

**Isaiah Chapter 32, Hebrew Text with Translation and Footnotes**  
**Divine Promises Continue—Genuine Justice in Government,**  
**and the Outpouring of the Spirit Are Coming—**  
**but Jerusalem’s / Judah’s Complacent Women are Warned in the Interim—**  
**Their Attitudes Will Contribute to Disaster--**  
**a Chapter Closing with Two Puzzling, Enigmatic Verses<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup>**Chapter 32** has five end-notes: (1) Israel’s Negev, Southern Area; (2) Passages in the Hebrew Bible Using the Verb שָׁקַט, **shaqat**, “To Be Quiet,” with Reference to Lands, Peoples, Cities and Individuals; (3) Occurrences of the noun בִּטַּח, **betach** in the Hebrew Bible; (4) Occurrences of the Noun מְנוּחָה, “Place of Rest,” in the Hebrew Bible; (5) Occurrences of the adjective שְׂאֲנַן, **sha)anan**, in the Hebrew Bible.

Alexander states that **chapter 32** “consists of two distinguishable parts. The first continues the promises of the foregoing context, **verses 1-8**. The second predicts intervening judgments both to Israel and his enemies, **verses 9-20**.”

“The first blessing promised in the former part is that of merciful and righteous government **verses 1-2**. The next is that of spiritual illumination, **verses 3-4**. As the consequence of this, moral distinctions shall no longer be confounded, men shall be estimated at their real value; a general prediction, which is here applied to two specific cases, **verses 5-8**.”

“The threatenings of the second part are specially addressed to the women of Judah, **verse 9**. They include the desolation of the country and the downfall of Jerusalem, **verses 10-14**. The evils are to last until a total change is wrought by an effusion of the Holy Spirit, **verses 15-18**. But fearful changes are to intervene, for which believers must prepare themselves by diligence in present duty, **verses 19-20**.” (Volume 2, p. 1)

Oswalt entitles **Isaiah 32:1-33:24** “Behold the King.”

He comments that “**Chapters 32** and **33** represent an alternative to the situation described in **chapters 30-31**. There false counsel depicted reliance upon Egypt as Judah’s hope...Here, God, the God Who will have delivered them from Assyria, is depicted as the true Source of righteous rule. Although human kings may rule on His behalf (**32:1-4**), it is His Spirit which must energize them if they are to rule rightly (**34:4, 15**)...”

“Trusting human resources leads to injustice, blindness, corruption, and destruction. But trust in God leads to justice, clarity, integrity, and life. The thought in

(continued...)

<sup>1</sup>(...continued)

the two chapters moves through four stages...

“The first describes the nature of true leadership and the effects stemming from it (**32:1-8**)...

“The second explains what is the fundamental ingredient for that kind of leadership to exist: God’s Spirit (**32:9-20**)...

“The third makes this necessity of Divine intervention even more explicit, stating that Judah is helpless without Him (**33:11-16**)...

“[The fourth] Finally, in a more emotive segment, the author imagines the day when Yahweh rules over a serene and quiet land delivered from all her enemies (**33:17-24**).” (P. 579)

<sup>2</sup>Slotki states that **verses 1-8** foretell “the moral restoration of the commonwealth [of Israel].” He adds that **verses 1-2** predict that “a righteous and beneficent government will secure peace and safety for the people.” (P. 150)

Oswalt entitles **verses 1-8** “True leaders.”

He comments that this segment “utilizes the language of the wisdom tradition to talk about sense and nonsense...The author talks of the results which might be expected from good leaders...Isaiah considers it as a given that life lived within the confines of the ‘natural’ spiritual order will produce life and health, whereas life which flies in the face of God’s order can only produce disorder and disaster. The results of the true leadership will be security (**verse 2**), insight and understanding (**verses 3-4**), and judgment according to character (**verses 5-8**).

“A major question is whether the segment was intended as a messianic prophecy. The most significant argument raised against that point of view is that the language is not nearly so idealized as it is in such undoubtedly messianic passages as **8:23-9:6**<sup>Heb</sup> / **9:1-7**<sup>Eng</sup> and **11:1-9**...

“At the least, it seems that a quality of government is being discussed that could only be expected in its fullness under the rule of the Messiah.” (Pp. 579-80)

Motyer entitles **32:1-8** “The king and the new society.” He comments that “the passing of the earthly king (**Isaiah 31:8-9** [but this is a depiction of an Assyrian, without any mention of ‘king’]) now merges into the reign of the true king (compare **Isaiah 9:1**<sup>Heb</sup> / **8:23**<sup>Eng</sup>; **11:1**). It is part of the purpose of biblical eschatology to allow the ultimate vision to brighten the intermediate dark days.”

(continued...)

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

Watts entitles **32:1-8** "Suppose a King..."

He comments that "The episode belongs to the teaching of the Wise. Its setting is determined by its context. Such a teaching in the times of the deceptive policies described in **chapter 31**, especially in view of that telltale 'no longer' in **verse 32:5**, must be set in the reign of Josiah, for the destruction of Assyria is still ahead.

"It may be that this is intended to be presented tongue-in-cheek. The truisms or platitudes of wisdom are presented with mock seriousness as a satirical comment on a society which has neither justice nor righteousness, in which people do not see, hear, know, or say that they have confused the folly and knavery of their political policies with nobility and honor." (P. 412)

Kaiser entitles **32:1-8** "In the Kingdom of Righteousness."

He comments that "Two things will be obvious to an attentive reader of this passage. First, its language and conceptions have remained virtually uninfluenced by the prophetic tradition, and are those of the wisdom schools. Secondly, it is intended in spite of this to be understood in relation to its context as a prophecy of the change in society in the time of salvation which is to come..."

"Its present purpose is to bear witness to the righteous government and devout citizenship in the Messianic age...The wisdom teacher speaks in very general terms of the consequence of just government by the king and his officials, **32:1-5**, and of the difference between the fool and him who is noble..."

"As in the case of **Isaiah 28:23-29**, we have before us a redaction of the **Book of Isaiah** by wisdom thinkers.

"This wisdom prophecy, as we can now describe this passage, clearly falls into two stanzas, each of six couplets: **32:1-5** and **32:6-8**. The logical coherence of the first stanza is clear, for it portrays the consequences of a righteous rule which transforms the circumstances of the whole population. But the connection between the first and second stanzas is not so clear. It is apparently a digression on the part of the wisdom teacher, in which, in the familiar manner of the wisdom schools, he instructs his reader in the difference between the fool and him who is noble. But the effect is to complete the portrait of the age of salvation." (Pp. 320-21)

Motyer entitles **32:1-5** "New rulers and new people." (P. 257)

Watts states that in **verses 1-2**, "The lesson begins with the definition of rulers, *kings* and *princes*. They are to be identified with *justice* and *righteousness*. They are to be symbols of security and vital prosperity." (P. 412)

(continued...)

## וְלִשְׂרִים לְמִשְׁפַּט יִשְׂרוּ:

Look—(it is) for righteousness a king<sup>3</sup> will rule;

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

Alexander translates **verse 1**: “Behold, for righteousness shall reign a king, and rulers for justice shall rule.”

He comments that “the usual translation if in justice and in righteousness...But as this idea is commonly expressed by the preposition כ [rather than ל, which occurs here]...[the statement] may have been intended to suggest that he [the King] would reign not only justly, but for the very purpose of doing justice.” (2, P. 1)

Oswalt comments that “Isaiah looks to a day when the king will be Divinely enabled to do what thinking people had known from the beginning a true king should do. The coming of the Messiah became necessary because human beings could conceive of a kind of kingship which no human being could live up to. Where did such a concept come from except from the mind of God through revelation?” (P. 580)

There can be, we think, no denial of the fact that the prophetic message looked out into the future—not clearly, but in vision, “through a mirror darkly,” to depict the coming of a great king who would embody the highest ideals of ethics, morality, and establish a community filled with righteousness, justice, and peace. And when we ask, Where did such a vision come from, we say with Oswalt, it came from God. As a result of Isaiah’s vision, he believed devoutly in just such a future, even though his depictions are filled with puzzling enigma. What do you think?

<sup>3</sup>Slotki says that either “Hezekiah or the Messiah may be intended.” (P. 150)

Alexander states that “the truth appears to be that the promise is a general one, as if he had said, The day is coming when power shall be exercised and government administered, not as at present (in the reign of Ahaz), but with view to the faithful execution of the laws. Of such an improvement Hezekiah’s reign was at least a beginning and a foretaste.” (2, P. 1)

Motyer, however, as is his custom, leaves no uncertainty, stating that “A *king* is the Messianic king of **chapters 9 and 11**. In **9:7<sup>Heb</sup> / 6<sup>Eng</sup>** ‘righteousness’ marks his throne, in **11:1ff**, his character, and here his government...

“Sound moral principle (*righteousness*) is allied to sound moral practice (*justice*). The king embodies righteousness; the *rulers* / ‘princes’ are his executives, applying his principles of righteousness in correct decisions (*mishpot*).” (P. 257)

We say that here we see again one of the major themes of the **Book of Isaiah**. It is that righteousness and justice are all important for doing the will of YHWH. There can be no pleasing of YHWH without both—see footnote 5.

and for princes,<sup>4</sup> (it is) for justice they rule.<sup>5</sup>

32:2 וְהָיָה אִישׁ כַּמְחַבֵּא־רוּחַ

וּסְתֵר זֶרֶם

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<sup>4</sup>Slotki says that by “princes” is meant “the judges and officers of State.” (P. 150)

<sup>5</sup>Isaiah affirms that rulers—whether at the top (“kings”) or in lower positions (“princes”), are responsible for צְדָקָה, **tsedheq**, “righteousness,” and מִשְׁפָּט, **mishpot**, “justice.” That is, there are non-negotiable, indispensable requirements for those who hold public office / responsibility.

These are powerful, all-encompassing ethical terms, that occur throughout the **Hebrew Bible**. The root צְדָקָה, **tsedheq**, “righteousness,” occurs some 523 times; the noun מִשְׁפָּט, **mishpot**, “justice,” occurs some 422 times in the **Hebrew Bible**. The literature on both of these words is huge, and many different understandings of their meaning has arisen among students. See the article on צְדָקָה, **tsedheq** by B. Johnson in **Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament** XII, pp. 239-63, and his article on מִשְׁפָּט, **mishpot** in Volume IX, pp. 86-98.

From our study of **Isaiah**, we refer to **Isaiah 58**, where the noun צְדָקָה, **tsedheq** occurs twice (**verses 2 and 8**), and where “righteousness” in society is depicted in terms of worshiping YHWH by breaking yokes and setting the oppressed free, sharing your bread with the hungry, bringing the homeless poor into your home, covering the naked, satisfying the desire of the afflicted—a description of true righteousness that reminds us of the teaching attributed to Jesus in **Matthew 25:31-46**.

For the noun מִשְׁפָּט, **mishpot**, “justice,” see **Isaiah 1:15-17**:

- 15 And when you spread out your hands,  
I will hide My eyes from (seeing) you!  
Also if you people will multiply prayer(s), I am not listening!  
Your hands were full of blood!
- 16 Wash!,  
Make yourselves clean!  
Remove your deeds of wickedness from before My eyes!  
Cease to do evil!,
- 17 Learn to do good!  
Seek, after justice!  
Pronounce blessed the oppressed(?!)  
Act as judges (who deliver the) orphan!,  
Take up the cause of (the) widow!

כַּפְּלֵי־מַיִם בְּצִיּוֹן

כַּצֵּל סֵלֶע־כָּבֵד בְּאֶרֶץ עֵיפָה:

And each man / person<sup>6</sup> will be like a hiding-place / shelter<sup>7</sup> (from the) wind,  
and a covering / hiding-place<sup>8</sup> (from the) downpour,<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Slotki says this should be translated “and he (the king and each of the princes) shall be like a hiding-place...and like the watercourses...like the shadow.” (P. 150)

Alexander translates **verse 2**: “*And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the rain (or storm), as channels of water in a dry place (or in drought), as the shadow of a heavy rock in a weary land.*”

He comments that “Most of the late [mid-19th century C.E.] give אִישׁ [‘a man’] the sense of a distributive pronoun, *each* (i.e. each of the chiefs or princes mentioned in **verse 1**...The meaning rather is, that there shall be a man upon the throne, or at the head of the government, who, instead of oppressing, will protect the helpless.” (2, P. 2)

Oswalt notes that “The verse opens with ‘A man will be like...’ It is not clear whether this is to be taken as a distributive referring to ‘princes’ (each of them will be), or a general term (the leaders will be). The general usage perhaps fits the setting better.” (P. 577) Motyer says that “Each man (literally ‘a man’) is idiomatically correct, i.e. true ideals of leadership animate every member of the government.” (P. 257)

Oswalt comments that “In the coming era, leaders will no longer be predators from whom the people will need to seek relief (**29:20, 21**). Rather, the leaders themselves will be sources of protection and support, as they ought to be.” (P. 580)

Perhaps...but Isaiah may well mean “every man” should do all in his power to protect the helpless—not just the government officials.

<sup>7</sup>The noun מַחְבֵּא, **machabhe**), “hiding-place,” occurs only here in the **Hebrew Bible**. We can be fairly certain as to its meaning, since the root חָבַא as a verb means “withdraw / hide,” and is found in **Isaiah 49:2** in the statement of YHWH’s “servant” that YHWH hid him in the shadow of His hand. The prefixed *mem* oftentimes signifies “place.” See the end of the next footnote.

<sup>8</sup>The noun סֵתֶר, **sether**, means “covering” or “hiding-place,” or “secret-place,” and is used for YHWH in the **Psalter**:

**Psalms 27:5,**

(continued...)

<sup>8</sup>(...continued)

כִּי יִצְפְּנֵנִי בְּסֻכָּה בְּיוֹם רָעָה  
יִסְתֶּרֵנִי בְּסֵתֶר אֱהֱלוֹ  
בְּצוּר יְרוּמְמֵנִי:

For He will hide me in His den / shelter on (the) day of trouble.  
He will hide me in (the) secret-place of His tent!  
He will raise me up (high) upon a rock!

**Psalm 31:21**<sup>Heb</sup> / **20**<sup>Eng</sup>,

תִּסְתִּירֵם בְּסֵתֶר פְּנִידָךְ  
מִרְכָּסֵי אִישׁ  
תִּצְפְּנֵם בְּסֻכָּה  
מִרִיב לְשׁוֹנוֹת:

You will hide them in a secret-place before You  
from conspiracies of a man;  
You will store them up in a shelter,  
from contention of tongues!

**Psalm 32:7,**

אַתָּה סֵתֶר לִי  
מִצַּר הַצָּרֵנִי  
רָנִי פִּלְטַתְּ סוּבְבֵנִי  
סֵלָה:

You--a secret-place for me--  
You will protect me from (the) foe!  
You will encompass me with ringing cries to escape!  
Selah

**Psalm 61:5**<sup>Heb</sup> / **4**<sup>Eng</sup>,

אֲגוּרָה בְּאֵהֶלְךָ עוֹלָמִים  
אֲחֹסָה בְּסֵתֶר כְּנָפֶיךָ סֵלָה:

I would dwell temporarily in Your tent of long-lasting-times;  
I would take refuge / shelter in (the) secret-place of Your wings! Selah.

**Psalm 91:1,**

(continued...)

like streams of water<sup>10</sup> on parched ground,<sup>11</sup>

like (the) shadow of a massive rock in a fainting / weary land!<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>(...continued)

יֵשֵׁב בְּסֵתֶר עֲלִיּוֹן  
בְּצֵל שְׁדַי יִתְלוֹנֵן:

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

**Psalm 119:114,**

סֵתֶרִי וּמִגְנִי אַתָּה  
לְדַבְרֶךָ יִחְלָתִי:

My secret-place and my shield are You;  
I hoped for Your word.

All of these passages use the noun **סֵתֶר**, **sether**, “covering,” “hiding-place,” “secret-place”—the noun that follows as a synonym for **מַחְבֵּא**, **machabhe**), “hiding-place,” in the next line.

1QIs<sup>a</sup> instead of **סֵתֶר**, **sether**, has **סֵתֶרָם**, **sethram**, “their shelter.”

<sup>9</sup>Occurrences of the noun **זֶרֶם**, **zerem**, “flood of rain,” “rain-storm,” “downpour” are at: **Isaiah 4:6; 25:4** (twice); **28:2** (twice); **30:30; 32:2** (here); **Habakkuk 3:10** and **Job 24:8**.

Motyer comments that “Completeness is expressed by the contrasting dangers of *wind* and water; there is protection from every threat...*Water* and *shadow* are the two components of provision and refreshment, therefore symbolizing every beneficial care.” (P. 257)

<sup>10</sup>For occurrences of the phrase **פְּלִגְי־מַיִם**, **phalghey-mayim**, “streams / channels / canals of water” in the **Hebrew Bible**, see: **Isaiah 30:25; 32:2** (here); **Psalms 1:3; 199;136; Proverbs 5:16; 21:1** and **Lamentations 3:48**.

<sup>11</sup>Slotki says that this is “an image of prosperity.” (P. 150)

<sup>12</sup>In an unpointed Hebrew text, such as all Hebrew manuscripts were before the Masoretes did their work of pointing / spelling the text in the 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E.,

(continued...)



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

the phrase here, בְּצִיּוֹן, “on parched ground,” or “in a dry place,” could easily be read as בְּצִיּוֹן, “in Zion.”

Those who have lived in the desert understand well the meaning of this simile, a massive rock (I think of “Shiprock” north of Gallup on the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico) in the middle of a desert with no trees, only the hot, burning sun on a summer day, but in the shadow of which the weary traveler can find relief from the sun’s heat. The image of YHWH as a “Rock” in Whom His people can find relief / refuge is closely related.

We are tempted to call **verse 2** as a whole, a biblical description of the “ideal man”—he plays the role of a tiny “God” in his family and community, becoming a shelter from the wind, a hiding-place from the downpour, a giver of water to parched ground, the shadow of a massive rock in a fainting / weary land!

All of these are things that the biblical authors attribute to YHWH; YHWH wants His men to play just such a role in their families and in their community! And today, with all of our broken marriages, we think of single mothers who have had to play just such a role for their fatherless children, and who have admirably accomplished the task in spite of great odds against them. Thanks to all of those who fulfill such a critical role in human development!

Kaiser comments on **verses 1-2** that “According to the conceptions of this wisdom redactor, kings in the Messianic age will be real kings in a real kingdom, and so will not be able to do without officials who rule righteously like himself...From the very first wisdom had been concerned with the importance of justice for a king’s rule, as we learn from **Proverbs 16:10; 20:8, 26**, and especially from **20:28; 29:4, 14** and **31:4-5**; compare also **25:5**...

“Thus if kings and royal officials ever truly rule according to justice and righteousness, and so give everyone his due, they will form a strong bulwark for all their subjects against any attempt to do violence...

“In the language of imagery, then, they are as it were a roof against the summer thunderstorms and the winter squalls of rain...

“The concluding two metaphors...compare them to the irrigation channels in a dry country...and to the shadow of a huge rock which prevents the ground from becoming dried out, and gives men protection from the heat of the day.” (P. 322)

<sup>13</sup>Slotki comments on **verses 3-4** that they predict “a higher standard of morality and knowledge will be reached.” (P. 151)

(continued...)

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<sup>13</sup>(...continued)

Oswalt likewise states that **verses 3-4** mean that “Not only will the true leaders provide security for their people, they will also make possible that spiritual transformation in which the former blindness, deafness, and stammering are taken away...

“Spiritual clarity and perception always follow from submission to God’s ways. Refusal to submit is the surest prescription for an ultimate inability to discern any difference between good and evil... Thus it is appropriate that here spiritual clarity is a result of faithful leaders who themselves submit to God and to whom their people thus have no difficulty submitting.” (Pp. 580-81)

Motyer comments that “There are four transformations in the realms of the perception (*eyes*), reception (*ears*), grasp (*mind*) and communication (*tongue*) of truth.” (P. 257)

Watts states that in **verses 3-4** “The second and perhaps key definition of the episode deals with the public... The public has *eyes, ears, minds, and tongues*. But they are not often used, as was apparently the case in that time. If those faculties are used to *look to hearken, to know, and to speak*, the public good is served, for the character and motives of public officials (implied are the king and his ministers) can be understood and judged on their merits.” (Pp. 412-13)

Kaiser comments on **verse 3** that “In the age of salvation none of [the citizens or their rulers] will any longer be inaccessible to God’s claims and will consequently regard everything that happens from God’s point of view, and will likewise understand the meaning of all the words which He has once uttered and now repeats, and will act accordingly. The time of disobedience and the hardening of hearts, two sides of the same human attitude, will then be past.” (P. 323)

Alexander translates **verse 3**: “*And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.*”

He comments that “According to analogy, תִּשְׁעִינָהּ, **thish(eynah** is the future of שָׁעָה, **sha(ah**, a verb used repeatedly by Isaiah in the sense of *looking* either at or away from any object... However, a contrary meaning seems to be so clearly required, both by the context and the parallelism, that most interpreters, ancient and modern [19<sup>th</sup> century C.E.], concur in deriving it from שָׁעָה, **sha(a**, [‘be smeared over,’ ‘blinded’]... Some understand רֹאִים, **ro(iym** as meaning ‘seers’ or prophets, and שְׂמָעִים, **shome(iym**, ‘their hearers’; but most interpreters apply both words to the people generally.” (2, P. 2)

(continued...)

## וְאֵינִי שֹׂמְעִים תְּקַשְׁבָּנָה:

And (the) eyes of seers will not see with favor / partiality / be blinded;<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>(...continued)

And again we observe how the prophetic message is characterized by puzzle and enigma, with many differing interpretations arising from its statements.

<sup>14</sup>The Hebrew of this line is not difficult to translate—“And eyes of those seeing / seers will not see (תִּשְׁעִינָה, **thish(eynah**, qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine plural, “will not gaze / behold”—which **Brown-Driver-Briggs** claims “makes no sense.” However, the statement does, in our view, make sense—only, it hardly fits the context, if we understand it as meaning “not seeing.” The English translations we are using all change the statement:

**King James**, “And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim”;

**Tanakh**, “Then the eyes of those who have sight shall not be sealed”;

**New Revised Standard**, “Then the eyes of those who have sight will not be closed”;

**New International**, “Then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed”;

**New Jerusalem**, “The eyes of seers will no longer be closed...”

Oswalt, “Then the eyes of those who see will not be blurred.”

The Greek translation, **Rahlfs**, completely changes the statement: καὶ οὐκέτι ἔσονται πεποιθότες ἐπ’ ἀνθρώποις, “And no longer will they be trusting upon / in people...”

Slotki’s translation has “And the eyes of them that see shall not be closed,” and he says that this means they will not be closed “to the word of God.” (P. 151)

We suggest that the verb שָׁעָה, **sha(ah**, may have here, as it does in **Genesis 4:4-5**, the connotation of “looking with favor or partiality.” “Seeing with partiality or favor,” is not to be a characteristic in this future that Isaiah is describing, perhaps meaning that all people will be treated equally, without prejudice; or more specifically, meaning that the “seers’ or “prophets” will not adapt their visions to the desires of the people, but will simply report faithfully what they see.

For all the occurrences of this verb in the **Hebrew Bible**, see:

**Genesis 4:4, 5**, YHWH looks with favor on Abel’s sacrifice, but not on Cain’s;

**Exodus 5:9**, the Egyptian taskmasters don’t want the Hebrew slaves looking at the words of Moses and Aaron with favor, but to disregard what they say;

**2 Samuel 22:42**, David’s enemies looked to God for favor, but found none;

**Isaiah 17:7, 8**, in the good days coming, humans will look to their Maker for favor, not

(continued...)

and (the) ears of those listening will pay attention;<sup>15</sup>

32:4<sup>16</sup> וְלִבְּב נְמַהֲרִים

יבין לדעת

וּלְשׁוֹן עֲלִיָּוִים

תַּמְהֵר לְדַבֵּר צְחֹת:

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<sup>14</sup>(...continued)

to their altars and idols;

**Isaiah 22:4**, Isaiah doesn't want the people looking favorably to him—just let him weep;

**Isaiah 31:1**, the people are looking to the Egyptians for favor, not to the Holy One of Israel;

**Isaiah 32:3**, here; in the good days coming, seeing with favor or partiality will no longer be present;

**Psalms 39:14**, the psalmist doesn't want YHWH to look with favor on him again—perhaps implying giving him another task; just let him die!;

**Psalms 119:117**, the psalmist wants to look with favor on YHWH's statutes continually;

**Job 7:19**, Job wants Shaddai to quit looking at him with favor, and let him die!

**Job 14:6**, Job wants El, the Supreme God, to quit looking with favor on him, and let him cease to exist.

What do you think? We think this matter of “looking with favor” is certainly the case in **Genesis 4:4-5**, and suspect that it is true in the other occurrences—but admit that we may be reading it in in some of the passages.

<sup>15</sup>In the good times coming, the “seers” will be faithful in delivering their visions, and the people who hear their visions, and listen to their messages with open ears! It will be a time of faithful and responsive communication among the people of YHWH!

<sup>16</sup>Alexander translates / comments on **verse 4**: “*And the heart (or mind) of the rash (heedless or reckless) shall understand to know (or understand knowledge), and the tongue of stammerers shall hasten to speak clear things (i.e. shall speak readily and plainly.)*”

“The bodily defects mentioned here [denote not scoffers at religion, but those who neglect and ignore spiritual matters.] The minds of men shall begin to be directed to religious truth, and delivered from ignorance and error in relation to it.” (2, P. 2)

Motyer states that “**Verse 4** instances two contrasting classes: those who precipitately rush forward and those who through incapacity hold back. These opposites express totality; a wholly transformed society.” (P. 258)

and (the) heart<sup>17</sup> of those who are hurried / anxious<sup>18</sup>  
will understand to know;<sup>19</sup>  
and (the) tongue of those speaking inarticulately<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Kaiser comments that “The heart, the center of the functions of knowledge and will, of those who once acted rashly, reached false conclusions and carried out false acts, will now be calm and will consequently fulfil its function aright. Free of all haste and upheaval, and no longer subject to fear of each other, human beings will have insight into what is taking place round about them and what they are required to do about it.” (P. 323)

<sup>18</sup>Slotki’s translation of the niphal masculine plural participle נִמְהָרִים, **nimhariym** is “rash.” **Brown-Driver-Briggs** states that it means *hurried* = anxious, disturbed. Slotki says that this means “the hasty who act on their undisciplined impulses.” (P. 151)

This niphal participle occurs in only two other passages in the **Hebrew Bible**:

**Isaiah 35:4**, (probably with reference to **Isaiah 32:4**)

Speak to those who are *anxious* of heart,  
Be strong, do not be afraid!  
Look—our God!  
Vengeance will come!  
It is God’s recompense;  
He will come and He will save you people!”

**Habakkuk 1:6**, where YHWH is depicted as saying:

Because look at Me, raising up the Casdiym / Chaldeans,  
the nation—the bitter one and the *anxious / hurrying one*--  
the one going to earth’s breadths,  
to possess dwelling-places not belonging to him.

<sup>19</sup>We take the passage to mean that the “anxious / hurried” people will slow down, taking their time to understand and know their situation and their God, thereby relieving their anxiety, nervousness and “panic attacks.”

Motyer states that “To *know and understand* / ‘discern so as to know’ is to see to the heart of a thing and so come to true knowledge.” (P. 258)

<sup>20</sup>Slotki’s translation of עֲלֵתִים, (**illethiym**, is “the stammerers,” and Slotki says that this means “evil-minded persons who are afraid to speak clearly lest their secret designs will be given away.” (P. 151)

(continued...)

will hurry to speak clearly.<sup>21</sup>

32:5<sup>22</sup> לֹא־יִקְרָא עוֹד לְנֹבֵל נְדִיב  
וּלְכִלְיֵי לֹא יֵאמֵר שׁוֹעֵ:

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<sup>20</sup>(...continued)

But we see no basis for this comment, since this is the only occurrence of the word in the **Hebrew Bible**, and therefore there is little way to determine what the word means. We suspect that the definition is based on the Greek translation, ψελλίζουσαι, “they falter in speech / speak inarticulately,” evidently a synonym of τραυλίζουσι, “they mispronounce.” In addition, Slotki’s comment implies that “stammerers” are “evil-minded persons who are afraid to speak clearly”—which we believe is not at all the case.

<sup>21</sup>Slotki’s translation has “shall be ready to speak plainly,” and Slotki says that this is because of their having been “morally regenerated.” (P. 151) But this is based on his view that stammerers are “evil-minded people,” trying to hide their real intentions, rather than being people with speech defects.

Motyer states that “*Fluent and clear* is ‘be quick to speak with clarity.’” (P. 258)

Isaiah states that in the good times coming speech defects will quickly be cured.

As Kaiser states, “People who feel themselves oppressed and therefore stutter will be able to speak freely and without stumbling. The kingdom of righteousness is also the kingdom of prudence and freedom.” (P. 323)

<sup>22</sup>Slotki comments on **verses 5-8**, that they predict a time when, “Shame will be a thing of the past, men will be esteemed at their true moral value, and character will count for more than material wealth.” (P. 151)

Alexander comments on and translates **verse 5**: “When men’s eyes are thus opened, they will no longer confound the essential distinctions of moral character, because they will no longer be deceived by mere appearances. Things will then be called by their right names. *The fool* (in the emphatic Scriptural sense, the wicked man) *will no longer be called noble* (men will no longer attach ideas of dignity and greatness to the name or person of presumptuous sinners), *and the churl* [rude, vulgar] (or niggard [mean person, miser]) *will no more be spoken of (or to) as liberal...*

“It is clear that this [verse] contains a specific illustration of the general truth that men shall be estimated at their real value.” (2, P. 2)

Oswalt comments on **verse 5** that “One result of what clarity which comes from walking in God’s ways is the ability to evaluate persons on the basis of character.” (P. 581)

It will not be called / said again<sup>23</sup> to a foolish person,<sup>24</sup> Noble / Freely Generous!;<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Watts translates the phrase לא...עוד by “no longer,” and states that the implication is “that this has not been the case.” (P. 413) We think the implication is that it has been the case, but will not continue to be so.

<sup>24</sup>Slotki’s translation of נַבְּל, **nabhal** is “vile,” which is defined as meaning “extremely unpleasant.”

**Brown-Driver-Briggs** defines the adjective as meaning “foolish, senseless, especially of the man who has no perception of ethical and religious claims, and with the collateral idea of ignoble, disgraceful.” **Holladay** defines the adjective as meaning “foolish (intellectually & morally), = godless.”

Slotki notes that “For another description of this type of person, compare **Psalm 14:1-3**,

- 1 A foolish person (נַבְּל, **nabhal**) said in his heart, There is no God!  
They destroyed / spoiled; they did abominable deeds.  
There is not one (of them) doing good!
- 2 YHWH from (the) heavens looked down upon (the) children of humanity,  
to see if there is anyone acting wisely, seeking God.
- 3 The entirety / whole world of people turned aside;  
together they became corrupt.  
There is not one doing good;  
there is no one—(not) even one!

We say, surely the psalmist is committing the “all-fallacy”! In YHWH’s eyes, is there not one “good” person on earth? Is there absolutely no one who does good? What about Noah (**Genesis 1:9**)? What about Joseph (**Genesis 37-50**, the “Joseph Story,” depicting a truly good person)? What about Job (**Job 1:1**)? What about Asa (**2 Chronicles 14:2**)? What about Jehoiada (**2 Chronicles 24:16**)? What about Hezekiah (**2 Chronicles 31:20; 32:32**)? What about Nehemiah (**Nehemiah 5:19; 13:14, 31**)? Who are the “good people” mentioned in **Proverbs (12:12, 4; 13:2, 22; 14:14, 19; 15:3; 18:22)**? etc. etc.?

In the **New Testament**, see **Matthew 5:45; 12:35; 13:38; 25:21, 23; 26:10; Luke 6:33, 35, 45; 8:15; 19:17; 23:50** (Joseph of Arimathea); **John 5:29; Acts 9:36** (Dorcas); **11:24** (Barnabas); **Romans 2:7, 10; 5:7; 14:16; 15:14; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 9:8; Ephesians 2:10; 6:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:17; 1 Timothy 1:5, 19; 2:10; 4:6; 5:10, 25; 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:3, 21; 3:17; Titus 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14; Philemon 1:6, 14; Hebrews 10:24; 13:16, 21; Jacob / James 3:13, 17; 1 Peter 3:6; 11, 13, 16, 17, 21; 4:10, 19; 2 Peter 1:5; 3 John 11.**

Are all these passages describing “good” people, and “doing good,” to be

(continued...)

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<sup>24</sup>(...continued)

discounted? Surely we are all sinners, and we all “fall short,” as **Psalm 14** and the Apostle Paul in **Romans 3** so stringently remind us. But we are also commanded to “do good,” and some people in the **Bible** are described as truly “good people”—much like Paul does, and we ourselves commonly do, making distinctions between people who are “good” and people who are “bad.”

What do you think? Is it impossible to obey the commandment to “do good”?

And think about how people have lined up on opposing sides, debating this matter, one side quoting **Psalm 14** and Paul (along with a host of other passages), the other side quoting the many passages we have referred to—both sides with their “proof-texts.” This is the danger using the **Bible** for proof-texting.

Watts defines “the fool,” stating that “In the Wisdom schools the fool was regularly contrasted with ‘the wise’ (compare **Proverbs**). He is the one who has failed to master the disciplines of wisdom. But he is also the one who has a weak character, is easily tempted, and is impetuous in his decisions. The fool can be recognized by: foolish speech, a mind dedicated to wickedness, an ungodly lifestyle, and by heresy spoken against Yahweh.” (P. 413)

Motyer comments on **verse 5** that “An imperfect society imperfectly accords honors. Isaiah looks forward to a true aristocracy of character...”

“The ‘fool’ is such by what he lacks—moral sensitivity; the ‘scoundrel’ is such by what he has—a determination to promote himself at all costs. The fool is amoral; the scoundrel is unscrupulous.” (P. 258) But does the text make such distinctions? We think not.

<sup>25</sup>Slotki’s translation of נָדִיב, **nadiyah** is “liberal,” and Slotki suggests the alternative “noble.” The Hebrew word means “inclined,” “freely generous,” “noble.” See the article by Conrad in **Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament IX**, pp. 219-26.

Slotki’s translation has “by liberal things he shall stand,” and Slotki comments that “Not only does he devise them [liberal things], but he also carries them out.” (P. 152)

Notice how in this passage the opposite of the noble, freely generous person is the person who takes advantage of poor people.

Oswalt comments that “In every society those who have managed to gain power are treated as great, deserving persons regardless of their true character, because the underlings are afraid of the power. In the ideal setting which Isaiah envisions, the genuine qualities of the leaders will make it impossible to mistake a fool, no matter how rich and powerful he may be.” (P. 581)

(continued...)



and to a rascal / knave<sup>26</sup> a cry for help will not be spoken.<sup>27</sup>

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

Oswalt also states that the Hebrew word נְדִיב, **nadhiyb** “may refer to social standing, but its root meaning refers to character, someone who is generous and large-hearted, someone who knows that an all-wise God supplies his needs and therefore can afford to be generous to those less well off than he.” (P. 582)

<sup>26</sup>The noun כִּילַי, **khilay** is defined by **Brown-Driver-Briggs** as “knave”; by **Holladay** as “scoundrel.” We think of the knave as being what we call a “rascal,” or “rogue.” We think of the “scoundrel” as being “a dishonest or unscrupulous person.”

This noun occurs only two times in the **Hebrew Bible**, the first here in **Isaiah 32:5** and the second in **Isaiah 32:7**, where it is spelled כֶּלַי, **khelay**, meaning that we have no other context from which to help understand its meaning. And so, we sum up **verse 7** to define what the כִּילַי, **khilay** does: “with evil tools he makes plans to ruin poor people with words of falsehood, denying them the justice that they seek.”

<sup>27</sup>For this line, וְלִכְיֵלִי לֹא יֵאמָר שׁוֹעַ, our “and to a rascal / knave it will not be said, *Shoa*,” Slotki’s translation has “Nor the churl said to be noble.” For “churl” Slotki suggests “knave.” (P. 151)

But what does שׁוֹעַ mean? Consider the following closely related words in **Brown-Driver-Briggs**:

שָׁוַע, **shawa**(, a piel verb meaning “cry for help”;

שׁוֹעַ, **shoa**(, a masculine noun meaning “a cry for help”;

שׁוֹעַ, **shoa**(, a masculine noun meaning “cry,” perhaps “war-cry,” or “cry for help” in war;

שׁוֹעָה, **shaw(ah**, a feminine noun meaning “cry for help”;

שׁוֹעַ, **shoa**(, a name given to a people, nomads of Mesopotamia, east of the Tigris River.

We think the most probable meaning here is “a cry for help,” and the verse means that the “rascal” or “knave” is the kind of person who will not hear, or have a “cry for help” directed to him. The poor person seeking justice knows that it is useless to go to such person, speaking, asking for help.

But again we observe that the prophetic message has at times puzzling,

(continued...)

כִּי נִבְּלָ נִבְּלָה יִדְבֹר 32:6<sup>28</sup>

וְלִבּוֹ יַעֲשֶׂה-אֵוֶן

לַעֲשׂוֹת חֲנֹף

וְלִדְבַר אֱלֹהִים תִּזְעַק

לְהַרְיֵק נַפְשׁ רָעִב

וּמִשְׁקָה צָמָא יִחְסִיר:

Because a foolish person<sup>29</sup> will speak foolishness,

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<sup>27</sup>(...continued)

enigmatic content—not clear and straightforward—exactly what we should expect in the light of **Numbers 12:6-8** and **1 Corinthians 13:7-12**.

<sup>28</sup>Motyer entitles **32:6-8** “New values.” He states that these verses close “by making the positive point that in the new society it is true nobility that will find honor and security.” (P. 258)

Slotki comments on **verses 6-7** that they give “the characteristics of *the vile person* and the *churl*.” (P. 151)

Alexander comments on / translates **verse 6**: “The Prophet now defines his own expressions, or describes the characters which they denote. *The fool (is one who) will speak folly (in the strongest and worse sense), and his heart will do iniquity, to do wickedness and to speak error unto (or against) Jehovah (while at the same time he is merciless and cruel towards his fellow-men), to starve (or leave empty) the soul of the hungry, and the drink of the thirsty he will suffer to fail.*” (3, P. 3)

<sup>29</sup>Oswalt comments that “*Fool* is one of the strongest negative words in the **Old Testament** because it depicts the person who has consciously rejected the ways of God, which are the road to life, and has chosen the ways of death...

“As that folly is depicted here [in **verses 6-7**], it involves a pattern of life which in its expression as well as in its principles is concertedly opposed to God. As a result, the helpless are oppressed...If God cannot be relied upon to supply my needs, and if supply of my needs as I understand them is paramount, then those weaker than I had better take care.” (Pp. 581-82)

and his heart will do / work<sup>30</sup> wickedness,  
to practice profaneness,<sup>31</sup>  
and to speak confusion<sup>32</sup> to / concerning<sup>33</sup> YHWH,  
to push far away a hungry person,<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Where our Hebrew text has יַעֲשֶׂה, **ya(aseh** “will do / work,” 1QIs<sup>a</sup> has חוֹשֵׁב, **choshebh**, “thinking,” “planning.” The Greek translation, νοήσει, “he will grasp / understand” is better related to the Qumran text than to our Masoretic text.

<sup>31</sup>The noun חֲנֻפָּה, **choneph** occurs only here in the **Hebrew Bible**. **Brown-Driver-Briggs** defines it as “profaneness,” which means “an attitude of irreverence or contempt for God.” Holladay defines it as “godlessness.”

<sup>32</sup>The noun תוֹעָה, **to(ah** occurs only two times in the **Hebrew Bible**, here and in **Nehemiah 4:2**, where it is said concerning the enemies of the Jews:

And all of them conspired together,  
to come to wage war against Jerusalem,  
and to make (תוֹעָה, **to(ah**) confusion for it.

**Brown-Driver-Briggs** defines the noun as meaning “wandering / error” here in **Isaiah 32:6** (evidently because it is something spoken), but “confusion / disturbance” in **Nehemiah 4:2**<sup>Heb</sup> / **8**<sup>Eng</sup> (evidently because it is something done). **Holladay** defines the noun as meaning “confusion, chaos, perversion” in both passages. We think “confusion” fits in both passages.

Motyer translates by “spreads,” while the literal translation is “speaks.” He adds that תוֹעָה, **to(ah**, “error,” is “found only in **Nehemiah 4:2**<sup>Heb</sup> / **8**<sup>Eng</sup> and is used of turning people from the course on which they were set, distracting them and leaving them so that they do not know what to think.” (P. 259)

<sup>33</sup>Here the preposition is אֶל, **el**, normally meaning “to.” But as we have seen on numerous occasions, prepositions in Hebrew are sometime used interchangeably, and we think this is the case here. The foolish person would hardly be speaking confusion “to YHWH”; rather, he would be speaking confusion concerning YHWH, and in this context, probably claiming that YHWH does not demand justice for the poor. Such claims introduce confusion into religion. Notice how the result of such speaking is depicted in the next line: “to push far away a hungry person,” and to “cause drink for a thirsty person to be lacking.”

<sup>34</sup>Slotki’s translation of this line is “to make empty the soul of the hungry,” and Slotki comments that this means “to defraud the poor of their means of subsistence.”

(continued...)

and he will cause drink for a thirsty person to be lacking.<sup>35</sup>

32:7<sup>36</sup> וְכֵלֵי כֵלָיו רְעִים

הוּא זְמוּת יַעַץ

לְחַבֵּל (עֲנָוִים) [עֲנָוִים] בְּאִמְרֵי-שֹׁקֵר

וּבְדַבַּר אֲבִיוֹן מִשְׁפָּט:

And a scoundrel<sup>37</sup>—his tools (are) evil;<sup>38</sup>

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

He adds that “Another rendering is ‘to keep empty,’ preventing the poor from improving their lot.” (P. 151)

Kaiser comments that the foolish person, “when he speaks of Yahweh, what he says is confused and confusing, perverse and untrue...He also ignores the claims of his neighbor by not fulfilling even the most immediate duty of feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty (compare **Isaiah 58:7**; **Ezekiel 18:16**; **Job 22:7**; **Proverbs 25:21-22**; **Psalms 107:9** and **Matthew 25:35ff.**” (P. 324)

<sup>35</sup>It is obvious that what is being condemned in this passage is social injustice, the kind of practices that take no thought for the hungry and the thirsty, putting personal desires for financial gain as more important.

<sup>36</sup>Alexander comments on and translates **verse 7**: “Such is the fool: *and as for the churl*, although his making money be not sinful in itself, *his arms or instruments*, the means which he employs, *are evil*. He that hastens to be rich can scarcely avoid the practice of dishonest arts and of unkindness to the poor. *He deviseth plots to destroy the oppressed (or afflicted) with words of falsehood, and (i.e. even) in the poor (man’s) speaking right (i.e. even when the poor man’s claim is just, or in a more general sense, when the poor man pleads his cause).*” (2, P. 3)

Kaiser comments that “Just as bad [as the foolish person in **verse 6**] is the wicked man who does things in secret which are bound to arouse disgust, such as depriving the poor and the dependent of their rights in court by obtaining their condemnation through his lies, even though their innocence has been demonstrated.” (P. 324)

<sup>37</sup>See our footnote 26 for this noun, כֵּלָי, **khelay**, where it is spelled כִּילֵי, **kiylay**.

<sup>38</sup>Note the assonance in the first two words of this verse: וְכֵלֵי כֵלָיו, **wekhelay kelayw**, our “a scoundrel—his tools,” and Slotki’s “instruments of the churl.”

(continued...)

He counseled plans<sup>39</sup> to ruin poor people<sup>40</sup> with words of falsehood,  
and when (the humble) poor speaks (about) justice!<sup>41</sup>

32:8<sup>42</sup> וְנָדִיב נְדִיבוֹת יַעֲזֵן

וְהוּא עַל-נְדִיבוֹת יִקְוֶם:

And a noble / freely generous person counseled noble / freely generous things;  
and he will stand upon noble / freely generous things.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>38</sup>(...continued)

He notes that by “instruments” is meant “his methods.” (P. 151)

<sup>39</sup>Motyer translates the Hebrew זְמוֹת, **zimmoth** by “evil schemes.” He comments that “Apart from **Job 17:11**, [it] has a uniformly bad meaning. It is used nineteen times of sexual misconduct (e.g. **Leviticus 18:17**) and particularly of planning to get one’s own way at all costs.” (P. 259)

<sup>40</sup>The Masoretes offer two readings: first, the *kethibh*, “what is written,” עֲנָוִים, (**anawiym**, “poor, afflicted, humble, meek”; and second, the *qere*, “to be read,” עֲנִיִּים, (**aniyyiym**, “poor, afflicted, humble.” We think this is simply two different ways of spelling the same plural noun.

<sup>41</sup>Slotki’s translation of this line is “And the needy when he speaketh right,” and Slotki says this means “When he pleads his cause before a tribunal with right on his side.” (P. 151) See our footnote 5 for the noun מִשְׁפָּט, **mishpot**, “justice.”

Watts holds that the literal translation of the line וַיְבַדֵּבֶר אֲבִיוֹן מִשְׁפָּט is “and by a word the needy justice,” but we think it is literally “and in a poor / humble person’s speaking justice.”

Again we see that for Isaiah the nature of evil is lack of concern for the poor, oppression of the poor people in the community.

<sup>42</sup>Alexander comments on and translates **verse 8**: “As the wicked man’s true character is betrayed by his habitual acts, so *the noble* or *generous* man (and according to the Scriptures none is such but the truly good man) reveals his dispositions by his conduct—*devises noble (or generous) things, and in noble (or generous) things he perseveres* (literally, on them he stands).” (2, P. 3)

<sup>43</sup>And while evil is centered in lack of concern for the poor, “good” is centered in the kind of personality that is “noble,” or “freely generous”—in both his care for the poor,

(continued...)

<sup>43</sup>(...continued)

and in the plans which it makes for the future. The good person takes his stand upon a life and plan that is centered in free generosity! See our footnote 254.

Motyer states that “Noble (נְדִיב, **nadhiybh**) means to be liberally outgoing to God (**Exodus 35:5, 22**) and other people (**Proverbs 19:6**).” (P. 259) Yes...but the Proverb doesn’t say he is liberal to other people—it says people seek his favor, and want to make friends with him in order to get gifts!

Again we emphasize, be careful when using proof-texts!

Watts explains the overall meaning of **Isaiah 32:1-8** as being a “civics lesson,” which “gives the hearer / reader the tools to pass judgment on the leaders and their policies described in **chapter 31**. Are ‘those who go to Egypt’ to be termed fools, knaves, or noble men?...Any public that fails to recognize the character of its public officials, that fails to speak out in protest and thus bring about changes in personnel and policy shares the blame for the results. The people of God are often blind, unperceptive, and uncommunicative, not only about the ways of God, but also about the ways of men in leadership and government. When they are so, they stand judged along with the fools and knaves they failed to identify and remove.” (Pp. 413-14)

What do you think? Do you agree that **Isaiah 32:1-8** is a “civics lesson”?

<sup>44</sup>Watts entitles **32:9-20** “Until Spirit Is Poured Out.”

He states that “The episode develops as a dialogue between a speaker and a group of women...They are small-town housewives, economically dependent upon the vineyards and the orchards surrounding the town which witness to generations of skill and labor in planting, tending, and protecting...

“There is no evidence that God is the speaker. The prophet’s justification for the disaster is also absent. There is only the concession that where justice and righteousness abide, peace and stability can be found, which is obviously not the case here.” (P. 416)

Slotki comments on **verses 9-20** that they contain “A threatening address to the frivolous women of Jerusalem (compare the attack on them in **Isaiah 3:16ff.**), followed by a description of the new and prosperous era which will ultimately emerge from the ruin and destruction.” (P. 152)

Oswalt entitles **32:9-20** “Deserted or fruitful.”

He comments that “The prophet here uses direct address to make two points clear: the renewal promised in **verses 1-8** will not come without disaster, but it will

(continued...)

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<sup>44</sup>(...continued)

come and that through the agency of the Divine energy, God's Spirit...

"Two segments can be observed within the passage. The first is covered in **verses 9-14**. It is negative, utilizing agricultural imagery to predict a land desolate and forsaken...The second is positive, in fact diametrically opposite to the foregoing, predicting a day when the land will be inhabited and abundant, because of God's empowerment...

[In these verses] the prophet speaks directly to a group of women who, from the context, are apparently taking part in the harvest festival...G. A. Smith, to a great extent, and other commentators less so, suggests that women are addressed because they are especially prone to complacency and short-sightedness. That suggestion seems to be unwarranted. The whole nation of Israel, males and females alike, were prone to these defects...

"In this case, for reasons not now clear, the women were particular examples of the problem (so also **Amos 6:1**). It may be that Isaiah, having failed to alert the men to the tragedy they were precipitating, turns to the women to try to get them to influence their husbands. At any rate, he warns them that the new day he has spoken of in **verses 1-8** is no warrant for a placid, business-as-usual approach to life." (Pp. 583-84)

Motyer entitles **32:9-14** "Call to hear in the light of immediate and future prospects."

He comments that here the women "are seen as embodiments of the complacency and carelessness which inhibits spiritual concern and urgency...

"*Complacent* is the bad sense of the word שָׁנָן, **sha)anan**, translated *undisturbed* [our 'at ease'] in **verse 18**. It speaks of outward circumstances of ease but, in the present verse, complacently assumed as a perpetual right...Clearly, these are the same women as in **3:16**, with no thought beyond their wardrobes." (P. 259)

Alexander comments on and translates **verse 9**: "Here, as in many other cases, the Prophet reverts to the prospect of approaching danger, which was to arouse the careless Jews from their security. As in **Isaiah 3:16**, he addresses himself to the women of Jerusalem, because to them an invasion would be peculiarly disastrous, and also perhaps because their luxurious habits contributed, more or less directly, to the existing evils [we say, directly!]. *Careless women, arise, hear my voice; confiding daughters, give ear unto my speech.*" (2, P. 3)

Kaiser comments on **verse 9** that "In a way reminiscent of **Genesis 4:23**, and in content, of **Jeremiah 9:19**, and similar too to what we find in the **Book of Isaiah in 28:23**, the women and daughters of Jerusalem, who are described as in **Amos 6:1** as at ease and complacent, are startled out of their calm. They are called upon by someone who seeks, like a singer or a wisdom teacher, to attract their attention in order

(continued...)

שְׁמַעְנָה קוֹלִי  
בְּנוֹת בְּטָחוֹת  
תִּאְזְנֶה אִמְרָתִי:

Women at ease,<sup>45</sup> arise!<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>(...continued)

to tell them of a great misfortune which is to fall upon each and every one of them.” (P. 329)

<sup>45</sup>The plural feminine adjective שְׂאֲנָנוֹת, **sha)anannoth**, means (women who are) “at ease, secure.” The adjective occurs some ten times in the **Hebrew Bible**, at:

**2 Kings 19:28**, where Isaiah speaks YHWH’s words to Sennacherib, who is “at ease”:

Because of your raging against Me,  
and your being at ease came up into My ears—  
and I will place My hook in your nose, and My bridle in your lips;  
and I will bring you back by the way on which you came!

**Isaiah 32:9** (here),

Women at ease, arise!  
Listen to my voice!  
Daughters (who are) trusting / complacent,  
give ear to my speech!

**Isaiah 32:11**,

Tremble, women at ease!  
Quake / shudder, trusting / complacent (daughters)!  
Strip, and make yourself bare--  
and girdle your waists,

**Isaiah 32:18**, where being at east, secure, is YHWH’s intention for His people:

And My people will dwell in a dwelling of peace,  
and in dwelling-places of confidences  
and in places of rest, at east / secure ones.

**Isaiah 33:20**, again, such security and being at east is YHWH’s intention:

(continued...)



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

See Zion, city of our appointed pilgrim-festivals!  
Your eye will see (synonym) Jerusalem,  
a secure / at ease dwelling,  
a tent—it will not travel  
its tent-pegs will not be pulled up to the perpetuity,  
and all its cords will not be torn away.

**Isaiah 37:29**, YHWH's words to Sennacherib (see **2 Kings 19:28** above)

Because of your raging against Me,  
and your being secure / at ease went up into My ears--  
and I will place My hook in your nose,  
and My bridle in your lips,  
and I will cause you to return  
by the way on which you came!

**Amos 6:1**, where the masculine plural adjective, **הַשְּׂאֲנַנִּים**, occurs:

Woe! –to those who are at ease in Zion,  
to those who put their confidence in Samaria's mountain!  
Distinguished leaders of (the) “beginning / first of the nations”!  
to whom Israel's household will come.

**Zechariah 1:15**, where it is a matter of nations that are at ease / secure:

And (with a) great wrath I am angry against the nations, the ones at ease /  
secure;  
against which I, I was angry a little, and they helped for evil.

**Psalms 123:4**, where again the masculine plural adjective, **הַשְּׂאֲנַנִּים**, is used:

Our innermost-being was greatly over-filled by it--  
the mocking of the ones at ease / secure,  
the contempt belonging to proud people!

**Job 12:5**, Job complains that among other things, he will become to the person at  
ease, using the masculine singular adjective, **שְׂאֲנָן**:

A disaster of contempt—to (the) thought of one at ease / secure,  
a blow to those (whose) feet are slipping.

So, “being at ease / secure” is not just something peculiar to women, it is also a  
trait of men, even prominent rulers. But “being at ease / secure” is not a condition only

(continued...)

Listen to my voice!  
Daughters (who are) trusting / complacent,  
give ear to my speech!

32:10<sup>47</sup> יָמִים עַל־שָׁנָה

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

condemned by the biblical writers—it is also depicted as the condition YHWH desires for His people in the good times coming!

And so we have to ask, what is it about the women that are “at ease / secure” that is being condemned? We say, it is the fact that they themselves are at ease / secure, while others in their community are not at all—but rather are being oppressed by those in more comfortable circumstances. What do you think?

Oswalt comments that “While there is nothing inherently wrong with ease and security (as shown by their appearance in **verses 17** and **18**), they are bad when they are based on false premises...If I am at ease because I think I can manipulate God, or because the harvests have been so good, that is a false security which I had better be prepared to lose.

“Isaiah had been attempting to warn the people of this problem, so the sight of a woman totally absorbed in her finery (**3:16-4:1**) or mindlessly fulfilled in a good harvest must have been especially maddening to him.” (Pp. 584-85)

<sup>46</sup>Slotki comments that “The women are exhorted to *rise up* and cast aside their complacency.” (P. 152)

<sup>47</sup>Alexander comments on and translates **verse 10**: “Having called their attention in **verse 9**, [Isaiah] now proceeds with the prediction which concerns them. *In a year and more* (literally, *days above a year*), *ye shall tremble, ye confiding ones, for the vintage fails, the gathering shall not come.*”

Translations of **verse 10** vary slightly:

**King James**, “Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird *sackcloth* upon *your* loins.”

**Tanakh**, “Tremble, you carefree ones! Quake, O confident ones! Strip yourselves naked, Put the cloth about your loins!”

**New Revised Standard**, “Tremble, you women who are at ease, shudder, you complacent ones; strip, and make yourselves bare, and put sackcloth on your loins.”

**New International**, “Tremble, you complacent women; shudder, you daughters who feel secure! Strip off your fine clothes and wrap yourselves in rags.”

**New Jerusalem**, “Shudder, you haughty women, tremble, you over-confident women; strip, undress, put sackcloth round your waists.”

(continued...)

תִּרְגַּזְנָה בַּטְּחֹת

כִּי כִלְהָ בַצִּיר

אֶסֶף בְּלִי יְבוּא:

(Just) days above a year,<sup>48</sup>

you trusting / complacent ones will quake / shudder;  
when grape-harvest is ended,

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

**Rahlfs**, ἡμέρας ἐνιαυτοῦ μνείαν ποιήσασθε ἐν ὀδύνη μετ' ἐλπίδος ἀνήλωται ὁ τρύγητος πέπαυται ὁ σπόρος καὶ οὐκέτι μὴ ἔλθῃ, “Make mention of a day of a year in pain with hope! The vintage has been consumed; the sowing has ceased, and no longer will come!”

<sup>48</sup>Slotki's translation is “after a year and days,” and he states that this means “at the time of the next year's harvest; literally ‘days of over a year.’” (P. 152)

**King James** has “Many days and years”;

**Tanakh** has “In little more than a year”;

**New Jerusalem** has “Within one year and a few days”;

**Rahlfs** has ἡμέρας ἐνιαυτοῦ, “a day of a year.”

Oswalt comments that the phrase **יָמִים עַל־שָׁנָה**, **yamiym (al-shanah**, “Days upon a year is somewhat obscure. Older interpreters generally understood it to refer to a long time of trouble. More recent scholars, however, have concluded that it refers to the length of time until the trouble occurs. In any case ‘year’ seems to define the number of ‘days’ involved. This makes sense in the light of the harvest imagery. ‘You may rejoice now, but what about next year when the harvest fails?’” (P. 585)

Kaiser notes that the phrase “Days to a year” (his translation) “can be understood either as ‘in little more than a year’ or, relating it to the use of *yamim*, ‘days’ with the meaning ‘year’ (compare **Judges 17:10**; **1 Samuel 27:7** and **Isaiah 29:1**) in the sense of ‘in a few years’...Within a period which cannot be exactly foretold, but which is to be fairly short, their calm complacency will come to an end and they will shake with terror—because the sime and fruit harvests cannot take place, the agricultural year will bring nothing.” (P. 329)

Again we observe how the prophetic message is characterized by just such “obscure” words and indefinite phrases, something we should expect in a message rooted in dreams and visions, “seen through a mirror darkly.”

gathering (of grapes) will not come!<sup>49</sup>

32:11<sup>50</sup> חָרְדוּ שְׂאֲנָנוֹת

רְגִזָּה בְּטָחוֹת

פְּשֻׁטָּה וְעֶרְהָ

וַחֲגוּרָה עַל-חֲלָצִים:

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<sup>49</sup>Slotki's translation has "the ingathering shall not come," and he states that this means "The harvest will not be reaped and gathered in." (P. 152) Motyer says it means "will come to nothing." (P. 260)

Kaiser comments that "It remains completely obscure why the fruit harvest will not or cannot take place...All that is really clear is that their fields and the city will be deserted. Thorns and briars will grow upon deserted fields. Wild animals will roam." (P. 330)

<sup>50</sup>Oswalt comments on **verses 11-14** that "The prophet calls the women to begin to mourn for the land about which they now feel so confident. If it is correct that they were engaged in a harvest feast, these words would have been most unwelcome. Particularly in our moments of happiness, we do not like to be reminded that death stares all of us in the face. But it does, and we must not allow present happiness to leave us unprepared to meet it." (P. 585)

Slotki comments on **verse 11** that "The prophet sees the approaching calamities so vividly that he calls upon the women to go at once into mourning." (P. 152)

Alexander comments on and translates **verse 11**: "He now speaks as if the event had already taken place, and calls upon them to express their sorrow and alarm by the usual signs of mourning. *Tremble, ye careless (women); quake, ye confiding (ones); strip you and make you bare, and gird (sackcloth) on your loins.*" (2, P. 3)

Kaiser comments that "**Verse 11** is a very good example of the way in which the Hebrews had to describe bodily reactions when they were referring to emotions. Here we have a description of putting on mourning garments. The stripping naked probably does not refer to taking off everyday garments...much less to taking of all one's clothes. More likely it means a baring of the breast such as seems to be portrayed in the case of the mourning women on the coffin of King Ahiiram of Byblos...The typical mourning garment was the sack, a coarse garment of hair which the mourners wrapped round their loins...

"The poet calls the women to mourn not for the death of their relatives parents, brothers, husbands and children, but for the fields which produced the precious and plentiful harvest." (Pp. 330-31)

Tremble, women at ease / secure!<sup>51</sup>

Quake / shudder, trusting / complacent (daughters)!

Strip, and make yourself bare--<sup>52</sup>

and girdle your waists,<sup>53</sup>

32:12<sup>54</sup> עַל־שָׁדַיִם סֹפְדִים

עַל־שָׁדֵי־חֻמֶּד

עַל־גִּפְּנֵי פְרִיָה:

(striking yourselves) upon (your) breasts,<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Again Isaiah uses the plural feminine adjective שְׂאֲנַנּוֹת, **sha)anannoth**, “(women) at ease / secure.” See footnote 45.

<sup>52</sup>Slotki comments that Isaiah means for the women to strip themselves “of your costly garments.” (P. 152) Probably...but the text does not make this specific.

<sup>53</sup>Slotki holds that the translation “and gird sackcloth upon your loins” is a proper translation, even though the word for “sackcloth” is not in the text. Slotki says that it is “implied.” (P. 152)

<sup>54</sup>Alexander translates / comments on **verse 12**: “*Mourning for the breasts (or beating on the breasts as a sign of mourning) for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine...The older writers explained breasts as a figure for productive grounds or sources of supply.*” (2, p. 4)

Oswalt states that “It appears that it was typical for women in the ancient Near East to bare their breasts in mourning and to put sackcloth about their waists. For pictorial evidence, see Pritchard’s **Ancient Near East in Pictures**, #'s 459, 634 and 638.” (P. 585)

<sup>55</sup>Slotki states that women striking their breasts was “a mourning custom.” (P. 152)

Translations of this phrase, עַל־שָׁדַיִם סֹפְדִים, (al-shadhayim sophedhiym vary, from “They shall lament for the teats,” to “Lament upon the breasts,” to “Beat the breasts.”

Oswalt translates by “Upon the breasts, moaning,” and states that this “presents serious difficulties, all of which center upon the verb סֹפְדִים, **sophedhiym**. The

(continued...)

wailing / lamenting over pleasant fields,  
over vine(s) making fruit!<sup>56</sup>

32:13<sup>57</sup> עַל אֲדָמַת עַמִּי

קוֹץ שָׁמִיר תִּעֲלֶה

כִּי עַל-כָּל-בֵּיתִי מְשׁוֹשׁ

קָרְיָה עֲלִיזָה:

Over my people's ground<sup>58</sup>

thorn (and) thorn-bush (synonym) grow up!

Because over all houses of rejoicing / exultation,

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<sup>55</sup>(...continued)

versions unanimously translate it with 'smite,' but the Hebrew usage does not seem to include this meaning, only 'wail' or 'moan' being attested...

"The general sense is clear. The present confidence and security are only transitory. They will shortly be replaced by other emotions entirely...when all temporal sources of joy are removed." (P. 586)

Rahlfs translates the entire **verse 12** by καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν μαστῶν κόπτεσθε ἀπὸ ἀγροῦ ἐπιθυμήματος καὶ ἀμπέλου γενήματος, "And upon the breasts strike / beat, from a desired field and a vine of fruit." NETS has "and beat your breasts for a desired field and for a fruitful vine."

<sup>56</sup>Slotki says the reason for mourning is that the pleasant fields "are lying in ruins," and evidently the same thing is true of "the fruitful vine." As the next verse goes on to say, the former "pleasant fields" and the "fruitful vine" have now become the home of thorns and briars.

<sup>57</sup>Alexander translates / comments on **verse 13**: "Upon the land of my people thorn (and) thistle shall come up, for (they shall even come up) upon all (thy) houses of pleasure, O joyous city! Or, upon all houses of pleasure (in) the joyous city."

<sup>58</sup>Oswalt translates this line by "the land of my people," and he comments that it "makes it expressly plain that just because the Israelites might be called the people of God, they do not have some sort of mechanical claim over Him. The good land, a source of joy and abundance, could grow up in thorns and briars as quickly as any other if its people were out of harmony with God." (P. 586)

of a city of jubilation—<sup>59</sup>

32:14<sup>60</sup> כִּי־אֶרְמוֹן נָטַשׁ

הַמִּזֵּן עִיר עֲזָב

עֵפֶל וּבַחַן

הִיָּה בְעַד מְעָרוֹת עַד־עוֹלָם

מִשׁוֹשׁ פְּרָאִים

מִרְעֵה עֲדָרִים:

Because a citadel / palace was forsaken,

a noisy crowd of a city deserted;

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<sup>59</sup>We are confused as to the connection of these last two lines of **verse 13**. According to **King James**, they mean that thorns and briars are coming up on the houses of joy in the joyous city: “(shall come up thorns *and* briars) yea, upon all the houses of joy *in* the joyous city.” According to others, the lines mean to mourn for the house of joy and for the joyous city. As **New International** puts it: “yes, mourn for all houses of merriment and for this city of revelry.” But the phrase “mourn for” is being interpolated into the text. **Rahfs** has καὶ ἐκ πάσης οἰκίας εὐφροσύνη ἀρθήσεται πόλις πλουσία, “and out of every house joy will be taken. A wealthy city...”

<sup>60</sup>Alexander translates / comments on **verse 14**: “*For the palace is forsaken, the crowd of the city (or the crowded city) left, hill and watch-tower (are) for caves (or dens) for ever, a joy (or favorite resort) of wild asses, a pasture of flocks.*”

“The use of the word *palace* [אַרְמוֹן, ‘citadel,’ ‘castle,’ ‘palace’], and that in the singular number, clearly shows that the destruction of Jerusalem itself is here predicted.” (2, P. 4)

Oswalt comments on **verse 14** that “The climax of the mourning is reached in this verse. Why the mourning? Because the city of God will be empty...”

“Commentators have long puzzled over how the references to ‘Hill’ (Hebrew, עֵפֶל, (**ophel**), the spur of the hill upon which the temple rests, and to the ‘Tower’ could be [above] caves. Furthermore, how could flocks pasture in caves?...”

“But this is to take the passage too literally, As in **chapter 2**, the point is that the supposedly high...will be cast down, become its opposite number, before the Lord comes in power to save His people.” (Pp. 586-87)

hill<sup>61</sup> and watch-tower<sup>62</sup>

became useful as<sup>63</sup> caves for long-lasting time,<sup>64</sup>  
a rejoicing of wild donkeys,  
a pasture for flocks.

32:15<sup>65</sup> עֲרֵיעֶרָה עֲלֵינוּ רוּחַ מְמָרוֹם

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<sup>61</sup>Alexander comments that עֲפֹל, (**ophel** “originally means a hill, but is applied as a proper name (‘Ophel’) to the southern extremity of mount Moriah, overhanging the spot where the valleys of Jehoshaphat and Hinnom meet. ‘The top of the ridge is flat, descending rapidly towards the south sometimes by offsets of rock; the ground is tilled and planted with olive and other fruit-trees.’” (Robinson’s **Palestine**, I, pl. 394)

<sup>62</sup>Slotki’s translation of the phrase עֲפֹל וְבֵחַן is “The mound and the tower,” and Slotki comments that “Hebrew עֲפֹל [(**ophel**), literally ‘swelling,’ was the name given to the walled citadel in Jerusalem...It and its watch-tower will be deserted and become the lair of beasts.” (P. 153) Compare:

**Nehemiah 3:26-27**, in its description of those rebuilding the wall:

- 26 And the Nethinim were living in Ophel--  
(they took hold) as far as (the area) opposite the Water Gate to the  
east, and the projecting tower.
- 27 After him (? them) the people of Teqoah took hold of a double section (of the  
wall),  
from (the area) opposite the great projecting tower, and as far as the  
wall of Ophel.

<sup>63</sup>We translate בְּעַד, **bhe(adh** by “as.” Alexander observes that “Most writers seem to make בְּעַד here mean ‘instead of.’” (3, P. 4) **Brown-Driver-Briggs** holds that the word is actually a noun meaning “separation,” but “in usage a preposition, meaning ‘away from,’ ‘behind,’ ‘about,’ ‘on behalf of.’” Here in **Isaiah 32:14** these lexicographers suggest the meaning “on behalf of,” i.e. “take the place of,” “serve as” caves for ever, but state that this “use is singular.”

<sup>64</sup>Slotki’s translation of עַד-עוֹלָם is “for ever,” but Slotki corrects it, stating that the real meaning is “for a long time, its end being predicted in the next verse.” (P. 153) Yes!

<sup>65</sup>Oswalt comments on **verses 15-20** that “There is now a shift from the prophecy of warning (**verses 9-14**) to a prophecy of salvation. The promised kingdom will come.

(continued...)



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<sup>65</sup>(...continued)

There will be peace and security. But it will come only through Divine initiative and empowerment after the bankruptcy of human effort has been made plain...

“The reader will notice a change of emphasis from **verses 9-14**. There the emphasis was wholly material. Here that imagery is maintained, but there is a spiritual note added which suggests that the ultimate mark of God’s blessing is not good crops or secure [status] but righteous lives and just dealings...

“Isaiah, having demonstrated the tenuousness of security based on this world, here shows both the source and the means of security which lasts. All this is directly in line with the central question of **chapters 7-39**: in whom (or in what) do you trust?” (P. 587)

Kaiser entitles **32:15-20** “The Gifts of the Spirit.”

He comments that this passage is “the work of a scribe who wished to encourage the community to look beyond the distress of the imminent final age to the time of salvation which would follow, when the Spirit of God would transform this earth into a paradise and would finally teach men to live together in righteousness and in peace, thus bringing an end to the sufferings of Israel in history...

“The agricultural realism of his hopes is immediately evident in the concluding verse, which makes clear both that the age of salvation will be a time of fruitfulness, of the righteousness of peace, but will nevertheless be a reality in which work itself continues...

“[The passage] constantly borrows the very words of other prophecies of salvation, particularly from the **Book of Isaiah**. The last verse, however, brings a comparatively original feature...

“It was composed in a late post-exilic Hellenistic period. The experience of post-exilic Judaism underlying it, that we men cannot bring about our own salvation, but are dependent upon the Spirit of God Who brings salvation about, ought not to be dismissed without further thought at a period in which even Christians are dominated by confidence in man’s technical ability to control the future and to improve the world by education. Precisely because this text does not in the end exclude human activity it leads us to consider the difference between the future of our salvation which is in the hands of God, and the possible improvements in human society which we are called upon to make.” (Pp. 332-33)

Motyer entitles **32:15-18** “The Spirit and the new society.” He comments that “The reversals of **verses 13-14** are not final; an even greater reversal awaits, through the promised agency of the Divine Spirit...

(continued...)

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<sup>65</sup>(...continued)

“There will be a new earth (**verse 15bc**), new absolutes in a new society (**verses 16-17**) and new security of tenure (**verse 18**).” (P. 260)

But where in the text is a “new earth” mentioned, or “new absolutes in a new society”? There is nothing new about YHWH’s demand for righteousness and justice! And where is anything said about a “new security of tenure”? YHWH has always been leading His people to a “place of rest,” to security, to a “secure home”! We think Motyer’s comments here are at best inadequate.

Alexander comments on and translates **verse 15**: “The desolation having been described in **verse 14** as of indefinite duration, this verse states more explicitly how long it is to last. *Until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is reckoned to the forest.*”

“The general meaning evidently is, until by a special Divine influence, a total revolution shall take place in the character, and as a necessary consequence in the condition, of the people. The attempt to restrict it to the return from exile, or the day of Pentecost [**Acts 2**], or some great effusion of the Spirit on the Jews still future, perverts the passage by making that its whole meaning which at most is but a part. For the meaning of the figures, see the exposition of **Isaiah 29:17**. In this connection they would seem to denote nothing more than total change, whereas in the other case the idea of an interchange appears to be made prominent.” (3, Pp. 4-5)

Alexander seems to say if you disagree with his interpretation, you are guilty of “perverting the passage”! But the very nature of the prophetic message is that it is filled with puzzling enigmas, and it is the passage itself that gives rise to differing interpretations. Jewish scholars can quickly respond that Alexander and his fellow Christian interpreters are “perverting” the message of Isaiah.

We say, because of our backgrounds, and different overall assumptions, we look at the prophetic message through differing lenses. But in addition, there is the fact that the prophetic message is based on dreams and visions that are oftentimes hazy at best, not at all clear-cut and “face-to-face” in nature. What did you expect to find when you first began to read the **Book** or **Vision of Isaiah**? Did you expect it to be clear-cut, easily understandable, little more than a series of predictions of the coming of Jesus Christ? Did you realize how difficult it is to translate from the original Hebrew into English? And did you have any idea of how many differing interpretations there would be?

The fact is, we believe, that the **Book of Isaiah** is one of the greatest literary productions in history—now some 2700 years old, studied and translated in most of humanity’s languages, offering hope and guidance to people throughout the world. The early church “fathers” called the **Book of Isaiah** “the fifth Gospel”—but we say today that it is not the “fifth Gospel”—it is the “first Gospel.”

(continued...)

וְהָיָה מְדַבֵּר לְכַרְמֶל  
(וְכַרְמֶל) [וְהַכַּרְמֶל] לִיעֵר יַחֲשָׁב:

Until (the) Spirit from on high will be poured out on us,<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>(...continued)

Still, we affirm that its message is filled with obscurity and puzzle, and it is a disservice to pretend that this is not so—or to assume with Alexander that one interpretation is the “true” interpretation, while all others are false. We say, welcome to the real world of Isaiah—to a prophetic message that is oftentimes anything but clear and obvious, but that is still filled with dynamic teaching and guidance that we and our world desperately need! Welcome to the search! Come, learn to sing the Song of Isaiah! It can transform our lives and our theologies if we are willing!

Kaiser comments on **verse 15** that “The pouring out of the Spirit, an imparting of Divine power which no opposing force can resist, is therefore a characteristic of the age of salvation. It brings about miraculous increase in the vital force of Israel (compare **Isaiah 44:3-4**) and bestows upon the people of God either obedience, without which there can be no salvation (compare **Ezekiel 36:26-27**, and also **Ezekiel 39:29**), or else a direct relationship to God such as the prophets possess (compare **Joel 3:1-2<sup>Heb</sup> / 2:28-29<sup>Eng</sup>**.” (P. 334)

Yes...but the prediction of **Joel** says nothing of a “direct relationship to God”—it only predicts the outpouring of the Spirit enabling everyone to speak for God like the prophets—who did not, like Moses, have a direct relationship to God (i.e. “Face-to-face”), but rather a relationship based on dreams and visions, and a prophetic message characterized by puzzling ambiguities. The outpouring of the Spirit will enable the people of God to have similar dreams and visions to those of the prophets—but not a “direct relationship to God.”

<sup>66</sup>Oswalt comments that “In the **Old Testament** there is a developing understanding of the *Spirit* of God. In many cases the term is used impersonally, analogously to the human spirit. Thus it is used as an hypostasis [Greek: ὑπόστασις is the underlying state or underlying substance and is the fundamental reality that supports all else. But hypostasis is a very difficult term to understand, and we are not sure what Oswalt means by it] for the immanent, empowering, energizing activity of God...

“The identity of the Spirit became more and more explicit [in the **Old Testament**]. In any case, the outpouring of the Spirit became a central facet of the **Old Testament** hope. If God’s people were ever to share His character, an outcome devoutly to be hoped for, then it would have to come about through an infusion of God’s Spirit into human beings...

(continued...)

and a desert will be for the garden,<sup>67. 1</sup>

and the garden will be considered for the forest.<sup>68</sup>

32:16<sup>69</sup> וְשָׁכַן בַּמִּדְבָּר מִשְׁפָּט

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

“So long as human beings usurp ultimate rule of their lives, there is impotence, unrighteousness, and dependence upon the very forces which would destroy us. It is only when we come to the end of ourselves and acknowledge God’s right to rule our lives that we can experience the Divine empowerment for righteousness.” (Pp. 587-88)

<sup>67</sup>Oswalt translates by “the desert will become as a fertile field,” and comments that “The figure is of abundance. What was formerly useless for crops will become fertile, while what was fertile will become a veritable jungle. When the creative energy of God is let loose the results are always astonishing.” (P. 588) For a modern statement concerning Israel’s “Negev” southern area, see our end-note 1.

<sup>68</sup>Slotki notes that these last two lines of **verse 15** are to be compared with **Isaiah 29:17**,

Is it not still a little, a trifle (time),  
and Lebanon will return to (being) the garden?  
And the garden will be considered for the forest?

<sup>69</sup>Kaiser comments on **verses 16-18** that “**Verse 16** may be intended simply to emphasize that there will be no end to the new fruitfulness, since for **Old Testament** thought fruitfulness and the righteousness of men are linked (compare **Psalm 72; Isaiah 11:1-9**)...Here a complete correspondence is intended between fruitfulness and righteousness...

“[The author] thinks first of the new possibility of life bestowed by God and then of the new human society set up in the midst of a transformed nature, a society now characterized by righteousness...

“Only then does he turn to consider, in **verse 17**, the effects of righteousness, consisting of the free and untroubled existence and unhindered progress of men, animals and fields, in all-embracing peace and prosperity, *shalom*, and secondly in the quiet confidence of men towards their God (compare **Isaiah 30:15**) and security in the relationship between men and their fellow men, men and animals, and animals and other animals (compare **Ezekiel 34:25ff.; Deuteronomy 33:28** and **Isaiah 11:1-9**)...

“Thus Israel, referred to here as in **verse 13** as ‘my / My people,’ will in the end be able to dwell in peace, unconcern and security, a situation which in the period before the beginning of the final threat to Jerusalem and the Holy Land could only be imagined as a present reality if one deceived oneself.” (Pp. 334-35)

(continued...)

וְצִדְקָה בְּכַרְמֵל תֵּשֵׁב:

And justice will dwell in the desert,<sup>70</sup>

and right-relationship in the garden will dwell (synonym).<sup>71</sup>

32:17<sup>72</sup> וְהָיָה מִעֲשֵׂה הַצְּדָקָה שְׁלוֹם

וְעִבְרַת הַצְּדָקָה הַשְּׂקֵט

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<sup>69</sup>(...continued)

Alexander translates **verse 16**: “*And justice shall abide in the wilderness, and righteousness in the fruitful field shall dwell.*”

He comments that “This may either mean, that what is now a wilderness and what is now a fruitful field, shall alike be the abode of righteousness, i.e. of righteous men; or that both in the cultivation of the desert and in the desolation of the field the righteousness of God shall be displayed.” (2, P. 5)

<sup>70</sup>Slotki comments that if justice is going to dwell in the wilderness, “i.e., even in the wilderness, much more so in the inhabited places.” (P. 153)

<sup>71</sup>That is, the land will be filled with justice and righteousness—the two characteristics so necessary for the king and princes—see **verse 1**.

Oswalt comments that “The true abundance will be in matters of the spirit. From the prophet’s perspective, Judah’s national life has been a desert. Righteousness and justice have withered away as people have abandoned God’s ways to pursue their own advantage and comfort. This abandonment has led to oppression of the poor and the establishment of a very questionable foreign policy. In effect, Judah has cut herself off from the Source of her life. But in the days to come, when she is once again in touch with that Source, God’s righteousness will be hers in abundance.” (P. 588) Well said!

<sup>72</sup>Alexander comments on and translates **verse 17**: “As the foregoing verse describes the effect of the effusion of the Spirit to be universal righteousness, so this describes the natural and necessary consequence of righteousness itself. *And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness rest and assurance (or security) for ever.*” (3, P. 5)

Motyer comments that “This *righteousness*, therefore, which has peace, rest and security as its outcome, is more than moral integrity; it is the righteousness of being right with God.” (P. 261) He refers to **Genesis 15:16 [15:6]**, where Abram’s belief is considered “righteousness.” We think a much better understanding of “righteousness” in the **Book of Isaiah** is to be found in **Isaiah 58**, where righteousness means being right with fellow human beings, especially those who are suffering. See the next footnote.

וּבִטָּח עַד-עוֹלָם:

And (the) product of the righteousness will be peace;<sup>73</sup>

and (the) service<sup>74</sup> of the righteousness--to be quiet,<sup>75</sup>, <sup>2</sup>

and security<sup>76</sup>, <sup>3</sup> until long-lasting time.

32:18<sup>77</sup> וַיֵּשֶׁב עַמִּי בְנוֹה שְׁלוֹם

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<sup>73</sup>How can there be peace in this warring, hate-filled world? Isaiah states that peace is the product of righteousness. We say there is no better definition of righteousness than that found in **Isaiah 58**, which is so similar to the teaching attributed to Jesus in **Matthew 25:31-46**. That means, peace can only be achieved when people learn to care for one another, especially for those who are hurting and in need, becoming servants, “suffering servants,” bearing the sins of others, as described in **Isaiah 53**. Those who practice righteousness will live in a city of peace—see the next verse.

Oswalt comments on **verse 17** that “It is this abundant righteousness which will produce true peace. As Young points out, this is a distinctively Isaianic concept and appears in both parts of the **book**.” (P. 588) He appeals to **Isaiah 9:5**<sup>Heb</sup> / **6**<sup>Eng</sup>, which only states that the child / son born to us with his marvelous names will be call “Prince of Peace,” and **Isaiah 59:8-9**, which only bewails the lack of righteousness and justice, not by any means the same teaching as here in **Isaiah 32:17-18**. It is claims like this made by Young that have caused us to question his treatment of the **Book of Isaiah**, although in some instances we have found his work to be helpful.

<sup>74</sup>In these first two lines of **verse 17**, the words מַעֲשֵׂה, **ma(aseh** “deed,” “work,” is parallel to עֲבֹדָה, (**abhodhah**, “labor,” “service.” Alexander comments that “Both מַעֲשֵׂה and עֲבֹדָה strictly denote ‘work,’ or rather that which is wrought, the product of labor.” (3, P. 5) We agree. Genuine “righteousness” that results in “peace,” demands hard work, effort. It may even result in the loss of life of those committed to its practice. But it is the only way human beings can come to live in peace! See the next footnote.

<sup>75</sup>For this matter of “being quiet,” see our end-note 1.

<sup>76</sup>For occurrences of the noun בִּטָּח in the **Hebrew Bible**, see our end-note 2.

<sup>77</sup>Alexander translates **verse 18**: “*And my people shall abide in a home of peace, in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.*”

(continued...)

וּבְמִשְׁכָּנֹת מְבֹטָחִים

וּבְמִנוּחַת שְׁאֲנָנוֹת:

And My people will dwell in a pasture / habitation of peace,<sup>78</sup>

and in dwelling-places of confidences<sup>79</sup>

and in places of rest,<sup>80</sup> 4 secure ones.<sup>81</sup> 5

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<sup>77</sup>(...continued)

He comments that “There is something tranquilizing in the very sound of this delightful promise, which, as usual, is limited to God’s Own people, implying either that all should have become such, or that those who had not should be still perturbed and restless.” (3, P. 5)

And we ask, Who are “God’s Own people” in the light of **Genesis 1-10**, and its doctrine of Creation by the one God? Does not all humanity belong to God as His creature? Is it only the Jews, or only the Christians, i.e., “Trinitarian Christians” or “Protestant Christians,” or “Bible-Believing Christians,” or “those belonging to my church”?

Aside from this question, we observe that this promise of “rest” and “peace,” and “quiet resting-places” is integral to the biblical hope—it is what YHWH wanted for Israel, and it is what He wants for all His people. See in the **New Testament, Hebrews 3:1-4:13**, the passage on which I wrote my PhD Dissertation entitled “Rebellion, Rest, and the Word of God.”

<sup>78</sup>Yes, YHWH wants His people to dwell **בְּנוֹהַ שְׁלוֹם**, **binweh shalom**, in a “pasture / habitation / city of peace”—where the noise of war is silenced, where there is security. It is the dwelling-place of righteousness and justice, resulting in peace! This is powerful teaching in the midst of oftentimes puzzling, difficult statements.

<sup>79</sup>Where the previous phrase had a singular noun, **נוֹהַ**, **naweh**, “abode of shepherd,” “habitation,” here two plural nouns are combined, **מִשְׁכָּנֹת מְבֹטָחִים**, **mishkenoth mibhtachiyim**, “dwelling-places of confidences.” We take the plurals to mean, not just the isolated individual, but throughout the habitation / city.

<sup>80</sup>Again a plural phrase occurs: **וּבְמִנוּחַת שְׁאֲנָנוֹת**, **ubhimenuchoth sha)anannoth** “and in resting-places at ease / secure ones.” Just as Isaiah depicts the future habitations as being filled with confidence, he emphasizes this with a synonymous phrase—the people will have resting-places in which they will be secure, at ease. Who doesn’t want a future like that?

(continued...)

<sup>80</sup>(...continued)

The noun מְנוּחָה, **menuchah** “resting-place,” occurs some 21 times in the Hebrew Bible. For these occurrences, see our end-note 3.

<sup>81</sup>The plural adjective here, שְׂאֲנַנּוֹת, **sha)anannoth**, means the resting-places are “at east,” or “secure.” For its occurrences in the **Hebrew Bible** see our end-note 4.

<sup>82</sup>Motyer entitles **32:19-20** “Epilogue: humiliation and blessedness.” He comments that “This is an epilogue recapitulating the abrupt transition from disaster to blessing with which this ‘woe’ began...Both judgment and glory lie ahead and now is the time to choose.” (P. 261)

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 19**: “*And it shall hail in the downfall of the forest* (i.e. so as to overthrow it), and the city shall be low in a low place (or *humbled with humiliation*), i.e. utterly brought down. If this be read as a direct continuation of the promise in **verse 18**, it must be explained as a description of the downfall of some hostile power, and accordingly it has been referred by most interpreters to Nineveh...Others, thinking it more natural to assume one subject here and in **verse 13**, regard this as another instance of prophetic recurrence from remoter promises to nearer threats; as if he had said, Before these things can come to pass, the city must be brought low...

“Most interpreters, however, seem to fall into the usual error of regarding as specific and exclusive what the Prophet himself has left unlimited and undefined. However natural and probable certain applications of the passage may appear, the only sense which can with certainty be put upon it, is that some existing power must be humbled, either as a means or as a consequence of the moral revolution which had been predicted.” (3, pp. 5-6)

Oswalt comments on **verse 19** that “This verse breaks in abruptly. It may be understood in one of three ways:

- (1) It is a promise of the destruction of Assyria...
- (2) It speaks of the destruction of Israelite pride which must accompany the restoration of righteousness...
- (3) It is, coupled with **verse 20**, a promise that despite shocks and upheavals around about, God will spare His people...

“On balance, the second alternative seems most likely, especially in view of **verse 14**. The promise of Assyrian destruction would certainly fit the tone of the

(continued...)



## וּבִשְׁפֹלָה תִשְׁפַּל הָעִיר:

And it will hail when the forest<sup>83</sup> goes down;

and in the humiliation the city<sup>84</sup> will be humiliated / laid low.

32:20 אֲשַׁרְיֶכֶם זֶרְעֵי עַל-כָּל-מַיִם

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<sup>82</sup>(...continued)

segment, but there is nothing in the immediate context to point to such an understanding.” (Pp. 588-89)

Motyer, however chooses the first alternative: “The falling *forest*...is the cutting down of Assyria, and the humiliated *city* is the Jerusalem of **verses 12-14**. In the ultimate future, the *forest* is the given world infected by human sin and falling under judgment...and the *city* is life organized by human being without God...Only those who come to terms with the wrath of God can enter the promised glory.” (P. 261)

Kaiser states that “**Verse 19** has caused commentators much bewilderment, because it consists entirely of allusions. It has actually been proposed to relate it to the events prophesied in **verses 13-14** and to see the forest as the wildness, haughtiness and pride displayed in Judea; together with Jerusalem these will be annihilated in the imminent Divine judgment...More recently, **verse 19** has been regarded as a very general antithesis to the statements in the two previous verses: although forest fall and cities decline, Judah will nevertheless be protected henceforth from natural catastrophes and from enemies...

“We must retain the interpretation suggested long ago, that the forest destroyed by the hail is in fact the enemy army, which has overwhelmed the city of God...while the city itself is the world capital which is the source of all hostility towards the people of God and the city of God...As long as the world power, or, as we can put it, the world powers triumph, there can no hope of the peace to which the apocalyptic author and his community look forward, and not they alone, but all men.” (Pp. 335-36)

These differences and uncertainties of the interpreters is rooted in the fact that the prophetic message is not clear, “face-to-face” revelation, but rather revelation coming through visions and dreams, with their accompanying puzzling, enigmatic elements. W/e think the last two verses of **chapter 32** certainly display this nature!

<sup>83</sup>Watts comments that “The *forest* is clearly a metaphor which must refer to the larger political or economic unit, whether the kingdom or the empire. Either could fit here. Assyria is on its last legs and the Kingdom of Judah is experiencing its last real existence or prosperity under Josiah.” (P. 417)

<sup>84</sup>Watts comments that “The *city* may refer to Jerusalem or simply to the culture that is based on city-states. The villages and their prosperity were dependent on what was happening in the surrounding world, whether they knew it or not.” (P.417)

## מִשְׁלַחַי רְגַל-הַשּׂוֹר וְהַחֲמֹר: :מִשְׁלַחַי רְגַל-הַשּׂוֹר וְהַחֲמֹר:

O your blessedness--those sowing upon / beside all waters,  
sending forth / setting free the ox's foot and the donkey.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Alexander translates **verse 20**: “*Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth the foot of the ox and the ass.*”

He comments that “The allusion in this verse is supposed by some to be to pasturage, by others to tillage...[Some apply] the words to the practice of treading the ground by the feet of cattle before planting rice, [others] to the act of setting them at liberty from the rope with which they were tied by the foot...”

“There is still more diversity of judgment with respect to the application of the metaphor. [Some understand] it as contrasting those who lived at liberty on the sea-side or by rivers, with theirs who were pent up and besieged in cities; [others] suppose a particular allusion to the case of those who had escaped with their possessions from Jerusalem, [or] apply it to the happy condition of the people in the days of the Messiah [etc. etc.]...”

“Taking the whole connection into view, the meaning of this last verse seems to be, that as great revolutions are to be expected, arising wholly or in part from moral causes, they alone are safe, for the present and the future, who with patient assiduity [diligence] perform what is required; and provide, by the discharge of actual duty, for contingencies which can neither be escaped, nor provided for in any other manner.” (3, p. 6)

Oswalt comments that “However **verse 19** is to be understood, this verse closes the segment with a figure of unremitting blessing which stems from nearness to sources. Those who plant their crops on the banks of streams have no fear of crop failure. In fact, they can even let their livestock loose to crop the first growth, so abundant will the plants be. So it will be for God's people when they learn that the Source of spiritual abundance is in God.” (P. 589)

Motyer states that in **verse 20**, “This pastoral scene recalls the Messianic motifs of **30:23-26**, where cattle range free and mountaintops run with water. Sowing crops and tending beasts is the life of those who have home and tenure in such a land.” (P. 261)

Watts says that “This last verse looks almost with envy at those who have little to lose, who are not bound to houses and fields. They can move to avoid danger, can exist in almost any circumstances, and can simply drive their assets (ox and ass) to another place to start over again. That is difficult for the landowner and planter.” (P. 417)

(continued...)

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<sup>85</sup>(...continued)

Kaiser states that **verse 20**, “In an image which is instantly clear to a farmer he gives yet another picture of the age of salvation, when the seed will grow in such profusion beside the waters which now flow abundantly (compare **Isaiah 30:23ff.**) that the draught animals which would otherwise have been fed in their stalls can be allowed to walk across the fields and pasture there, an idea which is clearly meant to go beyond **30:24.**” (P. 336)

Are not these radically differing interpretations a clear demonstration of the puzzling, enigmatic nature of the prophetic message—at the close of a very powerful and important passage?

Watts explains the overall meaning of **Isaiah 32:9-20**: “The episode warns of a coming disaster that will wipe out a way of life. The women, looking about them at the homes and fields that make up their lives, see only peace, tranquility, and prosperity. They presume that this implies that justice and righteousness have brought this about and will continue to guarantee their future...

“They are examples of the blind, deaf, and uncomprehending people that the **[Book of Isaiah]** has complained about throughout. It is hard, in the midst of plenty, to imagine hunger. It is hard, in the setting of economic and social order, to imagine chaos and disruption.

“Yet the earlier episodes have pictured wrong-headed political policies and major international upheavals in the making. No interior small town, no matter how isolated, will escape the resulting problems...The failure to see beneath the surface the things that were anything but just and righteous constituted culpable blindness.

“Civilized and developed societies can be comfortable and efficient, but they are also very vulnerable. Loss of some basic services can threaten life itself. Those who had never come to depend on those services or structures survive very nicely without them. They are to be envied in the time of disaster.” (P. 418)

## 1. **Israel's Negev, Southern Area**

“Having poor soil conditions, a harsh climate, rugged terrain, little fresh water, and a small population, the Negev was largely ignored during modern Israel's first four decades. It did, however, have some influential supporters, among them David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister.

“When diplomats were determining the boundaries of the Jewish and Arab states in 1947 and 1948, Ben-Gurion was resolute in his conviction that the Negev, the southern third of the land, be part of the Jewish state. Though it was considered uninhabitable, he knew the new state's growth depended on this region. He also had faith that the desert could be cultivated and turned into a place where Jews could settle and prosper. More than 50 years later, his vision has been realized -- Israeli farmers have overcome arid land conditions to grow prize-winning tomatoes, olives, wine, and a host of other fruits, vegetables and flowers.

“Israel's population, fueled by immigration, is projected to grow from the current 7.3 million to 9.2 million by 2025. This increasing population trend creates many challenges for Israel: Where will people live? Can Israel provide enough food to meet its growing nutritional needs? And, most important, is there enough fresh water to meet Israel's needs while sharing sufficient water with its Arab neighbors? Because of its scarcity, fresh water is becoming the most important resource in the Middle East, and its management a war or peace issue.

“Israeli desert agricultural research has concentrated on developing new technologies that enable farmers to use brackish (salty) water for agricultural irrigation, something which had never been done before in any other place in the world. The Negev Desert has very little fresh water but an almost unlimited underground supply of brackish water, now used extensively for agriculture. Since brackish water is abundant in most desert areas of the world, the Israeli techniques have broad international applications. Ongoing research for further development is critical.” (From the Internet, “Agriculture in the Negev,” 4/4/2018)

### **Desalination of Water in Israel**

“July 19, 2016 — Ten miles south of Tel Aviv, I stand on a catwalk over two concrete reservoirs the size of football fields and watch water pour into them from a massive pipe emerging from the sand. The pipe is so large I could walk through it standing upright, were it not full of Mediterranean seawater pumped from an intake a mile offshore.

“Now, that's a pump!’ Edo Bar-Zeev shouts to me over the din of the motors, grinning with undisguised awe at the scene before us. The reservoirs beneath us contain several feet of sand through which the seawater filters before making its way to a vast metal hangar, where it is transformed into enough drinking water to supply 1.5 million people.

“We are standing above the new Sorek desalination plant, the largest reverse-osmosis desalination facility in the world, and we are staring at Israel’s salvation. Just a few years ago, in the depths of its worst drought in at least 900 years, Israel was running out of water. Now it has a surplus. That remarkable turnaround was accomplished through national campaigns to conserve and reuse Israel’s meager water resources, but the biggest impact came from a new wave of desalination plants.

“Bar-Zeev, who recently joined Israel’s Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research after completing his postdoctoral work at Yale University, is an expert on biofouling, which has always been an Achilles’ heel of desalination and one of the reasons it has been considered a last resort. Desalination works by pushing saltwater into membranes containing microscopic pores. The water gets through, while the larger salt molecules are left behind. But microorganisms in seawater quickly colonize the membranes and block the pores, and controlling them requires periodic costly and chemical-intensive cleaning. But Bar-Zeev and colleagues developed a chemical-free system using porous lava stone to capture the microorganisms before they reach the membranes. It’s just one of many breakthroughs in membrane technology that have made desalination much more efficient. Israel now gets 55 percent of its domestic water from desalination, and that has helped to turn one of the world’s driest countries into the unlikeliest of water giants.

“Driven by necessity, Israel is learning to squeeze more out of a drop of water than any country on Earth, and much of that learning is happening at the Zuckerberg Institute, where researchers have pioneered new techniques in drip irrigation, water treatment and desalination. They have developed resilient well systems for African villages and biological digesters that can halve the water usage of most homes.

“The institute’s original mission was to improve life in Israel’s bone-dry Negev Desert, but the lessons look increasingly applicable to the entire Fertile Crescent. ‘The Middle East is drying up,’ says Osnat Gillor, a professor at the Zuckerberg Institute who studies the use of recycled wastewater on crops. ‘The only country that isn’t suffering acute water stress is Israel.’

“That water stress has been a major factor in the turmoil tearing apart the Middle East, but Bar-Zeev believes that Israel’s solutions can help its parched neighbors, too — and in the process, bring together old enemies in common cause.

“Bar-Zeev acknowledges that water will likely be a source of conflict in the Middle East in the future. ‘But I believe water can be a bridge, through joint ventures,’ he says. ‘And one of those ventures is desalination.’

“In 2008, Israel teetered on the edge of catastrophe. A decade-long drought had scorched the Fertile Crescent, and Israel’s largest source of freshwater, the Sea of Galilee, had dropped to within inches of the “black line” at which irreversible salt infiltration would flood the lake and ruin it forever. Water restrictions were imposed, and many farmers lost a year’s crops.

“Their counterparts in Syria fared much worse. As the drought intensified and the water table plunged, Syria’s farmers chased it, drilling wells 100, 200, then 500 meters (300, 700, then 1,600 feet) down in a literal race to the bottom. Eventually, the wells ran dry and Syria’s farmland collapsed in an epic dust storm. More than a million farmers joined massive shantytowns on the outskirts of Aleppo, Homs, Damascus and other cities in a futile attempt to find work and purpose.

“And that, according to the authors of ‘Climate Change in the Fertile Crescent and Implications of the Recent Syrian Drought,’ a 2015 paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, was the tinder that burned Syria to the ground. ‘The rapidly growing urban peripheries of Syria,’ they wrote, ‘marked by illegal settlements, overcrowding, poor infrastructure, unemployment, and crime, were neglected by the Assad government and became the heart of the developing unrest.’

“Similar stories are playing out across the Middle East, where drought and agricultural collapse have produced a lost generation with no prospects and simmering resentments. Iran, Iraq and Jordan all face water catastrophes. Water is driving the entire region to desperate acts.

“Except Israel. Amazingly, Israel has more water than it needs. The turnaround started in 2007, when low-flow toilets and showerheads were installed nationwide and the national water authority built innovative water treatment systems that recapture 86 percent of the water that goes down the drain and use it for irrigation — vastly more than the second-most-efficient country in the world, Spain, which recycles 19 percent.

“But even with those measures, Israel still needed about 1.9 billion cubic meters (2.5 billion cubic yards) of freshwater per year and was getting just 1.4 billion cubic meters (1.8 billion cubic yards) from natural sources. That 500-million-cubic-meter (650-million-cubic-yard) shortfall was why the Sea of Galilee was draining like an unplugged tub and why the country was about to lose its farms.

“Enter desalination. The Ashkelon plant, in 2005, provided 127 million cubic meters (166 million cubic yards) of water. Hadera, in 2009, put out another 140 million cubic meters (183 million cubic yards). And now Sorek, 150 million cubic meters (196 million cubic yards). All told, desalination plants can provide some 600 million cubic meters (785 million cubic yards) of water a year, and more are on the way.

“The Sea of Galilee is fuller. Israel’s farms are thriving. And the country faces a previously unfathomable question: What to do with its extra water?

“Inside Sorek, 50,000 membranes enclosed in vertical white cylinders, each 4 feet high and 16 inches wide, are whirring like jet engines. The whole thing feels like a throbbing spaceship about to blast off. The cylinders contain sheets of plastic membranes wrapped around a central pipe, and the membranes are stippled with pores less than a hundredth the diameter of a human hair. Water shoots into the cylinders at a pressure of 70 atmospheres and is pushed through the membranes, while the remaining brine is returned to the sea.

“Desalination used to be an expensive energy hog, but the kind of advanced technologies being employed at Sorek have been a game changer. Water produced by desalination costs just a third of what it did in the 1990s. Sorek can produce a thousand liters of drinking water for 58 cents. Israeli households pay about US \$30 a month for their water — similar to households in most U.S. cities, and far less than Las Vegas (US \$47) or Los Angeles (US \$58).

“The International Desalination Association claims that 300 million people get water from desalination, and that number is quickly rising. IDE, the Israeli company that built Ashkelon, Hadera and Sorek, recently finished the Carlsbad desalination plant in Southern California, a close cousin of its Israel plants, and it has many more in the works. Worldwide, the equivalent of six additional Sorek plants are coming online every year. The desalination era is here.

“What excites Bar-Zeev the most is the opportunity for water diplomacy. Israel supplies the West Bank with water, as required by the 1995 Oslo II Accords, but the Palestinians still receive far less than they need. Water has been entangled with other negotiations in the ill-fated peace process, but now that more is at hand, many observers see the opportunity to depoliticize it. Bar-Zeev has ambitious plans for a Water Knows No Boundaries conference in 2018, which will bring together water scientists from Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza for a meeting of the minds.

“Even more ambitious is the US \$900 million Red Sea–Dead Sea Canal, a joint venture between Israel and Jordan to build a large desalination plant on the Red Sea, where they share a border, and divide the water among Israelis, Jordanians and the Palestinians. The brine discharge from the plant will be piped 100 miles north through Jordan to replenish the Dead Sea, which has been dropping a meter per year since the two countries began diverting the only river that feeds it in the 1960s. By 2020, these old foes will be drinking from the same tap.

“On the far end of the Sorek plant, Bar-Zeev and I get to share a tap as well. Branching off from the main line where the Sorek water enters the Israeli grid is a simple spigot, a paper cup dispenser beside it. I open the tap and drink cup after cup of what was the Mediterranean Sea 40 minutes ago. It tastes cold, clear and miraculous.

“The contrasts couldn’t be starker. A few miles from here, water disappeared and civilization crumbled. Here, a galvanized civilization created water from nothingness. As Bar-Zeev and I drink deep, and the climate sizzles, I wonder which of these stories will be the exception, and which the rule. (Rowan Jacobsen Author specializing in food, sustainability and natural systems) (from the Internet, “Agriculture in the Negev,” 4 / 4/ 2018)

2. Passages in the Hebrew Bible Using the Verb שָׁקַט, shaqat, “To Be Quiet,”  
with Reference to Lands, Peoples, Cities and Individuals

**Joshua 11:23,**

And Joshua took all the land,  
according to all that YHWH spoke to Moses.  
And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel,  
according to their allotments, to their tribes.

וְהָאָרֶץ שָׁקְטָה מִמִּלְחָמָה:  
And the land was quiet from war.

**Joshua 14:15c,**

וְהָאָרֶץ שָׁקְטָה מִמִּלְחָמָה:  
And the land was quiet from war.

**Judges 3:11a,**

וַתִּשְׁקַט הָאָרֶץ אַרְבַּעַיִם שָׁנָה  
And the land was quiet (for) forty years.

**Judges 3:30b,**

וַתִּשְׁקַט הָאָרֶץ שְׁמוֹנִים שָׁנָה:  
And the land was quiet (for) eighty years.

**Judges 5:31c,**

וַתִּשְׁקַט הָאָרֶץ אַרְבַּעַיִם שָׁנָה:  
And the land was quiet (for) forty years.

**Judges 8:28c,**

וַתִּשְׁקַט הָאָרֶץ אַרְבַּעַיִם שָׁנָה  
בְּיָמַי גִּדְעוֹן:  
And the land was quiet (for) forty years,  
in Gideon’s days.

**Judges 18:7b-d,** a people is described as living in Laish:

יֹשְׁבֵי-לָבֵטַח כְּמִשְׁפַּט צְדָנִים



שָׁקֵט וּבֵטֵחַ  
וְאִין־מְכָלִים דְּבַר בְּאֶרֶץ  
יִרְשׁ עֶצֶר

dwelling securely, after (the) manner of the Sidonians,  
being quiet and trusting / unsuspecting,  
and there was no one humiliating / causing lack of anything in the land--  
possessing wealth...

**Judges 18:27d**, a similar description of the people of Laish

עַם שָׁקֵט וּבֵטֵחַ  
a people being quiet and trusting / unsuspecting...

**2 Kings 11:20a**, after the death of Athaliah, the people of Judah are described:

וַיִּשְׂמַח כָּל־עַם־הָאָרֶץ  
וְהָעִיר שָׁקֵט  
and all the land's people rejoiced,  
and the city was quiet...

**Isaiah 7:4b-d**, Isaiah is to tell King Ahaz:

הַשְׁמֵר וְהַשְׁקֵט  
אַל־תִּירָא  
וְלִבְבְּךָ אַל־יִרֶךְ  
Be guarded, and show quietness;  
do not be afraid;  
and your heart shall not be timid...

**Isaiah 14:7**, In the good times coming, when Babylon's King has fallen, Israel's remnant will sing:

נָחָה  
שָׁקֵטָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ  
פְּצָחוּ רְנָה:  
It was at rest;  
it became quiet, all the land / earth--  
they broke forth (with) a ringing cry.

**Isaiah 30:15**,

כִּי כֹה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 בְּשׁוּבָה וְנַחַת תּוֹשְׁעוֹן  
 בְּהַשְׁקֵט וּבְבִטְחָה תִּהְיֶה גְבוּרַתְכֶם  
 וְלֹא אֲבִיתֶם:

Because in this way my Lord YHWH, Set-apart One of Israel, spoke:  
 In returning and rest you (plural) will be saved / delivered;  
 in being quiet and in trust will be your strength.  
 And you were not willing.

**Isaiah 32:17,**

וְהָיָה מַעֲשֵׂה הַצְּדָקָה שְׁלוֹם  
 וְעִבְרַת הַצְּדָקָה הַשְׁקֵט  
 וּבִטְחַ עַד־עוֹלָם:

And (the) product of the righteousness will be peace;  
 and (the) service of the righteousness--to be quiet,,  
 and security until long-lasting time.

**Isaiah 57:20,**

וְהָרָשָׁעִים כַּיָּם נִגְרָשׁ  
 כִּי הַשְׁקֵט לֹא יוּכַל

וַיִּגְרָשׁוּ מִיָּמִיו רַפֵּשׁ וְטִיט:  
 And the wicked people (are) like the driven sea,  
 because it is not able to be quiet.  
 And its waters cast out mire and mud!

**Jeremiah 30:10b,**

וְשָׁב יַעֲקֹב  
 וְשָׁקֵט וְשָׁאֵן

וְאֵין מַחֲרִיד:  
 And Jacob shall return,  
 and will be quiet and at ease,  
 and there is no one terrifying! **Jeremiah 46:27**, identical;

**Jeremiah 48:11,**

שָׁאֵן מוֹאָב מִנְעוּרָיו

וְשָׁקֵט הוּא

Moab was at ease from his youth,  
and he was being quiet...(upon his lees)

**Jeremiah 49:23b**, Hamath and Arpad,

בַּיַּם דְּאֲנָה

הַשָּׁקֵט לֹא יוּכַל:

...in the sea, anxious care;  
to be quiet it is not able.

**Ezekiel 16:49**, the sin of Sodom:

הִנֵּה-זֶה הָיָה עֵוֹן סֹדֶם אֲחוֹתֶךָ

גִּאּוֹן שְׁבַעַת-לֶחֶם

וְשִׁלוֹת הַשָּׁקֵט הָיָה לָהּ

וְלִבְנוֹתֶיהָ

וַיִּדְעֵנִי וְאֲבִיוֹן

לֹא הִחֲזִיקָה:

Look—this was Sodom, your sister's iniquity:  
exaltation / pride, plenty of bread,  
and there was ease of quietness for her  
and for her daughters;  
and (the) hand of (the) poor and needy  
she did not take strong hold of!

**Ezekiel 38:11**, where YHWH puts words into Gog's mouth:

וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלַיָּה עַל-אֶרֶץ פְּרוּזוֹת

אֲבוֹא הַשָּׁקֵטִים יֹשְׁבֵי לְבַטַּח

כֻּלָּם יֹשְׁבִים בְּאֵין חוֹמָה וּבְרִיחַ

וְדַלְתֵיהֶם אֵין לָהֶם:

And you will say, I will go up upon a land of open regions / hamlets;  
I will come (upon) the quiet ones, dwelling securely,  
all of them dwelling without wall and (gate-) bar(s),  
and doors / gates they do not have!

**Zechariah 1:11b**, those sent to patrol the earth, tell of their findings:

וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַתְּהַלְכֵנוּ בָאֶרֶץ

וְהִנֵּה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ יֹשֶׁבֶת וְשָׁקֵטָה:

and they said, we have walked to and fro in the earth,  
and look—all the earth is dwelling and being quiet!

**Psalm 76:9<sup>Heb</sup> / 8<sup>Eng</sup>**

מִשָּׁמַיִם הִשְׁמַעְתָּ דִּין

אָרֶץ יִרְאֶה וְשָׁקֵטָה:

From heavens You caused judgment to be heard;  
earth feared and was quiet--

**Psalm 83:2<sup>Heb</sup> / 1b<sup>Eng</sup>**

אֱלֹהִים אֶל-דְּמִי-לֶךְ

אֶל-תַּחֲרֹשׁ

וְאֶל-תַּשְׁקֹּט אֵל:

O God, do not (let there be) silence for You!  
Do not be silent,  
and do not be quiet, O Supreme God!

**Psalm 94:13**, YHWH will teach and discipline a person,

לְהַשְׁקִיט לוֹ מִיְמֵי רַע

עַד יִכְרֹה לְרָשָׁע שַׁחַת:

to give quiet to him from days of evil,  
until a pit will be dug out for the wicked person!

**Job 3:13**, Job wishes he had been stillborn,

כִּי-עַתָּה שָׁכַבְתִּי

וְאֶשְׁקֹט

וְשָׁנְתִי

אִזּוֹ יִנּוּחַ לִי:

Because now, I (would have) laid down,  
and I would be quiet;  
I (would have) slept—  
then it would cause me rest,

**Job 3:26**,

לֹא שְׁלוֹתַי  
 וְלֹא שְׁקֵטִי  
 וְלֹא-נַחְתִּי  
 וַיִּבֵּא רָגֶז:

I was not at rest,  
 and I was not quiet;  
 and I did not rest (synonym),  
 and raging / agitation came!

**Job 34:29,**

וְהוּא יִשְׁקֵט  
 וּמִי יִרְשָׁע  
 וַיִּסְתֵּר פָּנָיו  
 וּמִי יִשׁוּרְנוּ  
 וְעַל-גּוֹי  
 וְעַל-אָדָם יַחַד:

\*And He will show quietness,  
 and who will condemn (Him) as guilty?  
 \*And He will hide appearances,  
 and who will behold Him?  
 \*And (He)–over a nation,  
 and over humanity together!

**Job 37:17,** Elihu is describing the wondrous works of El / Eloah to Job:

אֲשֶׁר-בְּגָדֶיךָ חֹמִים  
 בְּהַשְׁקֵט אֶרֶץ מִדְּרוֹם:

(You [Job], whose garments (are) hot,  
 when He causes quietness of earth from (the) south--

**Proverbs 15:18,**

אִישׁ חֵמָה יַגְרִה מִדּוֹן  
 וְאָרֶךְ אֲפָיִם יִשְׁקֵט רִיב:

A man / person of rage will stir up strife;  
 and length of noses / long-suffering / patience will quieten a dispute.

**Ruth 3:18,** where Naomi tells Ruth,

וַתֹּאמֶר שְׁבִי בְתִי  
 עַד אֲשֶׁר תִּדְעִין אֵיךְ יִפֹּל דָּבָר  
 כִּי לֹא יִשְׁקֹט הָאִישׁ  
 כִּי־אִם־כֹּלֵה הַדָּבָר הַיּוֹם:

And she said, Stay (here), my daughter,  
 until you know how the matter will fall (out).  
 For the man will not be at rest  
 until he has completed the matter today!

**1 Chronicles 4:40a**, where it is said concerning the descendants of Simeon:

וַיִּמְצְאוּ מְרֻעָה שֶׁמֶן וְטוֹב  
 וְהָאָרֶץ רַחֲבַת יָדַיִם  
 וְשָׁקֵטָה וְשָׁלוֹה

and they found rich / fat and good pasture,  
 and the land wide of hands / very broad,  
 and was being quiet and at ease...

**2 Chronicles 13:23b**,

וַיִּמְלֹךְ אֲסָא בְנוֹ תַחְתּוֹ  
 בְּיָמָיו שָׁקֵטָה הָאָרֶץ עֶשְׂרֵי שָׁנִים:

and Asa his son reigned in his place.  
 In his days the land was quiet (for) ten years.

**2 Chronicles 14:4-5<sup>Heb</sup> / 5-6<sup>Eng</sup>**, describing Asa's reign:

וַתִּשְׁקֹט הַמְּמַלְכָּה לְפָנָיו:  
 ...and the kingdom was quiet before him / in his presence.

כִּי־שָׁקֵטָה הָאָרֶץ  
 וְאִין־עָמּוֹ מִלְחָמָה בְּשָׁנִים הָאֵלֶּה

כִּי־הִנִּיחַ יְהוָה לוֹ:  
 ...because the land was quiet,  
 and there was not war with him in these years,  
 because YHWH gave him rest.

**2 Chronicles 20:30**,

וַתִּשְׁקֵט מַלְכוּת יְהוֹשָׁפָט  
וַיִּנַּח לוֹ אֱלֹהָיו מִסְבִּיב:

And Jehoshaphat's kingdom was quiet;  
And his God gave rest to him all around.

**2 Chronicles 23:21a**, following the death of Athaliah--

וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ כָּל-עַם-הָאָרֶץ  
וַהֲעִיר שָׁקֵטָה

And all the land's people rejoiced,  
and the city was quiet...

3. Occurrences of the noun בִּטָּח, betach in the Hebrew Bible

Genesis 34:25b, Dinah's brothers, were filled with rage...

וַיִּבְּאוּ עַל־הָעִיר בִּטָּח  
וַיַּהֲרֹגוּ כָּל־זָכָר:

...and they came upon the city security / securely.

(The noun בִּטָּח, **betach** is literally “trust,” or “security,” but it is almost always used as an adverb, “securely,” or “trustingly,” and oftentimes means “dwelling securely,” with no danger threatening.)

Leviticus 25:18-19,

18 וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי  
וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ  
וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם  
וַיֵּשְׁבֶתֶם עַל־הָאָרֶץ לְבִטָּח:

And you (plural) shall do My statutes;  
and My commandments you shall keep,  
and you shall do them,  
and you will dwell upon the land to the security / securely!

19 וְנָתַנָּה הָאָרֶץ פְּרִיָּהּ  
וְאָכַלְתֶּם לְשָׂבַע  
וַיֵּשְׁבֶתֶם לְבִטָּח עֲלֶיהָ:

And the land will give its fruit,  
and you shall eat to the fullness;  
and you shall dwell to the security / securely upon it!

Leviticus 26:5b, with the overflowing harvests that YHWH will give,

וְאָכַלְתֶּם לַחֲמֻכָּם לְשָׂבַע  
וַיֵּשְׁבֶתֶם לְבִטָּח בְּאֶרְצְכֶם:

...and you (plural) shall eat your bread / food to the fullness;  
and you shall dwell to the security / securely in your land!

Deuteronomy 12:10,

וְעִבְרֹתֶם אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן  
וַיֵּשְׁבֶתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ



אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִנְחִיל אֶתְכֶם  
וְהֵנִיחַ לָכֶם מִכָּל־אֹיְבֵיכֶם מִסְבִּיב

וַיִּשְׁבְּתֶם־בְּטַח:

And you (plural) shall cross over the Jordan.

And you shall dwell in the land,  
which YHWH your God is causing you people to inherit.

And He will give you rest from all your enemies from around (you);  
and you shall dwell security / securely!

**Deuteronomy 33:12a**, in Moses' final blessing on the tribes of Israel, he says

לְבִנְיָמִן אָמַר

יְדִיד יְהוָה

יִשְׁכֵּן לְבֶטַח עָלָיו

To Benjamin he said,

Beloved of YHWH,

he will dwell to the security / securely upon it / Him...

**Deuteronomy 33:28a**,

יִשְׁכֵּן יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטַח

Israel settled security / securely...

**Judges 8:11b**, in the story of Gideon...

וַיִּךְ אֶת־הַמַּחֲנֶה

וְהַמַּחֲנֶה הָיָה בְטַח:

And he (Gideon) struck the camp;

and the camp was (feeling) security / secure.

(I.e., not realizing that an enemy was coming.)

**Judges 18:7**, as the tribe of Dan moved north,

וַיֵּלְכוּ חֲמִשָּׁתַּת הָאֲנָשִׁים

וַיָּבֹאוּ לְיִשָּׁה

וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת־הָעַם אֲשֶׁר־בְּקִרְבָּהּ

יּוֹשְׁבֵת־לְבֶטַח

כְּמִשְׁפַּט צְדָנִים

שֶׁקָּטַו וּבְטַח

וַאִין־מְכַלִּים דָּבַר בְּאַרְיָן  
 יוֹרֵשׁ עֵצֶר  
 וַרְחֻקִים הָמָּה מְצַדְנִים  
 וְדַבֵּר אִין־לָהֶם עִם־אָדָם:

And the five men went,  
 and they came to Laish.  
 And they saw the people who were in its midst,  
 dwelling to the security / securely,  
 according to (the) manner of Sidonians,  
 being quiet and trusting / being secure.  
 And there was no humbling matter in the land—  
 possessing wealth,  
 and they were being distant from (the) Sidonians.  
 And there was not a matter (for dispute) with (any) human.

**1 Samuel 12:11**, in Samuel's farewell address, he says:

וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֶת־יִרְבֵּעַל וְאֶת־בְּדָן  
 וְאֶת־יִפְתָּח וְאֶת־שָׁמוּאֵל  
 וַיַּצֵּל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד אִיְבֵיכֶם מִסָּבִיב  
 וַתֵּשְׁבוּ בְטָח:

And YHWH sent Yerubba(al and Bedhan,  
 and Jephthah and Samuel;  
 and He delivered you (plural) from (the) hand of your enemies from (all) around;  
 and you dwelt security / securely.

**1 Kings 5:5<sup>Heb</sup> / 4:25<sup>Eng</sup>**,

וַיֵּשְׁבוּ יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְבָטָח  
 אִישׁ תַּחַת גִּפְנוֹ וְתַחַת תְּאֵנָתוֹ  
 מִדָּן וְעַד־בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע  
 כָּל יְמֵי שְׁלֹמֹה:

And Judah and Israel dwelt to the security / securely,  
 each man beneath his vine and beneath his fig-tree,  
 from Dan and as far as Beersheba—  
 all Solomon's days.

**Isaiah 14:30**, a part of Isaiah's message to Philistia:

וְרָעוּ בְּכוֹרֵי דָלִים

וּבְיֹנִים לְבַטַּח יִרְבְּצוּ  
וְהַמְתִּי בְרֵעֵב שְׂרִשְׁף  
וְשִׂאֲרִיתֶךָ יִהְרָג:

And first-born ones of poor (weak) people will graze / feed,  
and poor (needy) people will lie down in safety.  
And / but I will put your root to death with the sword,  
and your remnant it will kill!

**Isaiah 32:17,**

וְהָיָה מַעֲשֵׂה הַצְּדָקָה שְׁלוֹם  
וְעִבְדַּת הַצְּדָקָה הַשְׁקֵט  
וּבְטַח עַד-עוֹלָם:

And (the) product of the righteousness will be peace;  
and (the) service of the righteousness--to be quiet,,  
and the security until long-lasting time.

**Isaiah 47:8,**

וְעַתָּה שְׁמְעִי-זֹאת עֲדִינָה

הַיּוֹשֶׁבֶת לְבַטַּח  
הָאֹמְרָה בְּלִבָּהּ  
אֲנִי וְאֶפְסִי עוֹד  
לֹא אֲשֵׁב אֶלְמָנָה  
וְלֹא אֲדַע שְׂכּוֹל:

And now, listen to this, pleasure-lover,  
who sits (enthroned) securely,  
the one who says in her heart,  
I (am), and no other;  
I will not sit a widow,  
and I will not know loss of children!

**Jeremiah 23:6,** the coming king in David's line:

בִּימֵי תוֹשֵׁעַ יְהוּדָה  
וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵן לְבַטַּח

זֶה־שְׁמוֹ אֲשֶׁר־יִקְרָאוּ  
יְהוָה | צְדִקְנוּ:

And in his days, Judah will be delivered / saved;  
and Israel will settle down / dwell for the security / securely.  
And this (is) his name by which He will call him:  
YHWH Our Righteousness!

**Jeremiah 32:37,**

הֲנִי מִקְבְּצֵם מִכָּל־הָאָרְצוֹת  
אֲשֶׁר הִדַּחְתִּים שָׁם  
בְּאַפִּי וּבַחֲמָתִי וּבִקְצָף גָּדוֹל  
וְהִשְׁבֹּתִים אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה  
וְהִשְׁבֹּתִים לְבֵטַח:

Look at Me—gathering them from all the lands  
where I thrust them out,  
in My anger and in the rage of Mine, and in great wrath;  
and I will bring them back to this place;  
and I will cause them to dwell for the security / securely!

**Jeremiah 33:16,**

בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם תִּוָּשַׁע יְהוּדָה  
וִירוּשָׁלַם תִּשְׁכֹּן לְבֵטַח  
זֶה אֲשֶׁר־יִקְרָא־לָהּ  
יְהוָה | צְדִקְנוּ:

In those days, Judah will be saved / delivered,  
and Jerusalem will settle down / dwell for the security / securely.

And this (is) what he will call to it—  
YHWH (is) Our Righteousness!

**Jeremiah 49:31,** Divine instructions for Nebuchadnezzar:

קוּמוּ עָלַי אֱלֹהֵי שָׁלִי  
יוֹשֵׁב לְבֵטַח  
נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
לֹא־דֹלֵתִים וְלֹא־בְרִיחַ לוֹ

בָּרָד יִשְׁכְּנוּ:

Arise! Go up to / against a nation at ease,  
one dwelling for the security / securely--  
(it is) a saying of YHWH--  
he has no doors / gates, and no (gate-)bar(s)--  
all alone they dwell!

**Ezekiel 28:26**, In the good times coming, when Israel is returned from exile, they will dwell in their own land,

וַיֵּשְׁבוּ עָלֶיהָ לְבֶטַח  
וּבְנוּ בָתִּים וְנָטְעוּ כִרְמִים  
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ לְבֶטַח  
בְּעֲשׂוֹתַי שְׁפָטִים  
בְּכֹל הַשְּׂאֲטִים אֲתֵם מִסְבִּיבוֹתֵם  
וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:

And they will dwell upon it for the security / securely.  
And they will build houses and will plant vineyards.  
And they will dwell for the security / securely,  
when I make / do judgments  
against all the ones hating them from (all) around them.  
And they will know that I (am) YHWH their God!

**Ezekiel 30:9**,

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יֵצְאוּ מַלְאָכִים מִלְּפָנַי בְּצִיִּים  
לְהַחְרִיד אֶת־כּוּשׁ בְּטַח  
וְהִיְתָה חִלְחֵלָה בָּהֶם בַּיּוֹם מִצְרַיִם  
כִּי הִנֵּה בָּאָה:

On that day messengers / angels will go out from before me in the ships  
to terrify Cush / Ethiopia (dwelling) security / securely.  
And the anguish will be on them in Egypt's day,  
because look—it is coming!

**Ezekiel 34:25**, in the good times coming,

וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם  
וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי חֵיהָ־רָעָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ

וַיִּשְׁבוּ בְּמִדְבַּר לְבֶטֶח  
וַיִּשְׁנוּ בְּיַעֲרִים:

And I will cut for them a covenant of peace / welfare;  
and I will cause evil beast(s) to cease from the land.  
And they will live in the wilderness for the security / securely;  
and they will sleep in the forests.

**Ezekiel 34:27**, in those good times coming,

וְנָתַן עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה אֶת־פְּרִיֹו  
וְהָאָרֶץ תִּתֵּן יְבוּלָהּ  
וְהָיוּ עַל־אֲדָמָתָם לְבֶטֶח  
וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה  
בְּשִׁבְרֵי אֶת־מַטּוֹת עַלֵּם  
וְהִצַּלְתִּים מִיַּד הָעֹבְדִים בָּהֶם:

And the field's tree will give its fruit,  
and the land will give its produce;  
and they will be upon their land for the security / securely.  
And they will know that I (am) YHWH,  
when I break (the) bars of their yoke.  
And I will deliver them from (the) hand of those enslaving them.

**Ezekiel 34:28**,

וְלֹא־יִהְיוּ עוֹד בְּזֵל לַגּוֹיִם  
וְחַיַּת הָאָרֶץ לֹא תֹאכְלֵם

וַיִּשְׁבוּ לְבֶטֶח

וְאִין מִחֲרִיד:

And they will not again be an object of plunder for the nations;  
and the land's beast(s) will not devour them;  
and they will live for the security / securely,  
with no one making them afraid.

**Ezekiel 38:8**,

מִיָּמִים רַבִּים תִּפְקֹד  
בְּאַחֲרֵית הַשָּׁנִים תָּבוֹא אֶל־אָרֶץ  
מִשׁוּבְּבַת מִחֲרָב

מִקְבֻצַּת מַעַמִּים רַבִּים  
עַל הַרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֲשֶׁר־הָיוּ לְחֶרֶבָה תָּמִיד  
וְהָיָא מַעַמִּים הוֹצֵאתָהּ  
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ לַבֶּטַח כָּלֵם:

From / after many days, you will be visited / mustered.  
At (the) end of the years you (singular) will come to a land,  
returned from (the) sword,  
gathered together from many peoples,  
upon Israel's mountains—  
which were for a continual desolation—  
And it (the returned people) was brought out from peoples,  
and they will dwell for the security / securely, all of them!

**Ezekiel 38:11,**

וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלֶּיהָ עַל־אֶרֶץ פְּרוֹזוֹת  
אָבוּא הַשְׁקֵטִים יֹשְׁבֵי לַבֶּטַח  
כָּלֵם יֹשְׁבִים בְּאֵין חוֹמָה וּבְרִיחַ  
וְדִלְתִים אֵין לָהֶם:

And you [Gog] will say, I will go up upon a land of open regions / hamlets;  
I will come (upon) the quiet ones, dwelling securely,  
all of them dwelling without wall and (gate-) bar(s),  
and doors / gates they do not have!

**Ezekiel 38:14,**

לְכֵן הִנְבֵּא בֶן־אָדָם  
וְאָמַרְתָּ לְגוֹג  
כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה  
לְכֵן הִנְבֵּא בֶן־אָדָם  
וְאָמַרְתָּ לְגוֹג  
כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה  
הֲלוֹא בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה  
בְּשֹׁבֶת עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַבֶּטַח תִּדְעֶ:

Therefore, prophesy son of a human!  
And you shall say to Gog,  
In this way my Lord YHWH spoke:

Will you not on the that day  
when My people Israel is dwelling for the security / securely, know?

Ezekiel 39:6,

וְשַׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּמַגּוּג  
וּבְיֹשְׁבֵי הָאֲיִלִּים לְבִטָּח  
וְיָדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה:

And I will throw fire on Magog,  
and on (the) inhabitants of the islands for the security / securely.  
And they will know that I (am) YHWH!

Ezekiel 39:26,

וְנָשׂוּ אֶת־כָּל־מַתָּם  
וְאֶת־כָּל־מַעֲלָם אֲשֶׁר מַעַלְוֵי־בִי  
בְּשִׁבְתָּם עַל־אֲדַמְתָּם לְבִטָּח  
וְאֵין מַחְרִיד:

And they shall take up / carry / forgive their reproach,  
and all their treachery which they practiced against Me,  
when they dwell upon their ground / land for the security / securely,  
and there is no one causing fear--

Hosea 2:20,

2:20<sup>Heb</sup> / 18<sup>Eng</sup>

וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית בְּיוֹם הַהוּא  
עִם־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה  
וְעִם־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם  
וְרִמַּשׁ הָאֲדָמָה  
וְקִשְׁת וְחֶרֶב וּמִלְחָמָה  
אֲשַׁבֵּר מִן־הָאָרֶץ  
וְהִשְׁכַּבְתִּים לְבִטָּח:

And I will cut for them a covenant in that day,  
with the field's wild beast(s),  
and with the heavens' bird(s),  
and creeping things of the ground;  
and bow and sword and war  
I will break in pieces from the earth / land;



and I will cause them to lie down for the security / securely!

**Micah 2:8**, the phrase appears

מֵעֹבְרִים בְּטַח שׁוֹבֵי מִלְחָמָה:

from those passing by for the security / securely, returning from war.

**Zephaniah 2:15**, prophecy against Nineveh:

זֹאת הָעִיר הַעֲלִיזָה׃  
הַיּוֹשֶׁבֶת לְבֹטָח  
הָאֹמְרָה בְּלִבָּהּ  
אֲנִי וְאֶפְסֵי עוֹד  
אֵיךְ הִיתָה לְשֹׁמֵה  
מִרְבִּץ לְחַיָּה  
כֹּל עוֹבֵר עָלֶיהָ יִשְׂרָק  
יִנְיַע יָדָיו׃

This—the city, the jubilant one—  
the one dwelling for the security / securely,  
the one saying in her heart,  
I, and no other(?!)  
How she became for a waste / horror,  
a sleeping-place for the wild animal!  
Everyone passing by her will hiss—  
he will shake his fist!

**Zechariah 14:11**,

וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בָהּ  
וְחָרָם לֹא יִהְיֶה-עוֹד  
וַיֵּשְׁבֶה יְרוּשָׁלַם לְבֹטָח׃

And they shall dwell in it;  
and there will not again be a ban (of destruction);  
and Jerusalem shall dwell for the security / securely.

**Psalms 4:9**<sup>Heb</sup> / **8**<sup>Eng</sup>

בְּשָׁלוֹם יִחְדְּוּ אֲשַׁכְּבָה וְאֵינֶן  
כִּי-אַתָּה יְהוָה לְבָדָד לְבֹטָח תּוֹשִׁיבֵנִי׃

In peace I will both go to bed and sleep--  
for You, YHWH alone,  
will cause me to live for the security / securely!

**Psalm 16:9,**

לְכֹן׃ שִׁמַּח לִבִּי  
וַיִּגַּל כְּבוֹדִי  
אֶף־בְּשָׂרִי יִשְׁכַּן לְבִטָּח׃  
Therefore my heart was glad,  
and my glory / abundance rejoiced.  
Surely my flesh will live for the security / securely!

**Psalm 78:53,**

וַיִּנַּחֵם לְבִטָּח  
וְלֹא פָחַדוּ  
וְאֶת־אוֹיְבֵיהֶם כָּסָה הַיָּם׃  
And He guided them to the security,  
and they were not afraid.  
And their enemies, the sea covered.

**Job 11:18,** Zophar tells Job that if he will seek Eloah / Shaddai, and repent,

וּבִטַּחְתָּ  
כִּי־יֵשׁ תִּקְוָה  
וְחִפְרָתָּ  
לְבִטָּח תִּשְׁכַּב׃  
And you will be confident,  
because there is hope;

and you shall search;  
in the security / securely you will lie down.

**Job 24:23,**

יִתֵּן־לוֹ לְבִטָּח  
וַיִּשְׁעַן  
וְעֵינָיָהוּ עַל־דַּרְכֵיהֶם׃  
He will give to him for the security,

and he will be supported;  
and His eyes (will be) upon their ways.

**Proverbs 1:33,**

וְשָׁמַעַ לִי יִשְׁכַּן בְּטֶחַח  
וְשֵׁאֲנֵן מִפֶּחַח רָעָה:  
And one who listens to me, shall live securely;  
and at ease from fear of evil!

**Proverbs 3:23,**

אִז תֵּלֵךְ לְבִטָּח בְּדַרְכֶּךָ  
וְרַגְלֶךָ לֹא תִגְוֶה:  
Then you will walk for the security / securely (on) your way,  
and your foot will not stumble.

**Proverbs 3:29,**

אַל-תִּתְחַרַּשׁ עַל-רֵעֶךָ רָעָה  
וְהוּא-יֹושֵׁב לְבִטָּח אִתָּךְ:  
You shall not devise over / against your neighbor evil,  
and he is dwelling for the security / securely with / beside you.

**Proverbs 10:9,**

הוֹלֵךְ בְּתָם  
יֵלֵךְ בְּטָח  
וּמַעֲקֹשׁ דַּרְכָּיו  
יִדָּע:  
One walking in the integrity / completeness  
will walk securely;  
and one twisting his ways  
will be known / found out.

4. Occurrences of the Noun מְנוּחָה, “Place of Rest,” in the Hebrew Bible

Genesis 49:15, where Jacob says of his son Issachar:

וַיֵּרָא מְנוּחָה כִּי טוֹב  
וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ כִּי נְעִמָּה  
וַיִּט שְׂכָמוֹ לְסִבְלָה  
וַיְהִי לְמַסְעֵבֶד:

And he saw a resting-place, that (it was) good,  
and the land, that (it was) pleasant.  
And he stretched / inclined his shoulder to bear (a load),  
and he was / became (part of) those serving in forced-labor!  
(We say, not a very good “resting-place”!)

Numbers 10:33,

וַיִּסְעוּ מִהַר יְהוָה  
דֶּרֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים  
וְאָרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה נֹסֵעַ לִפְנֵיהֶם  
דֶּרֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים  
לְתוֹר לָהֶם מְנוּחָה:

And they pulled out from YHWH’s mountain,  
a three-days journey.  
And (the) chest / ark of YHWH’s covenant was pulling out before them,  
a three-days journey,  
to seek out / spy out a resting-place for them.  
(Here, the “resting-place” means a “stopping-place” on the much longer journey.)

Deuteronomy 12:9-10,

9 כִּי לֹא־בִאתֶם עַד־עַתָּה  
אֶל־הַמְּנוּחָה וְאֶל־הַנַּחֲלָה  
אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ:

Because you (plural) until now you have not come  
to the resting-place, and to the inheritance,  
which YHWH your God is giving to you (singular)

10 וְעַבְרַתֶּם אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן  
וַיֹּשְׁבֶתֶם בָּאָרֶץ

אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִנְחִיל אֶתְכֶם  
וְהֵנִיחַ לָכֶם מִכָּל־אֹיְבֵיכֶם מִסְבִּיב  
וַיִּשְׁבְּתֶם־בְּטוֹחַ:

And you will cross over the Jordan,  
and you will dwell in the land

which YHWH your God is causing you to inherit.

And He will give you rest from all your enemies from (all) around,  
and you will dwell securely!

**2 Samuel 14:17a**, where a woman supposedly seeking justice for her son, says to King David:

וְהִיאֹמֶר שְׁפַחַתְךָ  
יְהִי־נָא דְבַר־אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ לְמִנוּחַ

And your maid-servant said,

Now, let my lord the King's word be for a resting-place...

(I.e., her quest for justice will be at rest; or perhaps, her family / home will not be destroyed by the death of her son.)

**1 Kings 8:56**, where Solomon says in his prayer of dedication of the temple,

בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה  
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן מְנוּחָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר  
לְאַנְפִּל דְּבַר אֶחָד מִכָּל דְּבָרֵי הַטּוֹב  
אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ:

Blessed (is) YHWH,

Who gave a resting-place to His people Israel,  
according to all which He said—

not one word fell / failed from all His good word,  
which He spoke by (the) hand of Moses His servant!

(Here, the “resting-place” is the land of Israel, with its central place of worship now completed.)

**Isaiah 11:10**,

וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא  
שָׂרֵשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר עֹמֵד לְנֶס עַמִּים  
אֱלֹהֵי גוֹיִם יְדַרְשׁוּ  
וְהִיתָה מִנְחַתוֹ כְּבוֹד:

And it will happen on that day,  
Jesse's root which is standing for a signal / banner of peoples,  
to him nations will seek / come seeking;  
and his resting-place will be glory / abundance!

**Isaiah 28:12**, YHWH, Who will speak by the language of foreigners, is

אֲשֶׁר | אָמַר | אֲלֵיהֶם  
זֹאת | הַמְנוּחָה  
הַנִּיחוּ | לְעֵינַי  
וְזֹאת | הַמְרִגְעָה

וְלֹא | אָבֹא | שְׁמוּעָה:  
the One Who said to them [Israel],  
This is the resting-place:  
Give rest to the weary / fainting!  
And this is the repose / rest!  
And you were not willing to listen!  
(Strangely, the “resting-place” is defined by “giving rest to the weary / fainting”!)

**Isaiah 32:18**,

וַיֵּשֶׁב | עַמִּי | בְּנוֹהַ | שְׁלוֹם  
וּבְמִשְׁכָּנוֹת | מְבִטְחִים  
וּבְמְנוּחֹת | שְׁאֲנֹנוֹת:

And My people will dwell in a pasture / habitation of peace,  
and in dwelling-places of confidences  
and in places of rest, secure ones.  
(Here again, the singular habitation is expanded to the two plurals—dwelling-places of confidences, and places of rest, secure ones.)

**Isaiah 66:1-2**, where YHWH is depicted as saying:

1 כֹּה | אָמַר | יְהוָה  
הַשָּׁמַיִם | כִּסְאִי  
וְהָאָרֶץ | רֵגְלִי  
אֵיזֶה | בַּיִת | אֲשֶׁר | תִּבְנֶה לִּי  
וְאֵיזֶה | מָקוֹם | מְנוּחָתִי:

In this way YHWH spoke:  
The heavens—My throne!  
And the earth—a footstool of / for My feet!

If / is this a house / temple which you will build for Me?  
And if / is this a place of My rest?

2 וְאֶת־כָּל־אֱלֹהֵי יְדֵי עֲשֵׂתָהּ  
וַיְהִיוּ כָל־אֱלֹהֵי  
נְאֻם־יְהוָה  
וְאֶל־זֶה אֲבִיט  
אֶל־עֵינַי וְנִכְחַת־רוּחַ  
וְחָרַד עַל־דְּבָרַי:

And all of these My hand made,  
and all these were / came into being.  
(It is) a saying of YHWH!

And to this (person) I will look—

to a poor person, and stricken / contrite of spirit,  
and one trembling over / at My word!

(We take the passage to mean that no house build by humans could be large enough for the Creator of heavens and earth—but He looks to a poor, stricken / contrite person, who trembles at His word for His “resting-place”!)

**Jeremiah 45:3**, Jeremiah’s words to Baruch:

אָמַרְתָּ אֹי־נָא לִי  
כִּי־יֹסֵף יִהְיֶה יָגוֹן עַל־מִכְאָבִי  
יִגְעַתִּי בְּאַנְחָתִי  
וּמְנוּחָה לֹא מָצָאתִי:

You said, Woe now to me!

Because YHWH added grief upon my sorrow!

I grew weary with my groaning,

and a resting-place I did not find!

**Jeremiah 51:59**, where an official in the Judean government is described as

שָׂר מְנוּחָה

literally, chief of resting-place, which probably means the officer in charge of picking out the place where Israel’s troops would make camp.

**Micah 2:10**,

קוֹמוּ וּלְכוּ  
כִּי לֹא־זָאת הַמְּנוּחָה  
בְּעֵבֹר טְמֵאָה

תַּחֲבֵל  
וְחָבַל נִמְרָץ:  
Arise and go!

Because this is not the resting-place,  
on account of she became unclean;  
she ruins / destroys,  
and a grievous ruin / destruction!

**Zechariah 9:1,**

מִשָּׂא דְבַר־יְהוָה  
בְּאֶרֶץ חֲדַרְחַךְ וּדְמַשְׁק מְנַחְתּוֹ  
כִּי לַיהוָה עֵין אָדָם  
וְכָל שְׁבֵטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Utterance / oracle / burden of YHWH's word:  
In Chadhrak land and Damascus (is) His / its resting-place;  
because (the) eye of humanity belongs to YHWH,  
and all Israel's tribes.

Translations vary:

**King James**, "The burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus *shall be* the rest thereof: when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, *shall be* toward the LORD."

**Tanakh**, "A pronouncement: The word of the LORD. He will reside in the land of Hadrach and Damascus; For all men's eyes will turn to the LORD -- Like all the tribes of Israel --"

**New Revised Standard**, "An Oracle. The word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach and will rest upon Damascus. For to the LORD belongs the capital of Aram, as do all the tribes of Israel;"

**New International**, "A prophecy: The word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach and will come to rest on Damascus-- for the eyes of all people and all the tribes of Israel are on the LORD--"

**New Jerusalem**, "A proclamation. The word of Yahweh is against Hadrach, it has come to rest on Damascus, for the source of Aram belongs to Yahweh no less than all the tribes of Israel;"

**Rahlfs**, λῆμμα λόγου κυρίου ἐν γῆ Σεδραχ καὶ Δαμασκοῦ θυσία αὐτοῦ διότι κύριος ἐφορᾷ ἀνθρώπους καὶ πάσας φυλὰς τοῦ Ἰσραηλ, "Substance / burden of (the) Lord's word in land of Sedrach and Damascus (is) His sacrifice, because (the) Lord gazes upon people and all (the) tribes of the Israel." (And we wonder: why do none of these translations have "in Damascus is His resting-place"? Is it because translators believe that YHWH's resting-place can only be in Israel, not in Syria?)



Psalm 23:2,

בְּנֵאֹת דְּשֵׂא יִרְבִּיעֲנִי  
עַל־מֵי מְנוּחֹת יִנְהַלְנִי:

In meadows of grass He causes me to lie down.  
Beside waters of resting-places He leads me.

(Israel's vision of the future included life in a "resting-place," מְנוּחָה, **menuchah**, which was identified as the Land of Israel, and later was denied to be located there. Here that same noun occurs in the plural, "places of rest." The psalmist's language implies that even now, in this life, there are occasions when that hoped for "rest" becomes a present possession of the individual who knows YHWH as his "Shepherd." Can we not call this an example of what scholars call "realized eschatology"? Or, in simpler terms, is this not saying that already in this life, YHWH's sheep begin to experience the reality of heavenly life? For Biblical Theology, it is a commonplace that YHWH God is leading his flock on to "rest." See for example, **Hebrews 3:1-4:11**, and the many passages referred to there. But, says this **Psalm**, already in the present, His sheep have experienced the blessedness of His "resting-place"!)

Psalm 95:10-11,

10 אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה | אֶקְוֵט בְּדֹר  
וְאָמַר עִם תַּעֲי לִבִּב הֵם  
וְהֵם לֹא־יָדְעוּ דַרְכָּי:

(For) forty year(s) I would loathe a generation.

And I said, They are a people of heart(s) wandering astray;  
and they did not know My ways--

11 אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּאַפִּי  
אֶם־יָבֹאוּן אֶל־מְנוּחָתִי:

to whom I swore in My anger,

they will not enter into My resting-place!

(The biblical story of Israel's wandering in the wilderness depicts its goal as being the Land of Israel as YHWH's promised "resting-place." But the generation that wandered for forty years, including Moses, their leader, was not allowed to enter into that "resting-place." It was the next generation that was allowed to enter in under Joshua.)

Psalm 132:8,

קִוְיָמָה יִהְיֶה לְמְנוּחָתְךָ  
אֶתָּה וְאַרְוֹן עֵינֶיךָ:

Arise, YHWH! (Come to) Your resting-place,  
You and Your strength's ark!

**Psalm 132:13-14,**

13 כִּי־בָחַר יְהוָה בְּצִיּוֹן  
אֲזָה לְמוֹשָׁב לּוֹ:

Because YHWH chose Zion;  
He desired it for a dwelling-place for Him:

132:14 זֹאת־מְנוַחְתִּי עַד־עַד  
פֶּה־אֲשָׁב כִּי אֲוִתֶּיהָ:

This (is) My resting-place of the future / forever and ever;  
here I will dwell, because I desired it!

(Here in **Psalm 132**, the “resting-place” is the temple, built by Solomon, in the City of David. But contrast **Psalm 132:8, 14** with **Isaiah 66:1**.)

**Ruth 1:9**, where Naomi says to her two daughters-in-law, now widows:

יִתֵּן יְהוָה לָכֶם  
וּמְצֹאן מְנוּחָה

אִשָּׁה בֵּית אִישָׁה  
וַתִּשָּׂק לָהֶן

וַתִּשְׂאֲנָה קוֹלָן וַתְּבַכְיֶנָּה:

May YHWH give to you (plural),  
and may you find a resting-place,  
each one in her man's / husband's house!

And she kissed them,  
and they lifted up their voice, and they cried.

(Here the “resting-place” will be a husband and home in Moab!)

**1 Chronicles 22:9**, where David tells Solomon what YHWH has said to him:

הִנֵּה־בֶן נוֹלָד לָךְ  
הוּא יִהְיֶה אִישׁ מְנוּחָה  
וַתִּנְחֹתִי לוֹ מִכָּל־אוֹיְבָיו מִסָּבִיב  
כִּי שְׁלֹמֹה יִהְיֶה שְׁמוֹ  
וְשָׁלוֹם וְשָׁקֵט אֶתְּךָ עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיָמָיו:

Look—a son is being borne to / for you;  
he will be a man of a resting-place,  
and I will give rest to him from all his enemies from (all) around.

Because שלמה Solomon will be his name;

ושלום and peace and quietness I will give / place over Israel in his days!

**1 Chronicles 28:2,**

וַיִּקָּם דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל-רַגְלָיו  
וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַעוּנִי אֲחֵי וְעַמִּי  
אֲנִי עִם-לְבָבִי לְבָנוֹת בַּיִת מְנוּחָה  
לְאַרְוֹן בְּרִית-יְהוָה  
וּלְהֵדָם רַגְלֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
וַהֲכִינוֹתִי לְבָנוֹת:

And David the King stood upon his feet,  
and he said, Listen to me, my brothers and my people!  
I, with my heart (desired) to build a house / temple place of rest  
for the chest / ark of YHWH's covenant,  
and for the footstool of our God's feet.  
And I made preparations to build.

5. **Occurrences of the adjective שָׁאֲנָן, sha)anan, in the Hebrew Bible**

**2 Kings 19:28**, where Isaiah speaks YHWH's words to Sennacherib, who is "at ease":

Because of your raging against Me,  
and your being at ease came up into My ears—  
and I will place My hook in your nose, and My bridle in your lips;  
and I will bring you back by the way on which you came!

**Isaiah 32:9** (here),

Women at ease, arise!  
Listen to my voice!  
Daughters (who are) trusting / complacent,  
give ear to my speech!

**Isaiah 32:11**,

Tremble, women at ease!  
Quake / shudder, trusting / complacent (daughters)!  
Strip, and make yourself bare--  
and girdle your waists,

**Isaiah 32:18**, where being at ease, secure, is YHWH's intention for His people:

And My people will dwell in a dwelling of peace,  
and in dwelling-places of confidences  
and in places of rest, at ease / secure ones.

**Isaiah 33:20**, again, such security and being at ease is YHWH's intention:

See Zion, city of our appointed pilgrim-festivals!  
Your eye will see (synonym) Jerusalem,  
a secure / at ease dwelling,  
a tent—it will not travel  
its tent-pegs will not be pulled up to the perpetuity,  
and all its cords will not be torn away.

**Isaiah 37:29**, YHWH's words to Sennacherib (see **2 Kings 19:28** above)

Because of your raging against Me,  
and your being secure / at ease / arrogant went up into My ears--  
and I will place My hook in your nose,  
and My bridle in your lips,  
and I will cause you to return  
by the way on which you came!

**Amos 6:1**, where the masculine plural adjective, **הַשְׂאֲנַנִּים**, occurs:

Woe! –to those who are secure / at ease / arrogant in Zion,  
to those who put their confidence in Samaria's mountain!  
Distinguished leaders of (the) “beginning / first of the nations”!  
to whom Israel's household will come.

**Zechariah 1:15**, where it is a matter of nations that are at ease / secure:

And (with a) great wrath I am angry against the nations, the ones at ease /  
secure;  
against which I, I was angry a little, and they helped for evil.

**Psalms 123:4**, where again the masculine plural adjective, **הַשְׂאֲנַנִּים**, is used:

Our innermost-being was greatly over-filled by it–  
the mocking of the ones at ease / secure,  
the contempt belonging to proud people!

**Job 12:5**, Job complains that among other things, he will become to the person at  
ease, using the masculine singular adjective, **שְׂאֲנַן**:

A disaster of contempt—to (the) thought of one at ease / secure,  
a blow to those (whose) feet are slipping.

So, “being at ease / secure” is not just something peculiar to women, it is also a trait of men, even prominent rulers. But “being at ease / secure” is not a condition only condemned by the biblical writers—it is also depicted as the condition YHWH desires for His people in the good times coming! And so we have to ask, what is it about the women that are “at ease / secure” that is being condemned? We say, it is the fact that they themselves are at ease / secure, while others in their community are not at all—but rather are being oppressed by those in more comfortable circumstances.

