction”; “this mountain” is mentioned, but simply as the place chosen by YHWH for the Divine feast for all nations]. This verse resumes the thread of the discourse, which was interrupted at the end of the last chapter, for the purpose of inserting the triumphal song (**verses 1-5**). Having said there that Jehovah and his elders should appear in glory on mount Zion [and in Jerusalem], he now shows what is there to be bestowed upon the nations.” (P. 415)

Perhaps...but can we be sure that **25:6** is a continuation of **24:23**?

Watts states that “Yahweh’s feast will be for all peoples. He moves beyond the circles of His intimates, the elders, and issues a universal invitation.” (P. 331)

But the text says nothing about an “invitation.” **Isaiah 55** begins with an invitation to come and eat and drink, but this is not true of **chapter 25**, which simply says YHWH will make or give a drinking-banquet for all the peoples, but says nothing concerning inviting them to the feast.

Watts is reading this passage in the light of Jesus’ parable of a king giving a wedding feast for his son, and inviting people to come to it—but many refused the invitation—in **Matthew 22:1-14**. **Isaiah 25:6-8** is quite different, with no mention of an invitation, and no mention of anyone refusing to come.

בְּהַר הַזֶּה
 מִשְׁתָּה שְׁמָנִים
 מִשְׁתָּה שְׁמָרִים
 שְׁמָנִים מִמַּחֲזִים
 שְׁמָרִים מִזְקָקִים:

And YHWH of Armies will make for all the peoples,³⁹

³⁹Motyer comments that in **verses 6-8**, “The theme of universality is stressed—*all peoples* (twice), *all nations*, *all faces*, *all the earth*. Note the *sequence*—*peoples* (ethnic groups), *nations* (political entities), *faces* (individuals)—and how all these become *His people* (**verse 8b**).” (P. 209)

Ortlund likewise notes that “The five-fold use of ‘all’ in **Isaiah 25:6-8** suggests the fullness of God’s salvation. The inclusiveness of ‘all peoples’ is matched by the particularity of ‘this mountain.’” (P. 1284)

Gray states that the promise here has to do with “the incorporation of all nations in the new and universal kingdom which will have its center at Zion (compare **Psalms 87** [Yes--see our commentary on **Psalms 87**], and of Yahweh’s gracious and tender care of all those of whatever nation who had suffered under other kings...than Himself.” (P. 429)

But where in the text is anything said about “incorporation of all nations in the new and universal kingdom”? And where is there mention of their having “suffering under other kings than Himself”?

Oswalt comments that “*on this mountain...for all peoples* combines particularity with universality...The universal deliverance could not occur without the particular manifestation. This is the genius of the revelation. Because God dealt with a certain people in certain ways, there is hope for all humanity. For it is God’s acts which save us, not merely a generalized teaching about Deity which could have been given apart from the Jewish people and Jerusalem.” (P. 463)

Does this comment make sense to you? We agree that the Divine feast for all nations on Mount Zion “combines particularity with universality,” but we also think that for Isaiah “Mount Zion” becomes much more than a particular city in Israel—it is a “heavenly Zion,” a symbol for the presence of YHWH. The text does not say that “because God dealt with a certain people in certain ways, there is hope for all humanity.” Not a word of this. Rather, it simply states, shockingly, without any

(continued...)

on this mountain,⁴⁰
a drinking-banquet⁴¹ of fatness,⁴²

³⁹(...continued)

forewarning, that YHWH has a universal goal in mind, one that goes far beyond anything said or done before. YHWH intends to give a drinking-banquet / feast for “all nations”— Israel is not even mentioned, but of course would be included as one among the many. The “genius of the revelation” is YHWH’s exceedingly bountiful design for all the nations and people of the earth!

What do you think? Why, do you think, is it so hard for commentators to say what this text says? Are we afraid of the “universal” implications of this passage?

Do you think, with Oswalt, that God could not give such a banquet unless He had previously dealt with Israel in “certain ways”? And we ask, Who is Oswalt, to be saying that God could not do something? In such a comment, he sounds akin to Job’s three friends, who were so certain as to what God could and could not do. We say the “genius of the revelation” is that out of the midst of YHWH’s actions in relation to the world and to His people Israel, with all the accompanying violence and suffering and death, suddenly this startling affirmation comes--that YHWH intends “universal” salvation,” with death, the Divine punishment for humanity’s sin, “swallowed up לַנֶּצֶחַ, **lanetsach**, “for the perpetuity.” How would you describe this, other than “universal salvation”? Does this declaration / revelation not give hope to all humanity? We say it does!

Oswalt notes that the universality of this passage is probably the reason that the Aramaic Targum turns it into a “statement of judgment: “The Lord of Hosts will make for all the peoples on this mountain a feast and a festival. They shall consider it for honor but it shall be shame for them, even plagues which they cannot escape, plagues wherein they shall perish.”

⁴⁰There can be little doubt that Isaiah means “on Mount Zion.” See especially in **Isaiah, 2:2-4; 4:5; 8:18; 10:12; 18:7; 24:23; 29:8; 31:4 and 37:32.**

The mention of Mount Zion or just Zion is noticeably missing in **chapters 40-66.** But the word “Mount” by itself occurs oftentimes in those chapters, and there can be little doubt that the reference is to the same mountain—Mount Zion. See, for the singular word “mount” in Isaiah: **2:2; 2:3; 10:32; 11:9; 13:2; 16:1; 22:5; 25:6,7, 10; 27:13; 30:29; 56:7; 57:13; 65:11, 25; 66:20,** all of which, we think, mean Mount Zion.

⁴¹Ortlund notes that this “feast” (our “drinking-banquet”) is “God’s bountiful answer to the worldly partying silenced in **Isaiah 24:7-11.**” (P. 1284)

And we say, all the “parties,” all the “drunken festivals,” all the “celebrations” we human may have, cannot begin to compare with the “drinking-banquet” YHWH has in mind for all humanity! Our parties / orgies / festivals quickly fade into forgetfulness—but

(continued...)

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here is a celebration that will know no end! Yes, the “worldly partying” of **Isaiah 24** is silenced—but this Divinely intended banquet of **Isaiah 25:6-8** will never end, will never be silenced! We should all long to be part of that banquet!

⁴²Slotki’s translation has “a feast of fat things,” and he comments that “The banquet may be held to celebrate the inauguration of the new and happy era for mankind. A metaphorical interpretation has been given to the verse, and the food and wine understood of spiritual sustenance. Similar imagery is employed in Rabbinic literature for the bliss in store for the righteous in the hereafter.” (P. 116)

Alexander comments that the noun שְׂמֵנִים “properly means *fatnesses*, here put for rich and dainty food.” (P. 415) We think the meaning is probably that there is no holding back at this meal—the table is loaded with the finest, the costliest, the very best food and drink possible—as YHWH is giving the feast, providing all peoples and nations with an unequaled drinking-banquet, at which death is swallowed up forever, and all tears are permanently wiped away!

Oswalt comments on the phrase “a feast of fatness,” that “To a people who did not have to worry about cholesterol, the fat portions of the meat were the best (**Psalm 36:9^{Heb} / 8^{Eng}; 63:6^{Heb} / 5^{Eng}**). Thus it is not surprising that these were the portions of the sacrifices reserved for God (**Leviticus 3:3; 4:8, 9**). But here God is giving the rich food to His people [no—to the nations!], as the Host.” (Pp. 463-64)

⁴³Slotki’s translation has “wines on the lees.” He states that “wines that are left for a long time on their sediment improve in flavor and potency.” (P. 116) Oswalt agrees, stating that “a feast of lees” (his translation) “refers to wine which has been allowed to strengthen by leaving the dregs in the wine after the fermentation process. The wine, strained before drinking, was clear and strong, i.e., good wine.” (P. 464)

Jeremiah 48:11,

Moab was at ease from his youth,
and he is being settled upon his lees / dregs,
and he was not emptied from vessel to vessel,
and he did not go into captivity.
Therefore his taste stood / remained in him
and his scent / aroma was not changed.

An article in **Wikipedia** states that “Lees refer to deposits of dead yeast or residual yeast and other particles that precipitate, or are carried by the action of ‘fining,’ to the bottom of a vat of wine after fermentation and aging. The yeast deposits in beer brewing are known as *trub*. However, yeast deposits from secondary fermentation of beer are referred to as *lees*. Normally the wine is transferred to another container

(continued...)

fatness full of marrow,
(and) refined wines.⁴⁴

⁴³(...continued)

(*racking*), leaving this sediment behind. Some wines (notably Chardonnay, Champagne and Muscadet) are sometimes aged for a time on the lees (a process known as *sur lie*), leading to a distinctive yeasty aroma and taste. The lees may be stirred (*bâtonage* in French) in order to promote uptake of the lees flavor. The lees are an important component in the making of Ripasso where the left-over lees from Amarone are used to impart more flavor and color to partially aged Valpolicella.” (Wikipedia, 6/27/2012)

Alexander states that שְׁמָרִיִּים, **shemariym** “means the lees of wine, as being the *keepers* (from שָׁמַר, ‘to keep’), or preservers of the color and flavor. It is here put for wine kept long upon the lees, and therefore old and of superior quality.” (P. 415)

H. Wolf comments that such a feast or banquet is “associated with a coronation (**1 Kings 1:25** [a coronation feast / banquet for David’s son Adonijah]) or wedding (**Judges 14:10** [Samson’s marriage feast / banquet]).” (P. 1051)

But we should not take these associations as determinative for what kind of feast is being described here. This is a universal feast, celebrating the swallowing up of death forever!

⁴⁴The Hebrew text has a beautiful, rhyming parallelism: notice how the second word in lines one and two are the first word in lines three and four

שְׁמָנִים מִשְׁתֵּה שְׁמָרִיִּים, **mishteh shemaniym**

מִשְׁתֵּה שְׁמָרִיִּים, **mishteh shemariym**

שְׁמָנִים מִמְּחָיִים, **shemaniym memuchayim**

שְׁמָרִיִּים מִזְּקָקִים, **shemariym mezuqqaqiym**

A drinking-banquet of fat meats,
a drinking-banquet of flavor-giving lees;
fat meats full of marrow (?),
flavor-giving lees, purified!

There can be no doubt that this is carefully crafted literary work!

Translations of these last four lines vary:

King James, a feast of fat things,
a feast of wines on the lees,

(continued...)

⁴⁴(...continued)

of fat things full of marrow,
of wines on the lees well refined.

Tanakh, A banquet of rich viands,
A banquet of choice wines --
Of rich viands seasoned with marrow,
Of choice wines well refined.
("Viands" means "items of food")

New Revised Standard,
a feast of rich food,
a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow,
of well-aged wines strained clear.

New International,
a feast of rich food for all peoples,
a banquet of aged wine--
the best of meats
and the finest of wines.

New Jerusalem,
a banquet of rich food,
a banquet of fine wines,
of succulent food,
of well-strained wines.

Rahfs omits all but one of these mentions of rich food and fine wines, and has:

πίονται εὐφροσύνην
πίονται οἴνου

χρίσονται μύρον,
they will drink gladness;
they will drink wine;

they will anoint (with) perfume.

(NETS supplies the word "feast" after "He will make," but it is not found in the Greek text.)

Alexander comments that "This verse contains a general statement of the relation which Jerusalem or Zion should sustain to the whole world, as a source of moral influence. There is nothing to indicate the time when the promise should be fulfilled, nor indeed to restrict it to one time exclusively. As the ancient seat of the true religion, and as the cradle of the church which has since overspread the nations, it has always more or less fulfilled the office here ascribed to it." (P. 415)

But where in this verse is anything said or even suggested concerning "a source of moral influence"? Where is anything said about "the ancient seat of the true

(continued...)

⁴⁴(...continued)

religion,” or “the cradle of the church”? We say No. No—this is too weak, too paltry. It doesn’t sing the song of Isaiah, with its rich notes and melodious, mind-boggling hope.

This prophetic vision, with all its puzzling elements, depicts the desire and the plan of YHWH for all nations—it is that they shall eat at His table, richly spread with food and drink beyond compare—the very best, the most expensive that can be imagined! There is nothing about qualifications for being invited; nothing about conversion, or obedience—only the desire and plan of YHWH to richly feed all the nations—in a banquet modeled after the banquet once observed on Mount Sinai by YHWH and Israel’s elders.

This is a depiction of YHWH—the universal God of all peoples and nations—sharing in a joyous universal eating and drinking from His gracious provision, and announcing the reversal of the decree of death for humanity made so prominent in **Genesis 3!**

And in the next two verses it is emphasized that at this universal banquet of God’s grace, death both has been and will be swallowed up forever, and all tears will be wiped away from human eyes. What a powerful, unequalled hope, a hope to be proclaimed and shared with all the world! What a God Isaiah’s vision of YHWH is!

Again we say, Let’s learn to sing the song of Isaiah! Don’t water it down. Don’t minimize it. Don’t weaken it, with your doctrinal correctness, or your lack of faith!

What do you think? Is this the banquet symbolized by Jesus’ feeding of the multitudes mentioned so prominently in the **Gospels**? Is Jesus reenacting this feast with the people of his day?

We think so. His actions, we believe, say to us, Let’s begin the Divine feast, here and now! And isn’t this what his church, his followers, ought to be doing in the world?

⁴⁵Ackerman comments on **verses 7-8** that “In Cananite mythology, the chaotic forces that Baal subdued through His defeat of the sea God Yamm are unleashed again after Baal’s enthronement. The God of death, Mot, stretches open His mouth and swallows up Baal, taking Him down to the underworld and rendering Him dead... But, in the perfected world that succeeds the apocalypse, no such threat of resurgent chaos will exist; rather, the God of creation and order, the Lord, will *swallow up death forever*...”

“This passage is cited by Paul in **1 Corinthians 15:54** in his discussion of resurrection; **Revelation 7:17** quotes from the second half of **verse 8** to describe how every tear will be wiped away in the eschatological kingdom.” (P. 989)

1 Corinthians 15:54,

(continued...)

⁴⁵(...continued)

But then when this corruptible (body) will be clothed with incorruptibility,
and this mortal / subject to death (body) will be clothed with immortality,
then shall happen the word, the one having been written:
The death was swallowed up into victory.

This last line is not an exact quotation of the Greek translation of **Isaiah 25:8a**, which has: “He swallowed the death, having power.”

Isaiah 25:8b, as translated in **Rahlfs** is:

And again the God took away every tear from every face.

Revelation 7:17b has

and the God will wipe away every tear out of their faces.

which likewise is not an exact quotation of the Greek.

But at least, Paul is singing the song of Isaiah!

Oswalt comments on **verses 7-8**: “But the people who come to the great feast come with veils over their faces. Although some commentators believe this refers to the veil of ignorance which prevents the Gentiles from understanding and accepting God’s revelation (**2 Corinthians 3:15**), most are agreed, in the light of **verse 8**, that the reference is to the shroud of death. Before human beings can experience the joy of God’s great feast, something must be done about the universal curse...

“At the end of every pathway the Grim Reaper [why capitalize this phrase? Death is not Divine!] awaits us all, and that cold hand blights every human happiness [not if you truly believe that God is in charge of death!]. But God will *swallow*—not merely remove, but envelop in such a way as to destroy—that shroud. Moreover, He will do it on Mount Zion, the prophet says...

“For the Christian, what other meaning can this have than the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? In him, death has been defeated once and for all, for all the peoples of the earth (**Romans 6:14; 1 Corinthians 15:12-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Revelation 1:17-18; 21:4**). This is the ultimate deliverance. We may be delivered from want and from oppression, but until we are delivered from death, and the sin which issues in death, all these other deliverances are a mockery; death is the final conqueror.” (P. 464)

But what of the non-Christian people reading the **Book of Isaiah** centuries before the coming of Jesus, those for whom the passage was written, long before these **New Testament** affirmations were made? They could only take the prophetic

(continued...)

פְּנֵי-הַלּוֹט | הַלּוֹט עַל-כָּל-הָעַמִּים

⁴⁵(...continued)

statement to mean that YHWH's plan was to conquer death forever for all peoples and nations. How and when, they would have no means of knowing. But if they believed the prophet, they could live in confidence that sometime in the future, death would be swallowed up forever, for all people. They could put their faith in YHWH, as the God Whose ultimate purpose is to conquer death for all humanity. Do you agree? Why? Why not?

Do you believe in YHWH / God as the One Who will ultimately swallow up death forever, wiping away all tears and signs of death? And do you believe that the resurrection of Jesus from death demonstrates the reality of this ancient vision, especially if you agree with **1 Peter 3-4** that having died, Jesus went "in the Spirit" and preached good news to those who had died under the judgment of God?

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 7**: "*And He will swallow up (i.e. destroy) in this mountain the face of the veil, the veil upon all peoples, and the web, the (one) woven over all the nations...*

"The influence to go forth from this center shall dispel the darkness both of ignorance and sorrow which now broods over the world." (P. 415)

But again we say, No. No, this is not about "influence going forth to dispel the darkness of ignorance and sorrow." There is nothing said in this verse about "influence." The verse is about YHWH, and what YHWH has planned for the entire world, and what He will do for all nations and all peoples. He has swallowed up death (the qal, perfect / past tense, **verse 8**, בִּלְעַתְּ הַמָּוֶת לְנֶצַח, "He swallowed up the death for the perpetuity"), and He will swallow up all the dark symbols of death—the veil that covers the face of the widow, the shroud, the black cloth that is placed over the casket! No one else has ever done that; no one else will ever even begin to do that.

"He swallowed up death!" "He will swallow up all its symbols!" He will do away with death forever! He will wipe away all the tears of grief that stain our faces and our hearts when our loved ones die. He is making an unbelievably rich, expensive feast for us—all nations, all peoples—and He has and is swallowing up death and its symbols forever!

Sing it out with joy! Let the mountains and the hills hear our voice! Sing the song of Isaiah! This is Isaiah's prophetic vision of the God we serve—the God Who offers hope to all humanity!

וְהִמְסָכָה

הַנְּסוּכָה עַל-כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם:

And He will swallow up on this mountain⁴⁶

the appearances of the shroud⁴⁷ that shrouds over all the peoples,

⁴⁶Slotki holds that the phrase “this mountain” “indicates that the prophecy was uttered in Jerusalem.” (P. 116)

Possibly...but it may only mean the mountain being spoken of throughout **chapters 24-27** is Mount Zion—that is, “this mountain” that we have been describing. It’s the mountain to which all the nations are coming (according to **Isaiah 2:2-4**). It’s the mountain where YHWH’s incomparable feast is being spread for all the nations. It’s the mountain where life abounds, as death and its symbols are swallowed up, and all our tears are wiped from our faces!

We say, Come to YHWH’s mountain! Eat and drink to your full! Bring every member of your family—bring your neighbors and people you don’t even know. Eat the rich meat! Drink the rich wine! Let the feast begin! Sing the song of Isaiah!

⁴⁷D. Winton Thomas, the editor of **Isaiah** in **Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia** suggests that the noun in our Hebrew text, הַלְלוֹט, “the shroud,” should be changed to read הַלְלוֹט, “the wrap,” referring to **1 Samuel 21:10**, where the qal feminine participle לְלוּטָה means “wrapped.”

Thomas, in his notes throughout this volume, again and again suggests changing the text where there is no textual evidence for such changes, reminding us of an earlier generation of scholars who treated the Hebrew text in a similar manner, as if they knew what Isaiah should have said, and dared to rewrite his ancient Hebrew--but whose treatments of the text lead to confusion rather than to understanding.

We ask, what good is it to re-write an ancient text, and then comment on it? Is it not better to keep the text as it has been handed down to us by successive generations, and admit that it contains statements we cannot understand, or that we think are mistaken, but not attempting to rewrite the ancient text?

H. Wolf holds that this shroud...sheet / covering...veil is referring to the materials “with which faces were covered in mourning,” instead of materials for covering up the face of the dead persons. But he adds, “in any event, the associations are with death.” (P. 1051)

Ortlund comments on the **English Standard Version’s** translation “the covering,” and “the veil,” that it means “The pall [a cloth, often of velvet, for spreading

(continued...)

and the mourning-veil that is woven over all the nations.⁴⁸

⁴⁷(...continued)

over a coffin, bier (a movable frame on which a coffin or a corpse is placed before burial or cremation or on which it is carried to the grave), or tomb; anything that covers, shrouds, or overspreads, especially with darkness or gloom'] of death hanging over all human activity under the curse [of death]...God will swallow it up and give back life." (P. 1284)

For the "curse of death," see:

Genesis 3:17-19,

- 17 And to the human He said,
Because you listened to your woman's / wife's voice,
and you ate from the tree which I commanded you saying,
You shall not eat from it,
the ground is cursed for your sake;
with pain / toil you shall eat (from) it all your life's days.
- 18 And thorn(s) and thistle(s) it will cause to grow for you;
and you shall eat vegetation of the field.
- 19 With (the) sweat of your face you shall eat bread / food,
until your return to the ground;
because you were taken from it;
because you are dust,
and to dust you will return!

In the light of **Isaiah 25:7-8**, it is obvious that it is a mistake to say that the **Hebrew Bible** does not attempt to deal with the problem of death and life beyond death, i.e., "the Bible is about morality, not immortality." This text, along with a number of other passages, reveals the fact that biblical theology is deeply concerned with the problem of death, which has always cast a shadow over humanity's existence.

We say, No religion or philosophy that refuses to deal openly with the problem of death, and offer a genuine basis for hope in the face of death, is adequate for humanity's deepest need! What do you think?

Alexander translates by "the face of the veil," and comments that some understand this means "the veil itself." But he states that "Gesenius, with more probability, infers from the analogous expression in **Job 41:5** [a very difficult passage], that the veil or covering is here described as being the surface, or upper side of the object covered. Most interpreters suppose an allusion to the practice of veiling the face as a sign of mourning, which agrees well with the next verse, and is no doubt included, but the words seem also to express the idea of a veil upon the understanding." (Pp. 415-16)

Perhaps...but the text does not make this clear. We think it is certainly dealing with the veils, the shrouds, the palls, the funeral cloths spread over a coffin or tomb.

⁴⁸Slotki's translation of these two lines has "The face of the covering that is cast over all peoples, And the veil that is spread over all nations."

Slotki states that the "covering" and the "veil" constitute "a metaphor for human suffering and sorrow; there is perhaps an allusion to the covering of the head by a mourner." (P. 116)

With these statements concerning "all the peoples," in line two, and "all the nations" in line four, it is obvious that Isaiah is describing YHWH's present and future action on behalf of all humanity, not just on behalf of Judah / Israel! It is a vision of YHWH's having swallowed up death, of His taking away the death-shrouds and mourning-veils from all humanity!

1QIs^a, instead of our Hebrew text's הַגּוֹיִם, **haggoyim**, spells הַגּוֹאִים, and we wonder what the letter *aleph* means when inserted into the word. Is it simply a mis-spelling? Kutscher thinks it was inserted to distinguish between the ג and the א' on each side (see Watts, p. 329).

What a universal hope is expressed in this passage, a hope that becomes realized and proclaimed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

But the Greek translator did his best to avoid such a gracious universal conclusion. **Verses 7-8a** in **Rahlfs** is:

- 7 ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ παράδος ταῦτα πάντα τοῖς ἔθνεσιν
ἢ γὰρ βουλή αὕτη ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη
On this mountain, hand over / betray all these things to the nations,
for this counsel / plan (is) against all the nations,
- 8a κατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος ἰσχύσας
the death swallowed up, having been strong / powerful...
(that is, death swallowed up the nations, while the tears are taken away from those who have been oppressed, i.e., Israel)

Similar to this Greek translation is the Aramaic Targum of Jonathan's translation of **verses 6-7**,

- 6 And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make a feast and a banquet;
they think that it shall be for their glory;
but it shall be to them for disgrace and for mighty afflictions,
from which they shall not deliver themselves,
afflictions through which they shall come to an end.
- 7 The face of the prince,
of the prince of all the people shall be destroyed;

(continued...)

25:8⁴⁹ בִּלְעַ הַמּוֹת לְנֶצַח

וּמַחָה אֶדְנִי יְהוָה הַמַּעַה

⁴⁸(...continued)

and the face of the king,
of the ruler of all the kingdoms.
(Compare footnote 38.)

⁴⁹Alexander translates / comments on **verse 8**: “He has swallowed up death for ever, and the Lord Jehovah wipes away tears from off all faces, and the reproach of His people He will take away from off all the earth, for Jehovah hath spoken (it)...

“The people of God, who seemed to be extinct, shall be restored to life, their grief exchanged for joy, and their disgrace for honor in the presence of the world, a result for which He pledges both His power and foreknowledge [but Alexander is making the passage speak exclusively of Israel, ‘the people of God’—and the promise of the swallowing up of death and its signs is made to all the nations and peoples of the earth]...

“Rosenmueller understands the first clause as a promise, that in the golden age which Isaiah anticipated wars and mutual violence should cease; Gesenius as a promise of immortality, like that which man enjoyed before the fall. Hendewerk applies it to the death and immortality of Israel as a nation...

“The true understanding seems to be, that all misery and suffering, comprehended under the generic name of death, should be completely done away. It is, then, a description of the ultimate effects of the influence before described as flowing from mount Zion, or the church of God [but again (see footnote 44), the passage is not about ‘influence’ but about the mighty act of God in swallowing up death and all its symbols, already begun, and promised to continue in the future]...

“In its higher sense this may never be realized by any individual until after death. Paul says accordingly (**1 Corinthians 15:54**) that when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νῆκος [‘the death was swallowed up into victory’] [expressing] the final, perpetual, triumphant abolition of death.” (P. 416)

We take Paul’s quotation, with its transformation of the phrase לְנֶצַח, from “to / for the perpetuity” to the phrase εἰς νῆκος, “into victory,” to be his joyful affirmation of the truth of Isaiah’s vision, exemplified in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, which certainly signifies “victory” for those “in Christ” (and Christ reaches out to all nations and peoples!).

מַעַל כָּל-פָּנִים
וְחָרַפְתָּ עִמּוֹ יָסִיר
מַעַל כָּל-הָאָרֶץ
כִּי יִהְיֶה דְבָר:

He swallowed up⁵⁰, ⁵ the death for long-lasting time.⁵¹

⁵⁰The root verb בָּלַע, “swallow,” “engulf,” occurs at the beginning of both **verses 7 and 8** in the piel. In **verse 7** it is וּבִלַּע, which can be read as “and He swallowed” if the waw is understood to be an ordinary waw and not a *waw-conversive / consecutive*. Somewhat strangely, our English translations do not translate by “swallow” here in **verse 7**, although three of them do in **verse 8**:

King James, Tanakh, New Revised Standard, New International, and New Jerusalem, all have “and He will destroy” in **verse 7**.

In **verse 8** **King James, New Revised Standard** and **New International** have “He will swallow up,” as if the verb is future, while **Tanakh** has “He will destroy,” and **New Jerusalem** has “He has destroyed.” We insist that here, in **verse 8**, it is בָּלַע, the piel perfect without any preceding waw, which should be read “He swallowed.”

In **verse 8**, a few Hebrew manuscripts read וּבִלַּע, turning the statement from “He swallowed,” to “And He will swallow,” if the waw is understood as *waw-conversive / consecutive*.

Slotki notes that “An alternative translation, adopted in recent editions of the **Authorized Daily Prayer Book**, p. 324, reads: ‘He maketh death to vanish (in life) eternal.’ (P. 116)

For occurrences of the Greek verb καταπίνω, “drink down” or “swallow up” in the **Greek Bible**, see our end-note 4.

Motyer has the strange comment on **verse 8** that “The verb He will swallow is the perfect tense without conjunction, and is to be understood as a participial perfect, ‘having swallowed’...” (P. 209)

A straight-forward reading of the Hebrew text as pointed by the Masoretes leads to the view that Isaiah is saying not only that YHWH will swallow death, but that He has

(continued...)

⁵⁰(...continued)

in fact already swallowed death, not only for His people Israel, but for all peoples and nations of the earth, doing away with the need for mourning and tears.

What do you make of all this? As I write these notes, I myself am going through the grief process, having seen my beloved Sarah die in my arms two months ago. How can I deal with her death? I sing the song of Isaiah. God has swallowed up death, including Sarah's death. He is wiping away my tears. Death is not the ultimate enemy; death has been, and will be totally conquered. God is the God of life—and Sarah and I have both entrusted ourselves to this God, the God of life eternal—the God revealed so powerfully in the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Rahifs translates the first line of **verse 8** quite differently: κατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος ἰσχύσας, “The death, having prevailed, swallowed up...” The Hebrew text can be translated in this way: בָּלַע הַמּוֹת לְנֶצַח, “It swallowed, the death (did), forever...” As is commonly known, in Hebrew the verb most often precedes the subject, and so the Greek translation may well be correct. But the passage is nonetheless positive—“The death swallowed up forever...but YHWH will wipe away every tear caused by the death.” YHWH will destroy the consequences of the death's swallowing!

⁵¹Ortlund, following **English Standard's** translation “He will swallow up death forever,” comments that this is a matter of God's “defeating the swallowing power of death.” Compare:

Isaiah 5:14,

Therefore grave / underworld made wide its appetite,
and opened wide its mouth beyond measure;
and its splendor and abundance and its uproar and jubilant (people) will go down
into it.

1 Corinthians 15:54,

But then, when this corruptible (body) shall be clothed with incorruptibility,
and this mortal (body) shall be clothed with immortality,
then this word will happen, the one having been written,
The death was swallowed up into victory!
(Paul's quotation is different from **Rahifs' of Isaiah 25:8**, which we take to say κατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος, “the death swallowed up.” Paul's quotation is much closer to the Hebrew, “He swallowed up the death for the perpetuity.”)

Revelation 21:4,

(continued...)

⁵¹(...continued)

And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,
and the death will not be still / yet;
neither mourning, neither crying, neither pain / toil will not be still / yet,
[because] the first things passed away.

Ortlund continues: “This is a promise that at some future time God’s people will no longer be subject to death but will live forever.” (P. 1284)

But Ortlund overlooks the fact that the Hebrew verb in in the perfect (“past”) tense, and the promise is not made to a certain group of people, but to all humanity. We think we understand why Ortlund (and many others) translate and interpret in this way, but we insist that such a translation and understanding are not true to the Hebrew text, or to Isaiah’s vision, which envisions death as already having been swallowed up.

We understand the biblical “visions” to be filled with the inexact and the enigmatic, and do not expect to find the exactitude that many expect in such biblical statements. But with that said, we hold that it cannot be denied that Isaiah’s vision sees the ultimate defeat of death, and life beyond death for all humanity, already begun in YHWH’s decisive action, something believers can live by. What a vision of hope!

Gray states that “The idea of the abolition of death is an advance on the expectation of greatly prolonged life in the new age (**65:20**).” (P. 430)

But is this the way biblical visions and ideas are to be considered? Are we to put them all in a line, and then see which ones are an “advance” over others, and date them on that basis? We think that the biblical visions are what they are—visions that spokespersons like Isaiah—and Amos—and visionaries like Zechariah, Daniel and John on Patmos had. They vary greatly, and they are filled with puzzling enigmas. They reflect the longing, probing, searching hearts of the prophets (compare **1 Peter 1:10**), and should not be expected to all fit together nicely into a Divine time-table.

But there they are—and they speak to the deepest fears and longings of Israel and humanity throughout the ages.

It is quite true that later in **Isaiah**, other visions are given—and the vision of the new Jerusalem is quite different from the vision of **chapter 25**. But that doesn’t negate the power and the relevancy of either vision. They are Divinely given, enigmatic visions rooted in faith, and filled with hope. They tell us that this is YHWH God’s world, and that He is at work in human history, already having conquered, and continually conquering the darkest fears that haunt humanity, creating a wondrous future for Israel—and for all humanity.

Gray holds that such a powerful vision of the swallowing up of death and the wiping away of tears has to point to “the post-exilic period; and with probability, indeed, to a very late part of that period...The difficulty, indeed...is not to decide whether we are

(continued...)

And my Lord YHWH will wipe out tear(s)⁵²

⁵¹(...continued)

dealing with a pre-exilic or a post-exilic work, but to see how any part of the prophetic canon can be late enough to contain them. The entirely explicit and well-established belief in the resurrection of *individual* Israelites (**26:19**) carries us far below **Ezekiel**, beyond the **Book of Job**, and into the region of **Daniel** and **Enoch** (i.e., about 165 B.C.E. and later)...Not less remarkable is the prediction of the abolition of death (**25:8**)...Other ideas demand, or find their most natural explanation, if we admit a post-exilic origin for **chapters 24-27**." (P. 400)

Gray knew nothing of the Dead Sea Scrolls, with the cave 1 scroll of the entire **Book of Isaiah**, including **chapters 24-25**, which has been carbon-14 dated from 335 B.C.E to 107 B.C.E, and its paleographic dating placed between 150-100 B.C.E. The manuscript is a copy, made from an earlier manuscript, making its dating about 165 B.C.E. or later highly unlikely.

And Gray's argument assumes that if a canonical writer taught something, or envisioned something, it must have been held to be true by many, even a majority of Israel. But this is simply not the case. Many things are taught in the canonical writings that Israel constantly denied or refused to give credence to. Whether or not a biblical writer taught something must be determined by examining what he wrote—not by asking what the Israelites believed! The **Torah**, especially **Deuteronomy** teaches radical monotheism, but generations of Jews worshiped Baal and Asherah. And as we read Second and Third Isaiah we are shocked with the apparent fact that the worship of foreign Gods with their rituals continued in post-exilic Jerusalem.

Jesus is depicted in the **Synoptic Gospels** as having taught clearly the abolishment of kosher food laws, but his closest disciples had a difficult time believing it, and following its implications (see **Acts 10-11** and **Galatians 2:13-14**, where Paul confronts and condemns Peter because of his hypocritical refusal to eat with people who did not obey Israel's food laws).

⁵²This is the only place in Isaiah where the collective noun דִּמְעָה, "tears," occurs. For the promise, compare:

Isaiah 30:19,

Because a people will dwell in Zion;
in Jerusalem, you will certainly not cry;
being compassionate, He will show compassion to you.
To your out-cry's voice--
when He hears, He (already) answered you!

Isaiah 35:10, in the good times coming,

(continued...)

⁵²(...continued)

And YHWH's redeemed ones will return,
and they will come (to) Zion with a ringing-cry,
and long-lasting joy / gladness upon their head.
They shall attain rejoicing and joy / gladness,
and sorrow and sadness will flee! **Isaiah 51:11**, same.

Isaiah 65:19, in the good times coming,

And I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and I will exult in My people.
And it will not be heard in her again,
a voice of crying
and a voice of crying out!

Revelation 7:17,

Because the Little Lamb, the One in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them,
and He will lead them to a spring of waters of life;
and the God will wipe out every tear out of their eyes.

Revelation 21:4,

And He will wipe out every tear out of their eyes;
and the death will not be any more / still,
neither mourning, neither shout of grief, neither suffering / pain will be there any
longer / still,
[because] the first things departed / went away.

Oswalt comments that this statement of **Isaiah 25:8** "is a fine example of the power of imagery. The text could say that God will take away the sorrow associated with death, for that is obviously the meaning. But how much more expressive is the picture of the Master of the Universe tenderly wiping the tear-stained faces as a mother might her child's...

"Once again, this demonstrates God's sovereignty over the nations. They cannot conquer death, but God can. Not only will He conquer death for Himself and His Own people, but for all people." (Pp. 464-65)

Yes...but nothing is said in the text about God conquering death "for Himself and His Own people." These are Oswalt's words, read into the text. And we wonder, why can't commentators be content to say what the text actually says, without additions? And why doesn't Oswalt mention the text's affirmation that God "has swallowed up death," making the text all future instead of both past and future?

(continued...)

from upon all faces.⁵³

And He will remove His people's reproach⁵⁴

⁵²(...continued)

Watts comments that “The issue of death has surfaced in the [**Book of Isaiah**] before. In **14:4-20** death and the grave are pictured as appropriate endings for the career of the king of Babylon. Similarly in **27:13-14** tyrants who have ruled Israel are seen as now dead. This stands in sharp contrast to the promise to Israel that ‘your dead will live.’

“But the announcement here (**verse 8**) is breathtaking! Surprising! Worthy of the King of Kings! The great royal edict is portrayed as final. It is not a temporary reprieve or a delay of sentence. In a section that is so filled with violence and death, the dreadful unspoken fear that the cycle of blood-guilt and vengeance can never be broken has finally been brought out into the open. Yahweh of Hosts has announced that He will deal with it personally and permanently. He had taken steps to imprison the kings and their armies (**Isaiah 24:22**) to await their sentences...

“Now He decrees royal amnesty, removing the shrouded curse that had covered all the peoples, destroying the death-ban...What face had not felt the tear of grief? The experience of death is universal in every age. How much more in that time of violence and destruction! God's comfort was intended for...all peoples who mourned, friend and foe alike...

“In a throne appearance, in the full array and authority of His royal prerogative He announces that He will...nullify the effect of the curse of death and all its implications.” (Pp. 332-33)

⁵³Gray states that this is a picture “of mankind with face hidden under the veil of mourning; the peoples come up to Zion...still wearing the garb of mourning, of mourning for all their sufferings (**24:13, 17-20**), for they have not yet realized that affliction is past...

“Yahweh sees the veil and, tearing it off, destroys it; and on the face revealed, when the veil is withdrawn, He sees the tears with which recent anguish, and mourning for those who have died, have stained the face, and He wipes these away—the last tears of mankind, for death itself He has now destroyed.” (P. 429)

Yes...but still death comes to all people and nations; and it is obvious that the work of swallowing up death and all its symbols has only begun—and awaits further fulfillment. Nevertheless, the enigmatic prophetic vision proclaims universal good news—the swallowing up of death has already begun, and will one day be complete!

⁵⁴Slotki states that “reproach of His people” means “their apparent neglect by Providence.” (P. 116)

(continued...)

from upon all the earth,⁵⁵

⁵⁴(...continued)

Ortlund comments that by “reproach” is meant “The appearance that they [YHWH’s people, i.e., Israel] have been abandoned by God.” (P. 1284) He says to compare:

Deuteronomy 28:37, among the “curses” for disobedience is:

And you (singular) will be for a horror, for a proverb, and for a taunt
among all the peoples where YHWH is leading you.

Psalms 44:14-18^{Heb} / 13-17^{Eng},

- 14/13 You have placed / made us a reproach to our neighbors,
a mocking and a derision to those surrounding us.
15/14 You have placed / made us a proverb among the nations,
a shaking of head(s) among peoples.
16/15 All the day my insult is before me,
and my face’s shame covered me!
17/16 From (the) voice of one reproaching and one reviling,
from before an enemy and one taking vengeance.
18/17 All this came upon us, and we did not forget You,
and we did not deal falsely in / with Your covenant.

For a promise similar to this in **Isaiah 25:8**, compare **Isaiah 54:4**:

You (singular) shall not be afraid,
because you will not be put to shame;
and you shall not be humiliated,
because you shall not be ashamed (synonym)!
Because you will forget (the) shame of your youth,
and (the) reproach of your widowhood you will not remember again!

Gray comments that this passage “closes with a special reference to the Jews, Yahweh’s peculiar people: all over the earth, the Jews of the Diaspora as well as those of Palestine, have in the days of anguish that are now past suffered the reproach of the nations that knew not God; this reproach Yahweh will now remove.” (P. 431) But the text says nothing about “the Jews of the Diaspora,” or about “the days of anguish that are now past.”

⁵⁵In the first line of this verse, Isaiah uses the perfect, “past” tense. Then in lines two and three he uses the imperfect, “future” tense. He seems to depict a wondrous act of YHWH that has already begun, but that still awaits fulfillment in the future.

If you ask, How can this great act of swallowing up death and all its dark symbols have already begun?, the answer is that YHWH has spoken, and His word will not fail.

(continued...)

because YHWH said (it)!⁵⁶

25:9⁵⁷ וְאָמַר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא

⁵⁵(...continued)

It is as good as happening! And, as Christian believers, we can say that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead has put the exclamation point on this Divine announcement / enigmatic prophetic vision!

⁵⁶Or, perhaps, “because YHWH promised (it)! Isaiah assures his readers that this tremendous hope is not something he just “dreamed up.” Not at all. It is based on YHWH’s word to Isaiah! The prophetic vision of universal hope is “God-given”!

Of course, so also are the many prophetic visions of Divine visitation in judgment / destruction. Can the person of faith believe in both? We think it entirely possible to believe in both—in universal hope through the gracious gift of YHWH, and at the same time, belief in the continuing visitation in judgment throughout history, because of human sinfulness.

For this exact phrase, “because YHWH said (it)!” see **Numbers 10:29; 1 Kings 14:11; Isaiah 1:2; 22:25; 24:3; 25:8** (here); **Jeremiah 13:15; Joel 4:8** and **Obadiah 1:18**. Isaiah again and again emphasizes that his message has come from YHWH. See **Isaiah 7:7; 28:16; 30:15; 40:10; 49:22; 52:4; 61:11** and **65:13**.

Gray states, in an overall evaluation of **verses 6-8**, “We have here one of the most catholic passages in the entire **Old Testament**, and one of the tenderest presentations of Yahweh...The writer...extended to the nations of the world all that is tenderest in the Hebrew thought of Yahweh’s relation to Israel.” (P. 431) We agree. Do you? Why? Why not?

⁵⁷Gray entitles **verses 9-12** “A Song of Deliverance; and the Humiliation of Moab.”

Motyer entitles these verses “Joy in the Lord,” and comments that “The concluding section of the oracle returns to the theme of joy in the Lord, joy that salvation has come at long last. But there is a darker reality too; there are those whose pride brings them under condemnation (**verses 10b-12**) and who suffer overthrow.” (P. 210)

Watts entitles the section “Response from a Yahwist.”

He comments that “The foundation of the scene is a hymn of thanksgiving (**verse 9**). It is closely related to **verses 6-8** by ‘in that day’ as a response to the throne announcement...Yahweh’s assertion of power in Jerusalem calls for the re-subjugation of Moab, as in the days of David...

(continued...)

⁵⁷(...continued)

“With childish glee [this passage] is demanding, in barnyard terms, the humiliation of Judah’s former vassal [Moab]...While God is tending to weighty matters that involve the world of that day, the end of an age and the beginning of a new one, Jerusalem’s attention is fixed on a spiteful provincial rivalry...The scene pictures God’s frustration and elicits the reader’s disappointment.” (Pp. 334-35)

Do you agree with Watts that this passage “barnyard” language? The language certainly isn’t very nice or beautiful. Do you agree that the passage “pictures God’s frustration”? How so? Does this passage “elicit your disappointment”? In what way?

Oswalt comments on **verses 9-12** that “This third section of **chapter 25** returns to song, and again one can imagine that the writer intends for the reader to envision this song as a part of the festivities around God’s throne [and we ask, is this the kind of song that is sung around God’s throne, a song that depicts a neighboring nation swimming in a cess-pool?]. The theme turns once more from the salvation of the nations to the prior judgment, with Moab symbolizing the rest of the nations [do you agree that Moab symbolizes the ‘rest of the nations’?]. Some commentators regret this return, arguing that the picture of universal salvation in **verses 6-8** is more noble...

“However, this movement is entirely consistent with the canonical shape of the **book** as well as of the complete **Bible**. God does wish to deliver all the peoples of the world. But this does not mean all will respond to His invitation. For those who refuse to do so, the grim final word is judgment.” (P. 465)

But is this really the case? The text does not say God “wishes” to deliver the peoples of the world, but flatly promises that this is what YHWH will do! Is the depiction of “the rest of the nations” swimming in a cess-pool and drowning there the **Bible’s** “grim final word”?

We say, No! Consider **Ezekiel 16:53-63**, where the final word is not at all judgment and destruction, but rather grace and a new covenanted relationship with YHWH—both for the destroyed sinful cities of Sodom and Samaria, but also for the even more sinful city of Jerusalem, the “whore-city” par excellence—all of them cities that have rejected the Divine invitation!

In spite of the Divine judgment and destruction which has come to each of these three “sister cities,” YHWH still promises to restore the fortunes of these destroyed cities, and to “re-marry” the Whore-City Jerusalem! Is that not a “final word” of undeserved grace?

Along with **Ezekiel 16**, see in the **New Testament 1 Peter 3:18-4:6**, where it is said that Jesus, upon dying physically, went “in the Spirit” to the dead, held in prison for their sinfulness in the days of Noah, and preached good news to them. Many efforts are made to get around this, but for those open to the text, it seems clear that this is affirming that the “final word,” spoken / enacted by Jesus Christ, is grace, and good

(continued...)

⁵⁷(...continued)

news, even for sinners having been condemned and put to death for having rejected God's call!

What do you think? Do you answer that after death, there is no hope? Many of us who grew up under Christian influence have been taught that—and we have rejected the Roman Catholic teaching concerning God's judgment as “purgatory” / “purgative in nature,” “cleansing—not the final word. Has the Catholic teaching been more consistent with the **Bible** than what we were taught? We say, Yes.

We say that all of this exemplifies the “enigmatic,” “puzzling” nature of biblical prophecy. Yes, there are many, many passages that depict the coming of destructive judgment on sinful peoples and nations. But there are also some passages like this in **Isaiah 25:6-8** and also **Ezekiel 16:53-63**, that have a totally different depiction of what is ultimately coming. And in thier light, we may say that the final word is one of grace and ultimate forgiveness—the swallowing up of death and all its symbols, and the wiping away of all tears, and the restoration of fortunes.

Here in **Isaiah 25**, we witness the prophetic vision of the swallowing up of death and human tears for all humanity; immediately followed by the prophetic vision of the trampling of Moab in the dung-hill or cess-pool. And we ask, Can you, or Should you believe them both? –That ultimately all humanity will see death and its symbols swallowed up forever, but in the meantime Divine judgment continues to punish throughout history? We choose to believe both. What about you?

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 9**: “*And one shall say (or they shall say) in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him; let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation...*”

“When these gracious promises shall be fulfilled, those who have trusted in them shall no longer be ashamed of their strong confidence, because it will be justified by the event, and they will have nothing left but to rejoice in the fulfillment of their hopes.” (P. 417)

Oswalt comments on **verse 9** that “Delitzsch is probably correct when he sees the reference to removing the reproach from God's people (**verse 8**) as the immediate stimulus for this song...

“Although it had seemed impossibly long at the time, eventually the ‘waiting’ will have been shown to be worth it all, and the song will burst forth (**Revelation 6:9-11; 7:9-12**). This connection with **verse 8** may also explain the use of Moab to symbolize the nations, just as Malachi was to use Edom later (**Malachi 1:2-5**). It was particularly these neighboring nations which had taunted Judah for her apparently ineffectual trust in Yahweh (see **Numbers 22:11; 1 Samuel 12:9; Psalm 60:12^{Heb} / 11^{Eng}; Jeremiah**

(continued...)

תִּנְה אֱלֹהֵינוּ זֶה
 קִנְיֵנוּ לֹוּ וַיִּוְשִׁיעֵנוּ
 זֶה יִהְיֶה קִנְיֵנוּ לֹוּ
 נְגִילָה וְנִשְׂמַחָה בִּישׁוּעָתוֹ:

And he will say⁵⁸ on that day,⁵⁹

⁵⁷(...continued)

48:27-28; Ezekiel 25:8). They had reproached Judah, but in the last day, the reproach would be all theirs (**Ezekiel 36:6-7**)." (P. 466)

Once again, Oswalt piles up passages, but some of them hardly support his point. **Revelation 6:9-11** has to do with "waiting," but we do not see the relevance of **Revelation 7:9-12**. The treatment of Moab is undoubtedly similar to **Malachi's** treatment of Edom. **Numbers 22:11** depicts the king of Moab's desire for Balaam to curse Israel, but hardly can be considered a "reproach." **1 Samuel 12:9** says nothing about Moab reproaching Israel, only their fighting against Israel. Neither passage depicts any "taunting" of Israel for trusting in YHWH. **Psalms 60:12^{Heb} / 11^{Eng}** depicts Israel herself lamenting the fact that God does not go forth with her armies, and Oswalt may be assuming that the passage is quoting what Israel's enemies say—but the passage does not say this.

Jeremiah 48:27-28 states that Moab magnified itself against YHWH, but nothing about Moab taunting Judah. **Ezekiel 25:8** depicts Moab claiming that Israel "is like the other nations," which can be considered a "taunt." **Ezekiel 36:6-7** contains the promise that whereas Israel has suffered the reproach of surrounding nations, YHWH will cause those nations to suffer reproach themselves (but no mention is made of Moab specifically).

We say, Be very careful when you quote passages to support your view. Do they really support it, or are you just trying to prove your point? Oswalt would have done well to drop all of these references except the last two in **Ezekiel**, which do support his view.

⁵⁸1QIs^a has the 2nd person singular, "and you will say," where our Hebrew text has וַאֲמַר, "and he will say." **Rahlf's** has καὶ ἐροῦσιν, "and they will say," which has been followed by **New International**.

Motyer comments that "In the Hebrew *they will say* is singular [we insist, if that is so, then the translation should be 'he will say!']. It resumes the singular testimony of **verse 1** but also leads to the plural testimony of **verse 9c-e** and, therefore, a better

(continued...)

look⁶⁰—this is our God!⁶¹

⁵⁸(...continued)

translation would be, 'each will say.' The testimony of all is the response of each." (P. 210)

Who do you think is meant by "And he will say"? We think it means the person of faith who has experienced YHWH's deliverance / salvation will say what has happened to him, bearing witness to the goodness of YHWH.

⁵⁹Motyer states that "With *In that day*...Isaiah holds the whole scene in the perspective of the last day." (P. 210)

The phrase certainly points to a future action of YHWH, but not to the "last day" as Motyer states, which implies the "end of time," the "cessation of days." It is anything but that! This "day" is the beginning of long-lasting joy and universal peace and genuine goodness!

⁶⁰Ortlund comments that "At last, the realization of the forward-looking faith that patiently waited for a renewed society and a renewed earth [has become reality]." (P. 1284) See:

Isaiah 40:9-11:

- 9 Upon a high mountain, go up (feminine singular imperative) for yourself,
proclaimer (feminine) of good news (to) Zion!
Raise high (hiphil imperative, feminine singular) with strength your voice,
proclaimer (feminine) of good news (to) Jerusalem!
Raise high, do not be afraid (feminine imperative),
say (feminine imperative) to Judah's cities,
Look—your God!
- 10 Look—my Lord YHWH with strength will come--
and His arm reigning for Him!
Look—His reward (is) with Him,
and His recompense (is) before Him!
- 11 Like one shepherding his flock, He will shepherd;
with His arm He will gather together lambs;
and in His grasp[He will carry (them);
He will lead those giving milk (to their lambs).

⁶¹1QIs^a interpolates the name YHWH, "Look—this is YHWH our God!"

Motyer comments that "They are (at last!) face to face with God in Zion. See **Psalms 84:7**^{Heb} / **8**^{Eng}, speaking of a present experience of the worshipers of YHWH:

(continued...)

We waited for Him,⁶² and He saved / delivered us!⁶³

⁶¹(...continued)

They go from strength to strength;
each one will be seen by God in Zion!

“In wonderment they say to each other, ‘surely’ / ‘look’ this is our God...This is the Lord!” (P. 210)

Ortlund says that this exclamation is “An expression of wholehearted identification with Him.” (P. 1284) Compare **Exodus 29:45-46**,

45 And I will dwell in (the) midst of Israel’s children;
and I will be for them for a God.
46 And they will know that I (am) YHWH their God
Who, I brought them from Egypt land,
for My dwelling in their midst–
I, YHWH their God!

⁶²Oswalt comments that “*we waited for Him* expresses a fundamental element of the **Old Testament**, and the Isaianic, concept of trust. It is the kind of confident expectation that is willing to put the times in God’s hands and to believe in spite of a long interval. This kind of trust has forsaken that manipulation which seeks instant gratification...When such confident expectation is satisfied, the result is, as here, jubilation.” (P. 466)

For the root **קָוָה** see the article by G. Waschke, in **Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament** XII, pp. 564-73. Waschke agrees with Westermann that the biblical them of hope is indigenous to the **Psalms**, where the verb focuses on God / YHWH. “Yahweh is generally the object of hopes and expectations when the verb is used and also constitutes the corresponding background to statements using the nouns.” (P. 569) Also, see our end-note 6, and footnote 63.

⁶³**Rahlfs** omits the phrase “and He saved / delivered us.”

Motyer comments in a typical Protestant Christian manner: “The work of salvation is all His; no human action, co-operative or contributory action, was needed, only waiting (*trusted* [**New International’s** translation], from the root **קָוָה**) means ‘waited in confidence’; compare **Isaiah 40:31** [where the qal plural participle of **קָוָה** occurs] for what the Lord would do and rejoicing in it when He did it.” (P. 210)

Ortlund likewise states that “Salvation is His entirely, God’s alone, from first to last” (p. 1284), and quotes as proof-texts:

Exodus 14:13b, where Moses tells the people of Israel,

(continued...)

⁶³(...continued)

Stand firm, and see YHWH's salvation / deliverance,
which He will do for you people today!

Exodus 15:2, Moses' song says,

My strength and song—Yah!
And He was for me for salvation / deliverance—
this is my God, and I will beautify / praise Him!

Psalm 68:20-21^{Heb} / **19-20**^{Eng},

20/19 Blessed (is) my Lord, day (by) day!

He will carry for us, the God of our salvation / deliverance! Selah.

21/20 The God (is) for us,

God for saving acts;

and to YHWH my Lord,

to the death, bringings forth!

(These last two lines are an intriguing, but puzzling statement, especially the phrase לְמָוֶת תּוֹצֵאוֹת, "to the death, goings forth," which is commonly translated "escapes from death." What should we take this to mean? Does it only mean enabling His people to escape from death in battle? The Canaanite fertility religions, with their dying and rising God Baal, along with the "Mystery Religions" that followed them, were deeply concerned with the problem of human mortality, and with securing some form of "escape from death" for their devotees. It seems likely (though not certain) that this Psalm is claiming that true "escape from death" lies within the power of YHWH alone. If so, this **Psalm** may reveal to us one of the "roots of immortality" found within the **Hebrew Bible**.)

Psalm 98:2-3,

2 YHWH made known His salvation / deliverance,

to (the) eyes of the nations He revealed His righteousness.

3 He remembered His steadfast-love and His true faithfulness to Israel's household.

All earth's ends saw our God's salvation / deliverance!

Yes, salvation belongs to God! But surely, if this means there is nothing for human beings to do concerning their salvation / deliverance, it means we have to lay aside the powerful teaching of **Isaiah 1:16-20**, where the whole matter of cleansing and forgiveness is placed squarely on the back of Isaiah's hearers, with the commands to "wash yourselves,

make yourselves clean,

remove the evil of your deeds,

cease to do evil,

(continued...)

This (is) YHWH—we waited⁶⁴, ⁶ for Him.⁶⁵

⁶³(...continued)

learn to do good,
seek justice,
correct oppression,
bring justice to the fatherless,
plead the widow's cause...
If you are willing and obedient
you shall eat the good of the land!"

Of course the believer is to wait for YHWH's saving action, but in the meantime, that does not mean to sit back and do nothing! The Israelites who saw the salvation of YHWH at the crossing of the Sea of Reeds, had to obey Moses' commands to leave Egypt, and to cross the Sea, and to obey the Divine instructions given at Sinai! Yes, salvation / deliverance belongs to God, and comes from God. Human beings cannot save themselves apart from Divine action. But human response in trembling obedience and faith is demanded, if human beings are going to enjoy that Divine salvation!

What do you think? Have Motyer and Ortlund overstated their position? We think they have.

⁶⁴For occurrences of the verb קוּה in the **Hebrew Bible**, see our end-note 6.

This matter of "waiting expectantly for YHWH" is prominent in the **Hebrew Bible**, especially beginning with **Isaiah**, and continuing in the **Psalter**. How important is "waiting" for your understanding of the **Bible**? We think that if we are not willing to wait patiently for YHWH's salvation, we will become frustrated and disappointed, and eventually leave our faith in cynical doubt. Do you agree?

⁶⁵This phrase, קָוֵינוּ לוֹ, "we waited for Him" is repeated twice in this verse, and the exact phrase is not found anywhere else in the **Hebrew Bible**.

Westermann states that "prophecy has nothing to do with Israel's hope or hopes. Rather, one may determine that the vocabulary of hope and waiting in the **Old Testament** is not indigenous to the prophetic proclamation." (**Theological Literature of the Old Testament** III, p. 1132)

Such a statement makes us wonder how much this great scholar of **Genesis** and the **Psalms** and **Isaiah 40-55** has read the prophets. The fact is that the prophetic message in both Northern Israel and in Judah is interspersed with messages of hope—even in the so-called "prophets of doom," **Amos** and **Hosea**. And whether or not they use this Hebrew verb, the prophets of Israel, from Moses through **Malachi**, "stand on tip-toe," looking to the coming judgment, with its destruction of evil, and to "the good times coming" in which Divine blessings are promised for all the nations and peoples of

(continued...)

We will rejoice,⁶⁶ and we will be glad⁶⁷ in His salvation!

⁶⁵(...continued)
the earth.

Their visions of that future greatly vary; their vision is not clear or exact. Rather, it is filled with enigma / riddle / perplexity. But there is an undeniable united vision of hope that lifts them up in expectation—without which they would have, we believe, ceased their prophesying!

But even with this said, we are inclined to agree with Westermann, that the **Psalter** (along with the Wisdom literature) contains the most powerful of the biblical statements concerning hope and waiting.

⁶⁶This verb, נְגִילָה, “we will rejoice,” is found in only two other passages in the **Hebrew Bible**:

Psalms 118:24,

This, the day YHWH made;
we will rejoice and we will be glad in it!

Song of Solomon 1:4b, it is the voice of women in the plural, extolling the king’s love-making:

we will rejoice and we will be glad in you!

For the promise of future, coming joy in **Isaiah**, see:

Isaiah 35:10,

And YHWH’s redeemed ones will return,
and they enter Zion with a ringing cry,
and long-lasting gladness upon their head;
they will overtake exultation and gladness,
and grief and groaning will flee away! **Isaiah 51:11**, same.

Isaiah 66:10,

Rejoice with Jerusalem,
and be glad over her, all her lovers!
Be glad with her, (with) gladness,
all the ones mourning over her!

⁶⁷Where our Hebrew text has the cohortative 1st person plural verb, וְנִשְׂמְחָה,

(continued...)

25:10⁶⁸ כִּי־תִנְנִיחַ יְרֵי־הַהוּא בְּהַר הַזֶּה

וְנִרְדֹּשׁ מוֹאֵב תַּחְתֵּי

כְּהַרְדֹּשׁ מִתַּבֵּן (בְּמִו) [בְּמִו] מִדְּמִנָּה:

⁶⁷(...continued)

“and let us be glad!”, 1QIs^a lacks the cohortative ending, reading just וְנִשְׂמַח, “and we will be glad.”

⁶⁸Whereas **verses 1-9** contain a vibrant depiction of universal hope for the future, **verses 10-12** turn to a depiction of the gruesome future that awaits the proud enemies of YHWH’s people, like Moab.

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 10**: “*For the hand of Jehovah shall rest upon this mountain, and Moab shall be trodden down under Him (or in His place) as straw is trodden in the water of the dunghill...*”

“While Israel shall thus enjoy the permanent protection of Jehovah, His inveterate enemies shall experience ignominious destruction...Moab and Edom were the two hereditary and inveterate [deep-seated, incurable] enemies of Israel...Hence they are repeatedly mentioned, separately or together, as the representatives of obstinate and malignant enemies in general.” (P. 417)

But we ask, Is this the final word concerning Moab? We have loved to teach Hebrew through reading the little **Book of Ruth** with beginning students of Hebrew. Its story challenges the prevailing view of Moab and the Moabites, represented by Ezra and Nehemiah, with their cursing of those intermarrying with Moabites and other Non-Israelites, and their rejection of the children of such inter-marriages from participation in Israel and its worship.

But over against that narrow, legalistic, exclusivist view, the **Book of Ruth** depicts a Moabitess who intermarries into an Israelite family, and whose offspring Obed becomes a vital link in the ancestry of King David. What do you think?

And Alexander’s depiction of Moab and Edom as “hereditary and inveterate enemies of Israel” just doesn’t fit the picture of Israel and Moab that is given by the **Book of Ruth**, where there is easy immigration and emigration between the two countries, as well as intermarriage. What do you make of this? Undoubtedly there were times when the countries were at odds with one another—but we think Alexander has overstated the case.

Because YHWH's hand will rest on this mountain;⁶⁹
and Moab⁷⁰ will be trampled beneath Him,⁷¹

⁶⁹Gray thinks that the hand of YHWH resting on Zion means “the power of Yahweh will manifest itself, Zion will become the center of the universal kingdom.” (P. 432)

But does the text say this? Where are the words found, “the center of the universal kingdom”? We say, Zion is becoming “spiritualized”—it is located in Jerusalem, but a Jerusalem that is lifted up, above the hills and mountains, far beyond the physical city of Jerusalem in Israel—to become a symbol of YHWH's presence with His people—and that wherever YHWH is acknowledged and obeyed, that is “Zion.”

How will you deal with this matter in your understanding of religion? Is the city of Jerusalem in Israel “the center of the universal kingdom”? Will it one day become such? Or is the true Zion located in the hearts of any and all who worship and serve YHWH / God “in spirit and in truth”? See the **Gospel of John, chapter 4**, with its depiction of Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman, with Jesus affirming that neither in Jerusalem or in Shechem is the place where YHWH must be worshiped—but rather, God is worshiped “in spirit and in truth”—meaning, we think, the human heart / mind is the location of true worship.

⁷⁰Slotki notes that “Some commentators think that Moab is mentioned as typifying Israel's enemies.” (P. 117)

Gray comments that “Instead of the national enemies of Israel in general, Moab is here singled out, as elsewhere Edom (**chapter 34** and **63:1ff.**) in similar descriptions ...Why Moab is singled out is obscure...Other descriptions of calamities befalling Moab, or prophecies of the punishment of that people, are to be found in **chapters 15-16, Jeremiah 48, Zephaniah 2:8-10** and **Ezekiel 25:8ff.**” (P. 432)

Ackerman comments on **25:10b-12** that it is “an oracle condemning Moab, singled out here as representing the unrighteous doomed to destruction.” (P. 989)

Ortlund likewise comments that “Moab falls under God's foot and represents all nations and cultures lifted up against God, like Edom in **34:5-9** and **63:1.**” (P. 1284)

In the oracle concerning Moab in **Isaiah 15-16**, Isaiah's heart cries out for Moab and her fugitives, and Isaiah reveals an extensive knowledge of Moab and its cities, calling on his hearers to be a refuge for the Moabite refugees. Isaiah acknowledges the great pride of the Moabites that caused her empty boasts and led to her destruction, but still weeps over Moab and his heart laments for her. It is anything but an expression of rejoicing over Moab's fall.

Oswalt comments that The same hand which will rest on Zion in blessing will strike Moab down. This is not the result of favoritism or arbitrary pique on God's behalf.

(continued...)

like straw is trampled in a⁷² dung-hill!⁷³, ⁷

⁷⁰(...continued)

It is the result of two different attitudes. Those who commit themselves to God in patient trust will experience the hand of blessing, shading them from the oppressive heat of the sun (**Isaiah 49:2; Ezra 8:22, 31**) but those who exalt themselves against God in their own self-sufficiency must sooner or later be crushed under that hand (**verses 11, 12**), compare also **Isaiah 16:6; Jeremiah 48:29; Zephaniah 2:10**).

“The imagery here is very strong, so strong that some interpreters believe it must spring from a virulent hatred of Moab that is inconsistent with the kind of compassion expressed in **chapters 15** and **16**. However, this view does not take adequate account of the use of language among the Semites...

“Strong, florid [elaborate, full of extra, unnecessary words] language was as typical of Jesus (see his rebukes of the Pharisees, **Matthew 23:13-36**) as it is of modern Iranians. Yet Jesus’ compassion was boundless, and when the springs of emotion opposite to anger are touched in an Arab there is no more compassionate person. Thus it is entirely consistent for these words and the words of **chapters 15** and **16** to have been spoken by the same person...

“Just as God’s deliverance must come to those who trust him, so also His judgment cannot be escaped by those who flaunt Him.” (Pp. 466-67)

We say, **Isaiah 25:6-8** depicts a vision of YHWH’s ultimate goal in human history—it is nothing less than the deliverance from death for all people / nations!

But that prophetic vision does not deny, or mean the end of the continuing Divine judgments going on throughout history, as nations rise and fall by Divine decree. However, falling, destruction and death are not the final word in history. The final word is the swallowing up of death and all its symbols, as humanity, including those who have died under Divine decree, share in the Divine plenteous feast, and death no longer reigns. Such a view fits the teaching of **Ezekiel 16:53-63** and the **New Testament’s 1 Peter 3:18-4:6**. What do you think?

⁷¹Motyer states concerning **verses 10b-12** that “The Lord’s hand rests on Zion (**verse 10a**), His foot on Moab (**verse 10b**). Two striking similes in **verses 10c** and **11a, b** lead into a threefold statement of Divine action...

opposing the pride and cleverness of humankind (**verse 11c, d**),
destroying their self-made security (**verse 12a, b**)
and putting an end to it (**verse 12c, d**.” (P. 211)

Slotki’s translation has “And Moab shall be trodden down in his place.” He states that this means “where he stands.” (P. 117) The phrase in Hebrew is תַּחְתָּיו, **tachtayw**, which means “beneath him,” that is, beneath the one trodding him down. We see no justification for the meaning “where he stands.”

⁷²The Masoretes offer two spellings: the *kethibh* (what is written), בְּמַי, “in waters of,” and the *qere* (to be read) בְּמִו, a poetic spelling for בְּ, “in them,” or possibly “in it,” that is, in the dung-hill. It signifies the ancient method of disposing of human and animal waste. For the noun dung, see our end-note 7, with its article from the Internet, including other words that are used with reference to “dung.”

⁷³The Hebrew noun is מַדְמֵנָה, **madhmenah**, which **Brown-Driver-Briggs** defines as meaning “dung-place,” or “dung-pit.” **Holladay** has “dung-heap.” Watts has “a manure pit.” (P. 334)

Alexander comments that “The figure in the last clause [being trampled in a dung-hill] is strongly expressive, both of degradation and destruction. Moab is likened not only to straw, but to straw left to rot for the dunghill. The idea of subjection and ruin is expressed by the figure of treading down or trampling under foot.” (P. 417)

Motyer comments that “Moab chose to remain outside, and in the place he chose he will be trodden down. The first simile [being trampled in a dung-hill] disgusts us, as it was intended to. The alternative to the banquet is the midden [an old dump for domestic waste—compare our modern cess-pool or septic tank] (**verse 10c**), the world of rotteness and corruption, the world without God. The banquet is real and so, sadly, is the...world of rotteness and corruption.” (P. 211)

Ortlund comments that the only alternative to the Divine banquet is the dung-hill. (P. 1284)

⁷⁴Alexander translates / comments on **verse 11**: “*And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of it, as the swimmer spreadeth forth his hands to swim; and he shall humble his pride together with the spoils (or devices) of his hands...*”

“From this ignominious [deserving public disgrace or shame] doom Moab shall in vain try to save himself; his pride shall be humbled, and his struggles only serve to precipitate his ruin...The down-trodden straw now becomes a living person, who struggles in the filthy pool to save himself from drowning, but in vain...The only idea naturally suggested by the images employed, is that of a drowning man struggling in the water.” (P. 418)

Oswalt comments on **verse 11** that “Some commentators understand that Moab is simply lying spread-eagled on the ground with the conqueror’s foot planted in the middle of his back. In part, this uncertainty is because of the supposed impossibility of swimming in a manure pile. However, in its midst does not have any referent unless it does refer to the preceding verse, and if the reading ‘water of’ is correct, then there is no incongruity at all, for a barnyard [or a manure pile] can become very much like

(continued...)

כַּאֲשֶׁר יִפְרֹשׂ הַשָּׂחָה לְשָׁחוֹת
וְהִשְׁפִּיל גְּאוֹתוֹ
עַם אֲרָבוֹת יָדָיו:

And he will spread out his hands⁷⁵ in its midst (the dung-hill),
just like the swimmer spreads out (his hands) to swim;⁷⁶
and He will bring low / abase his pride,⁷⁷

⁷⁴(...continued)

quicksand in the winter and spring. So Moab sinks further in its own pride the more frantically it seeks to save itself.” (P. 467)

⁷⁵That is, to swim.

⁷⁶Ortlund comments that Moab will attempt to swim “out of the muck of **verse 10** by his own desperate methods of self-salvation.” (P. 1284)

Gray states that “The idea of swimming in a dung-pit while being trodden down is extraordinary.” (P. 433)

Rahlfs has:

And he will loosen his hands in the way he also humiliated to destroy;
and to humiliate his arrogance, upon those which he raised the hands.

NETS translates by:

And he will send forth his hands, as he himself brought him low to destroy him,
and he will bring low his pride--things on which he laid his hands.

However this should be translated, it is obvious that it has no reference to the “swimming” of the Hebrew text.

Gray thinks the original text “may rather have referred to Moab’s fruitless prayers to his God to save him in his distress.” (P. 433)

⁷⁷The phrase גְּאוֹתוֹ means “his pride / haughtiness.” The noun גְּאוֹה occurs four times in Isaiah prior to this occurrence in **25:11**:

Isaiah 9:8b, Ephraim and Samaria say, “in pride / haughtiness and in greatness / insolence of heart,” we will be able to rebuild following the Divine judgment.

(continued...)

with his hands' tricks / cleverness!⁷⁸

⁷⁷(...continued)

Isaiah 13:3, YHWH says concerning the armies that He is sending against Babylon,

I, I commanded to My consecrated one;
also I called My mighty men for My anger,
exultant ones of My pride / haughtiness.

Isaiah 13:11,

And I will visit (to punish) upon an evil world,
and upon evil people their iniquity.
And I will cause (the) exaltation of insolent people to cease,
and (the) pride of terror-striking people I will bring low.

Isaiah 16:6,

We heard Moab's exaltation—exceedingly proud.
His pride / haughtiness and his exaltation and his arrogance—
his empty talk is not right!

⁷⁸The noun that uniquely occurs here (being found nowhere else in the **Hebrew Bible**) is אַרְבוֹת, a feminine noun, which **Brown-Driver-Briggs** defines as “artifice.” Wildberger defines it as “skill.” (Watts, p. 334)

Here it occurs as a plural construct in the phrase אַרְבוֹת יָדָיו, which we take to mean “artifices / tricks of his hands.” Oswalt translates the noun by “struggles.” (P. 467)

Motyer comments on **verse 11** that “The second simile puts its finger exactly on Moab's character. In **chapters 15-16** [entitled ‘An Oracle Concerning Moab’] the alternative to sheltering in Zion was self-reliance and self-effort. So here, fallen in the *midden* [cess-pool, city dump], Moab will (of course!) find strength in himself to swim out. He can prevail over his circumstances, conquer his environment. Swimming provides a superb illustration of a go-it-alone policy...

:But the Lord does not admire Moab's *cleverness*. Indeed the very thing which in human terms would have saved is the very heart of offence to God, epitomizing the pride (אַוָּת), as in **16:6** which is always competent, self-assured, needing no external salvation.” (P. 211)

וּמִבְצָר מִשָּׁגֵב חֹמֹתָיִךְ 25:12⁷⁹

הֵשַׁח הַשְּׂפִיל

הִגִּיעַ לָאָרֶץ

עַד־עָפָר:

And (the) fortification stronghold of your walls,⁸⁰

He laid low, He abased,⁸¹

He brought to the earth,

as far as dust!⁸²

⁷⁹Alexander translates / comments on **verse 12**: “And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls He hath cast down, humbled, brought to the ground, to the very dust (or even to the dust)...”

“The specific fulfillment of this prophecy cannot be distinctly traced in history. It was certainly verified, however, in the downfall of the Moabitish nation, whenever it took place.” (Pp. 418-19)

Oswalt comments on **verse 12** that “The change of person (3rd person to 2nd person) in this verse seems to shift the focus from Moab back to a more generalized picture to the universal city which Moab had particularized for a moment. That mighty world-city with its apparently unshakable walls will be [shattered] to dust. All its towering pride will be brought down to a dunghill.” (Pp. 467-68)

⁸⁰Ortlund comments that the readers should “observe the city imagery,” and compare **Isaiah 24:10** and **25:2**.

For Moab’s walled cities, see the story in **2 Kings 3:27**, where the king of Moab is depicted as sacrificing his first-born son (who was to succeed him) on the wall of his city.

Oswalt notes that in the **Epic of Gilgamesh 1:305-310** (Pritchard, **ANET**, p. 97), “All of Gilgamesh’s frustrated search for immortality ends in a boast of the greatness of Uruk’s walls.” (P. 468)

⁸¹**Rahlfs** omits this word.

⁸²Motyer comments on **verse 12** that “Here three nouns of height are matched by three verbs of bringing down, leading to total destruction...Not even the ruins of a fort will be left, not even a heap of rubble. Just level ground, the very dust.” (P. 211)

1. Occurrences of the Noun פֶּלִיאָ in the Hebrew Bible

Exodus 15:11,

Who (is) like You among Gods, YHWH?
Who (is) like You, majestic / glorious in the set-apartness,
fearful / dreadful / awesome in praises,
doing a marvel / wonder!

Isaiah 9:5^{Heb} / 6^{Eng},

Because a child was born for / to us,
a son was given to us,
and the rule was upon his shoulder.
And his name was called Wonder (פֶּלִיאָ), Counselor,
God, Mighty Man,
My Father Perpetually, Prince of Peace.

Translations vary:

King James, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Tanakh, “For a child has been born to us, A son has been given us. And authority has settled on his shoulders. He has been named "The Mighty God is planning grace; The Eternal Father, a peaceable ruler.”

New Revised Standard, “ For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

New International, “ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

New Jerusalem, “For a son has been born for us, a son has been given to us, and dominion has been laid on his shoulders; and this is the name he has been given, 'Wonder-Counselor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace'.”

(We think it obvious that Isaiah is speaking of the Messiah / Branch / Root; but the names that he says the Messiah will be called are not easily determined, as is seen in **Tanakh's** translation. They obviously depict the Messiah as far more than an ordinary human being.)

Isaiah 25:1, YHWH has done a wonder / marvel, leading to His praise.

Isaiah 29:14,

Therefore, look at Me—he will again cause wonder with this people;
causing wonder and the wonder (וּפְלִיאָ)--

and wisdom of his wise ones will perish,
and understanding of his understanding ones will hide itself.

Translations vary:

King James, "Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid."

Tanakh, "Truly, I shall further baffle that people With bafflement upon bafflement; And the wisdom of its wise shall fail, And the prudence of its prudent shall vanish."

New Revised Standard, "so I will again do amazing things with this people, shocking and amazing. The wisdom of their wise shall perish, and the discernment of the discerning shall be hidden."

New International, "Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish."

New Jerusalem, "very well, I shall have to go on astounding this people with prodigies and wonders: for the wisdom of its wise men is doomed, the understanding of any who understand will vanish."

Psalm 77:12^{Heb} / **11**^{Eng},

I will remember Yah's deeds--
because I will surely remember from ancient time your wonder / marvel.

Psalm 77:15^{Heb} / **14**^{Eng},

You (are) the God Who does a wonder / marvel.
You made known among (the) peoples Your strength.

Psalm 78:12,

Before their father He did a wonder / marvel,
in Egypt-land, Tsoan's field.

Psalm 88:11^{Heb} / **10**^{Eng}, the psalmist who is drawing near to death and darkness asks
YHWH:

Will You do a wonder / marvel for the dead?
If dead spirits arise / stand up, they will praise / confess You! Selah

Psalm 88:13^{Heb} / **12**^{Eng}, the psalmist's questions continue:

Will Your wonder / marvel be known in the darkness?
And Your right-relationship in a land of forgetfulness / oblivion?

Psalm 89:6^{Heb} / 5^{Eng},

And heavens will praise / confess your wonder / marvel, YHWH
also your true-faithfulness, in a congregation of set-apart ones!

Psalm 119:129,

Your testimonies / Ten Commandments (are) wonders / marvels!
Therefore / that is why my innermost-being watched / guarded / kept
them.

Lamentations 1:9,

Her uncleanness (is) on her skirts.
She did not remember her future / end.
And she went down—wonders / marvels!
There is no one comforting / showing compassion to her.
See, YHWH, my affliction / poverty--
because / that an enemy has become great!

Daniel 12:6,

And he said to the man dressed (in) the white linens,
the one above the river's waters,
How long / until when (the) end of the wonders / marvels?

2. **Occurrences of the Phrase “From Afar” in the Hebrew Bible**

Deuteronomy 28:49,

YHWH will raise up a nation against Israel “from afar.”

2 Kings 2:7,

fifty sons of the prophets were standing afar from Elijah and Elisha.

Nehemiah 12:43, the joyful worship of the returned exiles at the dedication of the rebuilt wall of Jerusalem was heard from afar.

Job 2:12, Job’s three friends, coming to comfort him, see him from afar and do not recognize him.

Job 36:25, Elihu tells Job that God’s works are obvious to all:

All humanity saw / looked on it,
(weak) mankind observed (it) from afar.

Psalms 139:2, the psalmist confesses that:

You knew my sitting down and my rising up;
You discerned my purpose / aim from afar.

Proverbs 7:19, a seductive, unfaithful wife tells the young man,

Because the man is not in his house;
he went on a way from afar.

Isaiah 5:26, YHWH’s anger has come against His people, and it is not ended:

And He will lift up a signal for the nations from afar,
and He will whistle for it from the earth’s end / extremity.
And look—speedily, quickly it will come!

Isaiah 22:3, Jerusalem’s leaders and people have been captured:

All your chiefs / rulers fled together
from / without a bow / weapon they were imprisoned.
All your people being found were imprisoned together.
They fled from afar.

Isaiah 22:11, when Jerusalem was in the midst of being attacked / invaded,

And you built a reservoir between the two walls,
for (the) waters of the pool, the old one.

And you people did not look to / regard its Maker,
and its Former from afar you did not see.

Isaiah 23:7-9,

- 7 Is this for you people an exultant / jubilant (city),
from days of old, its antiquity?
Her feet bore her along,
from afar to be temporary residents.
- 8 Who counseled this,
against Tyre, the crown-bestower / wearer,
whose merchants (are) princes,
her traders honored ones of the earth?
- 9 YHWH of Armies purposed it,
to defile (the pride) of all beauty,
to dishonor all the earth's honored ones.
(This passage is closely related to the opening of **chapter 25.**)

Isaiah 25:1, YHWH has done **פְּלֵא מַרְחֹק עֲצוֹת** “a wonder / marvel of counsels
from afar.”

Isaiah 43:6, YHWH, Who is returning the exiles from captivity, says:

I will say to the north, Give!
And to (the) south, You shall not withhold!
Bring My sons from afar,
and My daughters from the earth's extremity!

Isaiah 49:1, YHWH's servant speaks:

Listen to me, coasts / regions!
And pay attention peoples from afar!
YHWH called me from (the) womb,
from my mother's belly He remembered / mentioned my name.

Isaiah 49:12, YHWH says,

Look—these will come from afar;
and look—these from north and from west;
and these from (the) land of (the) Chinese (!)?

Isaiah 59:14, in a confession of sinfulness, it is said:

And justice is driven back,
and right-relationship stands from afar.
Because true-faithfulness fell / stumbled in the city-square,
and uprightness is not able to enter.

Isaiah 60:4, the spokesperson / prophet says:

Lift up your eyes and see all around--
all of them have gathered; they are coming to you--
your sons from afar will come,
and your daughters upon a hip will be nourished.

Isaiah 60:9,

Because for Me coasts / regions wait,
and the ships of Tarshish at the first,
to bring your children from afar,
their silver and their gold with them,
for YHWH your God's name,
and for Israel's Set-apart One,
because He beautified you!

Jeremiah 30:10, YHWH speaks words of future hope to Jerusalem and Judah after their exile:

And you, you shall not be afraid, My servant Jacob--
(it is) a saying of YHWH--
and you shall not be dismayed, Israel.
Because look at Me--saving you from afar,
and your seed / descendant(s) from a land of their captivity!
And Jacob will return, and he will be quiet, and he will be at ease,
and there is no one causing fear! **46:27**, same.

Jeremiah 31:3,

From afar YHWH appeared to me (saying):
and (with) a long-lasting love I loved you;
therefore I drew you (with) steadfast love!

Jeremiah 51:50, those escaping from the destruction of Babylon are told:

Escapees from (the) sword, go--do not stand still!
Remember from afar YHWH and Jerusalem.
Let it (this remembrance) go up upon your (plural) heart!

Habakkuk 1:8b,

And his horsemen will come from afar,
they will fly like a griffon-vulture,
hurrying to eat!

3. **Passages With the Verb, “Fear,” “Reverence,”
with God / YHWH As the Object**

Genesis 22:12, YHWH’s messenger / angel tells Abraham that now YHWH knows that he “fears / reverences God” because he has not withheld his son Isaac as a sacrifice.

Genesis 42:18, Joseph tells his brothers: **אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲנִי יִרְאֶה**, literally, “the God, I (am) a fearer / one reverencing.”

Exodus 1:17, **וַתִּירְאֵן הַמִּיֻּלְדוֹת אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים**, “And the mid-wives feared / revered the God.” **1:21**, similar.

Exodus 18:21, those chosen to be judges in Israel must be **יִרְאֵי אֱלֹהִים** “ones fearing / reverencing God.”

Deuteronomy 25:18, Amalek, in fighting against Israel, “did not fear / reverence God.”

1 Samuel 12:18,

And Samuel called to YHWH,
and YHWH gave voices / thunders and rain on that day.
And all the people feared / revered YHWH and Samuel exceedingly.

2 Samuel 6:9, immediately following Uzzah’s being struck dead for touching the ark of the covenant,

And David was afraid / feared YHWH on that day,
and he said, How shall YHWH’s ark (of the covenant) come to me?
1 Chronicles 13:12 is similar.

1 Kings 18:3, Obadiah, who was over Ahab’s household, **הָיָה יִרְאֵה אֶת־יְהוָה**,
מְאֹד, “was fearing / reverencing YHWH exceedingly.”

1 Kings 18:12, Obadiah tells Elijah, **וְעַבְדְּךָ יִרְאֵה אֶת־יְהוָה מִנְעֻרָי**, “and your servant is one fearing / reverencing YHWH from his youth.”

2 Kings 4:1, the widow of one of the sons of the prophets tells Elisha that her husband was one who feared / revered YHWH.”

2 Kings 17:32-41,

32 And (the Sepharvites) were fearing / reverencing YHWH;
and they made for themselves from their extremities priests of high

places;
 and they were working for them in (the) temple of the high places.

33 They were fearing / reverencing YHWH,
 and their Gods they were serving
 according to the practice of the nations which led them into exile from there.

34 Until this day they are doing according to their practices, the former ones;
 they are not fearing / reverencing YHWH;
 and they are not doing according to their statutes and according to their judicial
 decisions,
 and according to the **torah** / teaching
 and according to the commandment which YHWH commanded Jacob's children
 to whom He gave his name, Israel.

35 And YHWH wrote with them a covenant, and He commanded them saying,
 You shall not fear / reverence other Gods,
 and you shall not bow down to / worship them;
 and you shall not serve them, and you shall not sacrifice to them.

36 But rather, YHWH Who brought you people up from Egypt-land with great
 strength with a stretched out arm,
 Him you shall fear / reverence, and to Him you shall bow down / worship,
 and to Him you shall sacrifice.

37 And the statutes and the judicial decisions,
 and the **torah** / teaching / law and the commandment which He wrote for
 you people,
 you shall keep / guard, to do all the days;
 and you shall not fear / reverence other Gods!

38 And the covenant which He cut with you people, you shall not forget;
 and you shall not fear / reverence other Gods.

39 But rather, YHWH your God you (plural) shall fear / reverence;
 and He will deliver you people from (the) hand of all your enemies.

40 And they did not listen;
 but rather, according to their custom, the former one, they (were) doing.

41 And these nations were fearing / reverencing YHWH,
 and they were serving their idols / images;
 also their children and their children's children,
 just like their father did, they (are) doing until this day!
 (What an example of religious syncretism, combining the various Near Eastern
 religions with Israel's worship of YHWH! The "bottom-line" of the passage is
 "Stop the Syncretism; Fear / Reverence YHWH Alone!")

Nehemiah 7:2,

And I commanded Chanani my brother and Chananyah, prince of the castle,
 over Jerusalem;
 because he (which one?) (was) like a man / person of true faithfulness,
 and a fearer of / one reverencing the God more than many.

Isaiah 50:10,

Who among you people is a fearer of / one reverencing YHWH,
listening to His servant's voice,
who walked (in) dark places,
and there is no brightness for him?
He will / let him trust in YHWH's name,
and lean on / support himself on his God.

Isaiah 57:11,

And whom were you (singular) anxious about, and feared,
so that you would lie?
And Me, you did not remember,
you did not place it upon your heart.
Have I not been holding silence, and / even for a long time?
And you would not fear / reverence Me!

Jeremiah 5:22,

Do you people not fear / reverence Me?
--(It is) a saying of YHWH--
Or from before Me will you not tremble / writhe?
(I am) the One Who placed sand (as) a boundary for the sea,
a long-lasting statute, and it will not cross over it;
and tossed to and fro, and they were not able;
and its waves roar, and they will not cross over it!

Jeremiah 26:19, the leaders of Judah / Jerusalem are reminded of how Micah predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, as Jeremiah has now done, whom they are threatening to kill:

Did Hezekiah, king of Judah, and all Judah indeed put him to death?
Was he not fearing / revering YHWH, and entreated the face of YHWH?
And YHWH changed His mind / repented concerning the evil which He spoke concerning them--
and we are doing a great evil against our innermost-beings!

Jonah 1:16, which depicts the non-Jewish sailors:

And the men feared / revered a great fear / reverence of YHWH;
and they sacrificed a sacrifice to the YHWH,
and they vowed vows.

Micah 7:15-17,

15 Like (the) days of your going forth from Egypt-land,
I will cause you to see wonders / marvels.

- 16 Nations will see, and they will be ashamed of all their strength / might;
they will place a hand over (their) mouth,
their ears will be silent / deaf.
- 17 They will lick dust like the serpent;
like crawling things of (the) earth they will (come) trembling from their
strongholds.
They will be in dread of YHWH our God,
and they will fear / reverence from before you!

Malachi 3:16,

Then those who fear / reverence YHWH spoke together,
each one with his neighbor;
and YHWH paid attention, and listened.
And a book of remembrance was written before Him,
for those fearing / reverencing YHWH,
and for those thinking / taking account of His name.

Job 1:1b, It is said of Job:

and that man was complete / perfect, and upright, and fearing / reverencing God;
and he turned away from evil.

Job 1:8, speaking to the satan / adversary, God adds to these qualities that “there in no
one like him on the earth.” **2:3**, same.

Job 1:9b, the adversary / satan asks God cynically,

Is Job fearing God for nothing?

Job 9:35, Job says if only God would quit causing him to suffer unjustifiably,

I would speak and I would not be afraid;
because I am not this way in myself.

Job 37:24, Elihu has described the mysterious greatness of God, and concludes,

Therefore men / people will fear / reverence Him.
He will not see / regard (?) any (who are) wise of heart / mind.

Psalms 15:4b, the person who can dwell on YHWH’s set-apart hill

will honor those who fear / reverence YHWH.

Psalms 22:24a^{Heb} / **23a**^{Eng},

Those who fear / reverence YHWH, praise Him!

Psalm 25:12,

Who is this, the man / person fearing / reverencing YHWH?
He will teach him in a way He will choose.

Psalm 65:9,

And inhabitants of (earth's) ends feared / revered because of Your signs;
goings forth of morning and evening, You cause to ring out for joy!

Psalm 66:16,

Come! Listen! And I will relate,
(to) all those fearing / reverencing God,
that which He did for my innermost-being

Psalm 112:1b,

Blessed (is the) man / person fearing / reverencing YHWH!
In His commandments he delighted exceedingly!

Psalm 115:11,

Those fearing / reverencing YHWH, trust (imperative) in the YHWH!
He (is) their Help and Shield!

Psalm 115:13,

He (YHWH) will bless those fearing / reverencing YHWH,
the little ones along with the great ones!

Psalm 118:4,

Let those who fear / reverence YHWH now say,
that His steadfast love is to long-lasting time!

Psalm 119:120,

My flesh bristled up from dread of You,
and I feared / revered your judgments / judicial decisions.

Psalm 128:1b,

Blessed (is) every one fearing / reverencing YHWH,
the one walking in His ways!

Psalm 128:4,

Look—because in this way he will be blessed,
a (strong) man, one rearing / reverencing YHWH!

Psalm 135:20b,

Those fearing / reverencing YHWH,
bless (piel imperative) YHWH!

Proverbs 14:2a,

One who walks in uprightness (is) fearing / reverencing YHWH.

Proverbs 31:30,

A deception, the grace / favor / charm,
and vanity, the beauty.
A wife / woman fearing / reverencing YHWH,
she will make her boast / be praised!

Ecclesiastes 5:6b^{Heb} / 7b^{Eng},

but rather, fear / reverence the God!

Ecclesiastes 7:15-18,

- 15 I saw everything / the whole in (the) days of my vanity.
There is a rightly-related person perishing in his right-relationship,
and there is a wicked person prolonging (his days) in his evil.
- 16 You shall not be exceedingly rightly-related,
and you shall not make yourself excessively wise.
Why / for what reason will you be appalled / destroyed?
- 17 You shall not be exceedingly wicked,
and you shall not be a fool.
Why / for what reason will you die when (it is) not your time?
- 18 (It is) good that you will / should take strong hold on this,
and also from this / that you release your hand.
Because one fearing / reverencing God
will go forth with all of them.
(We take all of this to mean, Moderation in all things—but fear / reverence of God
in everything!)

Ecclesiastes 8:12,

When one sinning does evil a hundred (times),
and lengthens his days,

still I am knowing, I am
that it will be good / better for those fearing / reverencing the God
who fear / reverence from before Him.

Ecclesiastes 12:1,

And remember (the) One creating you, in days of your youth,
as far as / up to when the evil days will not come,
and years arrive when you (singular) will say,
There is no delight / pleasure in them for me!

Ecclesiastes 12:13,

End of (the) matter—the whole was heard.
Fear / reverence the God,
and His commandments, keep / guard,
because / for this—everything of the human being.

In the **New Testament**, see:

Luke 18:2, Jesus tells a parable / comparison story about

a certain judge was in a certain city,
who was not fearing / reverencing God,
and not showing deference to a man / person.

Luke 23:40, one thief being put to death beside Jesus asks his fellow dying thief,

do you not even fear / reverence the God?

Acts 10:2, the Roman soldier Cornelius is described as

devout / Godly, and fearing / revering the God with everyone in his household.

Acts 13:16, 26, Paul addresses a Jewish synagogue in Asia Minor as Israelites and the
ones fearing / reverencing the God (meaning by the last phrase, the God-fearers,
non-Jews attending the Jewish synagogue.)

1 Peter 2:17, it is an imperative, fear / reverence the God.

Revelation 14:7, John hears a messenger / angel crying out the imperative,

fear / reverence the God and give to Him glory!

4. **Biblical Passages Referring to YHWH As a Place of Refuge**

Deuteronomy 33:27,

A dwelling-place (is the) God of ancient time,
and beneath, arms of long lasting time!
And He will drive out an enemy from before you--
and He said, Annihilate / Exterminate!

2 Samuel 22:3,

My God (is) my Rock,
I will take refuge in Him.
My Shield, and Horn of my Salvation / Deliverance;
my Secure Height and my Place of Escape, my Savior / Deliverer;
from violence / wrong You will save / deliver me!

2 Samuel 22:33,

The El / Supreme God (is) my strong Place of Safety;
and He will start my way, complete / sound.

Nehemiah 8:10,

And he said to them, Go, Eat fatness / richly prepared food,
and drink sweet things;
and send portions to anyone not prepared for it.
For today is set-apart for our Lord;
and you shall not be pained / grieved;
because (the) joy of YHWH, it (is) your place of safety / protection!

Psalm 14:6,

(The) counsel of a poor person, you (plural) put to shame,
because YHWH (is) his place of refuge / shelter.

Psalm 27:1,

For David
O YHWH, my Light, and my Deliverance--
of whom shall I be afraid?
O YHWH, Stronghold of my life--
of whom shall I be fearful?

Psalm 28:8,

YHWH—his Strength,
and Place of safety, salvations / deliverances of His anointed one—He (is)!

Psalm 31:5^{Heb} / 4^{Eng},

You will bring me forth from a net which they hid for me,
because You (are) my Place of Safety!

Psalm 37:29,

צְדִיקִים יִרְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ
וַיִּשְׁכְּנוּ לָעַד עֲלֶיהָ:

Righteous people will inherit land / earth;
and they will settle / dwell to the perpetuity upon it!

Psalm 43:2,

Because / since You are my God, my Place of Safety,
for what reason did You reject me?
For what reason shall I walk growing dark in my enemy's oppression?

Psalm 46:2^{Heb} / 1^{Eng},

God (is) for us a Place of Refuge and Strength,
a Help, found especially in troubles.

Psalm 46:8^{Heb} / 7^{Eng},

YHWH of Armies (is) with us;
Jacob's God (is) our Secure Retreat! Selah

Psalm 46:12^{Heb} / 11^{Eng},

YHWH of Armies (is) with us;
Jacob's God (is) our Secure Retreat! Selah

Psalm 48:4^{Heb} / 3^{Eng}, speaking of Mount Zion, City of the great King:

God (is) in her / its citadels,
known / famous for /as a Stronghold!

Psalm 52:9^{Heb} / 7^{Eng},

Look—the mighty man did not place / make God his Place of Safety;
and he trusted in his great wealth—
he sought safety in his desire / engulfing destruction!

Psalm 57:2^{Heb} / 1^{Eng},

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy!
Because in You my innermost-being has taken refuge.
And in Your wings' shadow, I will take refuge,
until destruction passes by / over!

Psalm 62:8-9^{Heb} / 7-8^{Eng},

8/7 Upon God (rests) my salvation / deliverance and my glory / honor--
Rock of my strength,
my Refuge (is) in God!
9/8 Trust in Him at all time(s), O people!
Pour out your heart(s) before Him!
God (is) a Refuge for us! Selah

Psalm 71:7,

Like a sign / wonder I was to / for many people;
and You (are) my Refuge of strength!

Psalm 91:2,

I will say to the YHWH, my Refuge / Shelter and my Stronghold / Masada!
My God, I will trust in Him!

Psalm 91:9,

Because You, YHWH (are) My Refuge;
(the) Most High, you placed (for) your Dwelling-place.

Psalm 94:22,

And YHWH was to me for a Stronghold / Secure Height;
and my God for a Rock, my Refuge!

Psalm 142:6^{Heb} / 5^{Eng},

I cried out to You, YHWH;
I said, You (are) my Refuge,
my Portion in (the) land of the living!

Isaiah 4:5-6,

5 And YHWH will create over all Mountain Zion's established place,
and over her called assembly--
a cloud by day, and smoke and brightness of fire's flame by night--
because over all glory, a covering.

6 And a booth will be for shade by day from (the) heat;
and for a refuge and a place of shelter from downpour and from rain.

Isaiah 32:2, where it is predicted that in the good times coming,

And each man / person will be like a shelter (from the) wind,
and a hiding-place (from the) downpour,
like streams of water(s) on parched ground,
like (the) shadow of a heavy rock in a fainting / weary land.

Jeremiah 16:19,

YHWH (is) my Strength and my Place of Safety,
and my Place of Escape / Refuge in a day of distress!
To You nations will come from earth's extremities,
and they will say Surely our fathers inherited a falsehood, a vapor /
breath,
and there is no one among them profiting!

5. Occurrences of the Greek Verb Καταπίνω, “Drink Down” or “Swallow Up” in the Greek Bible

Genesis 41:7, thin ears of corn swallowed up plump, full ears of corn; **verse 24** same.

Exodus 7:12, Aaron’s rod / staff swallowed the rods / staffs of Pharaoh’s servants.

Exodus 15:12, the earth swallowed the Egyptian armies.

Numbers 16:30, 32, 34; 26:10, the earth / ground swallows up Korah and his people;
Deuteronomy 11:6; Psalm 106:17, similar.

Numbers 21:28, fire from Heshbon swallowed the heights of the Arnon.

2 Samuel 17:16, Hushai advises David to flee quickly lest he be swallowed up by Absalom and his rebellion.

Psalm 35:25, the psalmist prays that his enemies will not be able to say, We have swallowed him up!

Psalm 55:10, the psalmist prays for YHWH to swallow and divide the tongues of his opponents.

Psalm 69:16, the psalmist prays

It shall not overwhelm me, a flowing stream of waters;
and it shall not swallow me, (the) depth;
and it shall not shut its mouth upon me, (the) well / pit!

Psalm 107:27, people in a storm, whose wisdom was swallowed up.

Psalm 124:3, if YHWH had not been on His people’s side, their enemies would have swallowed them alive.

Job 2:3, YHWH tells the Satan that he has incited Him against Job, to “swallow him without reason.”

Job 7:19, Job asks God how long will it be till He looks away from him, and he can “swallow his spit.”

Job 8:18, Bildad speaks about what will happen if someone is “swallowed up from his place.”

Job 10:8, Job complains that the God who made him, has now swallowed him

(וַתִּבְלַעַנִי), “and You swallowed me!”)

Job 20:15, Zophar claims that the wicked person “swallowed wealth, and vomits it out; from his belly God will dispossess it!”

Job 20:18a, Zophar continues, stating that he is returning gain, and he will not swallow (it).

Job 37:20b, Elihu asks Job (or) if a man said that he would be swallowed up?”

Proverbs 1:12, the wicked say

We will swallow them alive, like (the) grave / underworld,
and whole, like those descending (into) a pit / cistern!

Proverbs 19:28b, (The) mouth of wicked people will swallow wickedness / trouble.

Proverbs 21:20,

Desirable treasure and oil / fat (are) in a wise person’s dwelling;
and a foolish man / person will swallow it!

Ecclesiastes 10:12,

Words (from the) mouth of a wise man / person—favor / grace;
and lips of a foolish man / person will swallow it / them!

Isaiah 25:8,

He (YHWH) swallowed up the death for the perpetuity.

Isaiah 28:4, the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim will be like a first-ripe fig before summer--the one seeing it, while it is still in his hand, will swallow it!

Isaiah 49:19, YHWH has comforted His people, and says to them,

Because your ruins and your desolations and (the) land of your overthrow--
because now you will be (too) narrow for your inhabitant(s),
and you will be far distant from those who swallowed you!

Jeremiah 51:34,

He ate / devoured me, he confused me, Nebuchadretser, King of Babylon;
he made / established me an empty vessel;
he swallowed me like a dragon.
He filled his belly from / with my dainties,
he rinsed me out!

Jeremiah 51:44,

And I will visit (to punish) upon Bel [Babylonian Deity] in Babylon,
and I will bring forth from his mouth what he swallowed.
And the nations will not again from to him;
Also, Babylon's wall fell!

Lamentations 2:2,

My Lord swallowed, and He did not spare all Jacob's dwelling-places;
in His fury He threw down (the daughter of Judah's fortifications;
He brought (them) down to the earth / land;
He defiled a kingdom and its princes!

Lamentations 2:5,

My Lord was / became like an enemy;
He swallowed up Israel;
He swallowed up his citadels,
He destroyed his fortifications;
and He multiplied in Judah's daughter
mourning and lamentation!

Lamentations 2:8,

YHWH planned to destroy (the) daughter of Zion's wall;
He stretched out a (measuring-)line;
He did not return His hand from swallowing up;
and He caused fortress and wall to mourn,
together they languished!

Lamentations 2:16,

They opened their mouth against you (feminine singular), all your enemies;
They hissed and they ground (their) tooth;
they said, We swallowed (them)!
Surely this (is) the day which we awaited!
We found (it), we saw it!

Hosea 8:8,

It was swallowed up—[Northern] Israel!
Now they were among the nations,
like a vessel—there is no delight in it!

Jonah 2:1, YHWH appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah.

Habakkuk 1:13, Habbakuk asks YHWH: literally,

Clean of eyes from seeing evil,
and to look upon trouble, You are not able—
for what reason will you look on people acting faithlessly—
will You be silent when a wicked person swallows up a more righteous
person than himself?

Tobit 6:2,

But then the youth went down to be washed all around;
and a fish jumped up from the river and wanted to swallow the youth.

Ode of Solomon 1:12,

You stretched out Your right hand, and the earth swallowed them up.

Sirach 23:17,

A warm innermost-being (is) like a burning fire
it will not be quenched until it is swallowed up.
A sexually immoral man / person with a body of his flesh (a kins-person),
will not stop until he is burned up (with) fire.
To a sexually immoral person, all bread is sweet;
he will not cease until he dies!

Matthew 23:24,

Blind guides, the ones who filter out the gnat / mosquito,
but then swallow down a camel!

1 Corinthians 15:54,

But then when this corruptible (body) will be clothed with / put on incorruptibility,
and this mortal (body) will be clothed with / put on immortality,
then it will become the word, the one having been written:
The death was swallowed up into victory. Paul is referring to **Isaiah 25:8**.

2 Corinthians 2:7,

So that to the contrary rather, you people should forgive and comfort (him),
so that such a person will not be swallowed up by excessive grief.

2 Corinthians 5:4,

For also the ones being in the tent [body], we sigh deeply being weighed down—
not that we desire to be unclothed, but rather, to be clothed upon,
so that the mortal might be swallowed up by the life.

(We think that Paul's language here has been influenced by **Isaiah 25:8.**)

Hebrews 11:29b, the Egyptians were swallowed up" (by the water of the Sea of Reeds, when they attempted to cross it)

1 Peter 5:8b,

The opponent of yours (plural), slanderer / devil,
like a roaring lion goes about seeking [someone] to swallow up / devour.

Revelation 12:16, the earth opens its mouth and swallows up a river that the dragon had poured out to drown the woman.

6. **Occurrences of the Verb קָוָה, “Wait” in the Hebrew Bible**

Genesis 49:18, included in Jacob’s predictions for the future of his sons is the statement,

For Your deliverance / salvation I waited, YHWH.

Isaiah 5:2,

And He (YHWH) waited for (His vineyard) to make grapes,
and it made wild / sour grapes.” **5:4**, same;

Isaiah 5:7, interpreting the song of the vineyard,

And He (YHWH) waited for justice, and look–bloodshed;
for righteousness, and look–an outcry.

Isaiah 8:17, in what we take to be Isaiah’s own personal statement, stating his determined policy of leadership to his disciples, in the face of an unbelieving Ahaz:

and I will wait (root חָכַה) for the YHWH,
the One Who is hiding Himself from Jacob’s household;
and I will wait (root קָוָה) for Him.

Isaiah 25:9, we wonder if this may be the statement of Isaiah and his followers, at a later time, when they have experienced the validation of their faith? We think it may well be:

And he will say on that day,
Look–this (is) our God;
we waited for Him, and He delivered / saved us!
This (is) YHWH–we waited for Him;
we will rejoice and be glad in His deliverance / salvation!

Isaiah 26:8,

Also, (the) way of your judicial decisions--
YHWH, we waited (for) You!
For Your name and for Your memory--
desire / wish of an innermost-being!

Isaiah 33:2,

YHWH, have mercy on us!
For You we waited.

Be (qal imperative) their arm for the mornings;
also our salvation / deliverance in time of distress!

Isaiah 40:31,

And those waiting (for) YHWH will change / renew strength;
they will go up–(on) a wing like the griffon vultures;
they will run and will not grow weary;
they will walk and will not grow tired!

Isaiah 49:23b, in the good times coming, when kings and queens bow down to
YHWH's people,

And you (singular) will know that I (am) YHWH,
those waiting (for) Me will not be put to shame!

Isaiah 51:5,

My right-relationship (is) near;
My salvation / deliverance went out;
and My arms will bring justice to / judge peoples.
For Me, islands wait / will wait
and to / for My arm they will await (synonym)!
those waiting (for) Me will not be put to shame!

Isaiah 59:9, in a confession of guilt, YHWH's people say,

Therefore justice was far from us,
and right-relationship does not overtake us;
we wait / will wait for the light, and look–darkness;
for brightnesses–in the darknesses we will walk!

Isaiah 59:11, their confession continues:

We will growl like the bears, all of us;
and like the doves, moaning we will moan.
We will wait for the justice, and it is not;
for salvation / deliverance–it was far from us!

Isaiah 60:9a,

Because for Me, islands will wait,
and ships of Tarshish at the head / lead,
to bring your (feminine singular) children from afar...

Isaiah 64:2^{Heb} / **3**^{Eng},

When You did awesome things we were not waiting for / expecting,
You came down;
from before Your presence, mountains quaked!

Jeremiah 8:15,

To wait for peace / welfare,
and there was / is nothing good;
for a time of healing,
and look—terror / dismay! **Jeremiah 14:19**, similar.

Jeremiah 13:16, Jeremiah calls upon the people of Judah / Jerusalem:

Give (plural imperative) to the YHWH your God glory / honor,
before He causes darkness,
and before your feet stumble upon mountains (in) twilight!
And you people will wait for light—
and He will make it into a shadow of death,
and he will placed (it) for darkness!

Jeremiah 14:22, Jeremiah asks,

Is there among (the) vapors / false Gods of the nations, those bringing rains?
And if the heavens will give showers,
are You not He, YHWH our God?
And we will wait for You—
because You did all these things!

Hosea 12:7, Hosea advises the Northern Israelites:

And you (singular) shall return to your God;
steadfast love and justice, guard / keep!
And wait to / for your God constantly!

Micah 5:6^{Heb} / 7^{Eng}, in the good times coming, when a great shepherd arises from Bethlehem, among other things happening,

And Jacob's remnant will be in (the) midst of many peoples,
like dew from YHWH,
like showers upon herbage
which will not wait for man / person,
and will not wait (synonym) for humanity's children.

Psalms 25:3,

Also, everyone who waits (for) You will not be put to shame;
they will be put to shame, the ones vainly act faithlessly!

Psalm 25:5,

Cause me to walk in Your true-faithfulness,
and teach me!
Because You (are) (the) God of my deliverance / salvation!
You I waited (for) all the day!

Psalm 25:21,

Integrity and uprightness will guard me,
because I waited for You!

Psalm 27:14,

Wait to / for YHWH;
be strong, and make your heart / mind stout!
And wait to / for YHWH!

Psalm 37:9,

Because evil-doers will be cut off,
and those waiting (for) YHWH will inherit land / earth!

Psalm 37:34,

Wait to / for YHWH,
and keep / guard His way,
and He will exalt you for the possession of land / earth,
when wicked people are cut off, you (singular) will see!

Psalm 39:8,

And now, what did I wait (for), my Lord?
My hope—it (is) to / for You!

Psalm 40:2^{Heb} / 1^{Eng},

Waiting I waited / I certainly waited (for) YHWH,
and He reached out to me,
and He heard my cry for help.

Psalm 52:11b^{Heb} / 9b^{Eng},

and I will wait (for) Your name,
because (it is) good!

Psalm 56:7b, the psalmist tells how his enemies waited (for) my innermost-being / life.

Psalm 69:7a,

They shall not be ashamed in / of me
those waiting (on / for) my Lord YHWH of Armies!

Psalm 69:21b,

and I waited for the sympathy, and there was none!

Psalm 119:95a,

for me wicked people waited, to destroy me.

Psalm 130:5,

I waited (for) YHWH
my innermost-being waited;
and for His word I hoped!

Job 3:9, Job, in cursing the day of his birth, says:

They will grow dark / let them grow dark, (the stars) of its twilight;
it will wait / let it wait for light, and there is none;
and it will not see / let it not see / look on (the) eye-lids of dawn!

Job 6:19, Job's friends are like wadis without water--

Caravans (from) Tema looked,
travelers (from) Sheba waited for them.

Job 7:2, Job complains that he is:

like a slave gasps / pants (for) a shade,
and like a hired person who waits (for) his pay.

Job 17:13, Job asks his so-called friends,

If I will wait (for the) grave / underworld (for) my home / house,
in the darkness I spread out my couch? (then where would my hope be?)

Job 30:26, Job complains,

Because I waited (for) good and evil came;
I waited (synonym) for light, and darkness came!

Proverbs 20:22,

You (singular) shall not say I will repay evil!
Wait for the YHWH, and He will deliver / save you!

Lamentations 2:16,

They opened their mouth against you (singular), all your enemies;
they hissed, and they ground (their) teeth (literally, tooth);
They said, We swallowed him!
Surely this is the day that we waited for--
we found (him), we saw him!

Lamentations 3:25,

YHWH (is) good to waiting (for) Him,
to an innermost-being (that) will seek Him!

7.

“Dung,” “Dung-hill”

“DUNG; DUNG GATE

“dung ('ashpoth, domen, peresh; skubalon, etc.): Nine different words occurring in the Hebrew have been translated "dung" in the **Old Testament**. The word used to designate one of the gates of Jerusalem ('ashpoth, **Nehemiah 2:13; 3:14**) is more general than the others and may mean any kind of refuse. The gate was probably so named because outside it was the general dump heap of the city. Visitors in recent years riding outside the city walls of Jerusalem, on their way to the Mount of Olives or Jericho, may have witnessed such a dump against the wall, which has existed for generations.

“The first mention made of dung is in connection with sacrificial rites. The sacred law required that the dung, along with what parts of the animal were not burned on the altar, should be burned outside the camp (**Exodus 29:14; Leviticus 4:11; 8:17; 16:27; Numbers 19:5**). The fertilizing value of dung was appreciated by the cultivator, as is indicated by **Luke 13:8** and possibly **Psalms 83:10** and **Isaiah 25:10**.

“Dung was also used as a fuel. **Ezekiel 4:12,15** will be understood when it is known that the dung of animals is a common fuel throughout Palestine and Syria, where other fuel is scarce. During the summer, villagers gather the manure [‘dung’] of their cattle, horses or camels, mix it with straw, make it into cakes and dry it for use as fuel for cooking, especially in the winter when wood or charcoal or straw are not procurable. It burns slowly like peat [a brown, soil-like material characteristic of boggy, acid ground, consisting of partly decomposed vegetable matter. It is widely cut and dried for use in gardening and as fuel] and meets the needs of the kitchen. In Mesopotamia the writer saw it being used with forced draft to fire a steam boiler. There was no idea of uncleanness in Ezekiel's mind, associated with the use of animal dung as fuel (**Ezekiel 4:15**).

“Dung was frequently used figuratively to express the idea

(a) of worthlessness, especially a perishable article for which no one cares (**1 Kings 14:10; 2 Kings 6:25; 9:37; Job 20:7; Psalm 83:10; Jeremiah 8:2; 9:22; 16:4; 25:33; Zechariah 1:17; Philippians 3:8** [the **American Standard Revised Version** ‘refuse’]). Dunghill was used in the same way (**1 Samuel 2:8; Ezra 6:11; Psalm 113:7; Isaiah 25:10; Daniel 2:5; 3:29; Luke 14:35; Lamentations 4:5**);

(b) as an expression of disgust (**2 Kings 18:27; Isaiah 36:12**);

(c) of rebuke (**Malachi 2:3**).

“DUNGHILL

“Dung-hill ('ashpoth, **1 Samuel 2:8, madhmenah**, etc., with other words; **kopria, Luke 14:35**): Dung heap, or place of refuse. To sit upon a dunghill (**1 Samuel**

2:8; Psalm 113:7; Lamentations 4:5) is significant of the lowest and most wretched condition. To turn a house into a dunghill (**Daniel 2:5; 3:29**), or be flung upon a dunghill (**Luke 14:35**), marks the extreme of ignominy.”

James A. Patch, on the Internet, 12/13/2016

J. B. Gray, in his commentary on **Job 2:7**, which depicts Job as sitting “in the ashes,” comments that “Job first retired to the ashes *after* being smitten with disease, whether as a further means of allaying the itching...or because the ash-heap or hill was the proper place for lepers. In the latter case certainly *the ashes* would be the mound of burnt dung lying outside the town [as the Greek translation has it]. Still a conspicuous feature of the Huran [Syrian] towns and villages, such a mound is now termed *mezbele*...

The *mezbele* has been described as follows (by Wetzstein): “The dung...is carried in baskets in a dry state to that place outside the village, and there generally it is burnt once a month... The ashes remain...If a place has been inhabited for centuries, the *mezbele* attains a height far greater than that of the place itself. The rains of winter reduce the layers of ashes to a compact mass, and gradually convert the *mezbele* into a solid hill of earth...The *mezbele* serves the inhabitants of the place as a watchtower, and on sultry evenings as a place of concourse, for on this height there is a breath of air...There lies the outcast who, smitten by loathsome disease, is no longer admitted to the dwellings of men...There lie the dogs of the village, gnawing perhaps some fallen carcass, such as is often thrown there.” (Pp. 24-25)

Compare **Psalm 113:8**,

מְקִימֵי מֵעַפֵּר דָּל
מֵאַשְׁפֹּת יִרְיֵם אֲבִיּוֹן:

(YHWH is the One) raising up a poor person from dust,
from ash-heaps He will raise a poor person (synonym)!

In the **New Testament**, see the occurrences of κοπρία, “manure,” at:

Luke 13:8, the gardener tells the owner of the tree, who has ordered him to cut it down,

ἄφες αὐτὴν καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔτος,
ἕως ὅτου σκάψω περὶ αὐτὴν καὶ βάλω κόπρια

Leave it also this year,

until when I can dig around it, and I can throw manure (around it)
(that is, give it another chance at growth)

Luke 14:35. Jesus is depicted as saying concerning salt that has lost its “saltiness,”

οὔτε εἰς γῆν οὔτε εἰς κοπρίαν εὐθετόν ἐστιν,
ἔξω βάλλουσιν αὐτό.

Neither for (the) ground, neither for manure is it useful.
They throw it out.”

Clines comments that “The two trials of Job have now coalesced; and the one place, the ash-heap is, as the site of ashes for his mourning ritual and potsherds for his sores [is] the single appropriate place for his situation of alienation and displacement.” (P. 50)

Smith's Bible Dictionary, “Dung”

“The uses of dung were two-fold --as manure and as fuel. The manure consisted either of straw steeped in liquid manure, (**Isaiah 25:10**) or the sweepings, (**Isaiah 5:25**) of the streets and roads, which were carefully removed from about the houses, and collected in heaps outside the walls of the towns at fixed spots--hence the ‘dung-gate’ at Jerusalem--and thence removed in due course to the fields. The difficulty of procuring fuel in Syria, Arabia and Egypt has made dung in all ages valuable as a substitute. It was probably used for heating ovens and for baking cakes, (**Ezra 4:12,15**) the equable [constant, uniform] heat which it produced adapting it peculiarly for the latter operation. Cow's and camels dung is still used for a similar purpose by the Bedouins.”

American Tract Society Bible Dictionary, “Dung”

“Among the Israelites, the dung of animals was used only for manure, but, when dried, for fuel. In districts where wood is scarce, the inhabitants are very careful in collecting the dung of camels and asses; it is mixed with chopped straw, and dried. It is not unusual to see a whole village with portions of this material adhering to the walls of the cottages to dry; and towards the end of autumn it is piled in conical heaps or stacks on the roof. It is employed in heating ovens, and for other similar purposes,. The use of dung for manure is intimated in Isaiah 25:10.”

Easton's Bible Dictionary, “Dung”

(1) Used as manure (**Luke 13:8**); collected outside the city walls (**Nehemiah 2:13**). Of sacrifices, burned outside the camp (**Exodus 29:14; Leviticus 4:11; 8:17; Numbers 19:5**). To be "cast out as dung," a figurative expression (**1 Kings 14:10; 2 Kings 9:37; Jeremiah 8:2; Psalm 18:42**), meaning to be rejected as unprofitable.

(2) Used as fuel, a substitute for firewood, which was with difficulty procured in Syria, Arabia, and Egypt (**Ezekiel 4:12-15**), where cows' and camels' dung is used to the present day for this purpose.

