

## Isaiah 62, Hebrew Text with Translation and Footnotes

62:1<sup>1</sup> לְמַעַן צִיּוֹן לֹא אֶחְשָׁה

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander comments on **chapter 62** that “The words of the great Deliverer are continued from the foregoing chapter. He will not rest until the glorious change in the condition of his people is accomplished (**verse 1**). They shall be recognized by kings and nations as the people of [YHWH] (**verses 2-3**). She who seemed to be forsaken is still His spouse (**verses 4-5**). The church is required to watch and pray for the fulfillment of the promise (**verses 6-7**). God has sworn to protect her and supply her wants (**verses 8-9**). Instead of a single nation, all the nations of the earth shall flow unto her (**verse 10**). The good news of salvation shall no longer be confined, but universally diffused (**verse 11**). The glory of the church is the redemption of the world (**verse 12**).” (Pp. 405-06)

It is obvious here that Alexander means Jesus Christ as the “great Deliverer,” and the passage has to do with the Christian Church—all of which he reads into the text.

Oswalt states that “**Chapter 62** continues the thoughts of **chapters 60** and **61**, particularly **61:10-11**. The themes of light, revelation of Zion’s righteousness and salvation to the nations, marriage joy, relief from oppression, and restoration of the land are all prominent. The chapter seems to be particularly concerned with the question raised in **61:11**: How sure can one be that these glorious promises will actually come true? **Chapter 60**, in particular, represents the new Jerusalem as an accomplished fact. But that was still in the future from the hearers’ point of view. Will it really happen? This chapter reiterates and amplifies the affirmation of **61:11** that it will.” (P. 577)

Knight comments on **chapter 62**, “What tension the author or authors of **Trito-Isaiah** must have lived under...This speaker must have undergone a formidable revulsion of heart and mind from the high vision expressed in **61:10-11**. He had only to look around him to be overwhelmed with despondency at the actual state of affairs in ruinous Jerusalem, as we know the situation to have been from the **Book of Haggai**. Minority groups of persons with economic influence and financial power had now got together, it seems, or were beginning to coalesce in order to build elegant homes for themselves despite the ruins. They remind one today of those who are personally satisfied to have built a fallout shelter in their garden in case of nuclear war, or of those who suppose that their soul is ‘saved’ when the rest of society is in spiritual decay.

“There was plenty of building material lying at hand for them to use, since there were bricks, stones, and rubble everywhere, and enough wood to panel their homes comfortably on the inside (**Haggai 1:4**). This economically powerful group had thus sought selfishly to create themselves as the new upper class of Jerusalem’s citizens. At the same time the ordinary folk, having no financial backing, were now daily going out of the city to try to work the rough ground outside, seeking evidently with scant success to

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

bring the soured land back into fertility. Above all, inflation was upsetting the cost of living (**Haggai 1:6**)...

“Our author...is aware of the huge discrepancy that lay between the actual situation and the eschatological [final] hope which he had preached on the previous sabbath. For it was at this juncture upon the return from exile that eschatology [teaching concern-ing ‘final things’] though present in seed from the earlier prophets, was now becoming central to the theology of thoughtful persons. Their thinking had been stimulated by the fact of the jubilee year that had been actuated by Cyrus when he ‘redeemed’ Israel exactly fifty years after the nations ‘death’ in 587. They were now seeing his action as the trigger that interpreted the completion of the seventh day of creation (**Isaiah 61:2**).

“Who then is speaking here? Of course it is a human being, a poet, one who had returned from Babylon. But is this ‘I’ really the voice of God, or of a very confused individual? Reading on, we begin to feel that the thoughts we meet with are indeed God’s thoughts, as a poor, confused poet-preacher seeks to understand and express them.

Why was Jerusalem set on a hill at all, no matter whether that city was rebuilt or not? We remember that within just one verse of the **New Testament (Matthew 5:14)** Jesus says two things: ‘You are the light of the world,’ and ‘A city set on a hill cannot be hid.’ These two ideas our poet here has in mind those many centuries before Christ, but to understand them we must...read...’until (the fact of) God’s redemption of her (His *tsedeq*) goes forth as brightness.’ That sentence, however, is but one-half of the story. The other is: ‘and her saving love for others (feminine *yeshuah*) burns like a lamp’ (compare **Psalm 37:6**). We are to keep in mind that there are always two sides to God’s re-creative act. The first is that which He performs in order to redeem or rescue His people—and in this case is now past history. But second, now that His act of *tsedeq* is complete, God is offering to empower His people to act in love to others in their turn.... Thus it is only when ‘Jerusalem’ (the redeemed people) shines forth (compare **60:3**) in love to all the world that it will be seen as a city set on a hill (**2:3**). And never mind the bricks and mortar lying around before the poet’s gaze; these are merely the facts of life in a fallen world.” (Pp.61-62)

Oswalt comments on **verses 1-9** that **verses 1-5** “affirm that forsakenness will be replaced with delight, while **verses 6-9** insist that foreigners will not always be taking Israel’s crops, but will one day be praising Israel’s God.” (P. 578)

Slotki comments on **verses 1-5** that “The prophet (not God, as suggested by the Targum and some Jewish commentators) will not be silent until Zion’s cause is vindicated, her fame and glory are universally acknowledged, she and her children are reunited and God rejoices over her as a bridegroom over his bride.” (P. 301)

(continued...)

וּלְמַעַן יְרוּשָׁלַם לֹא אֶשְׁקֹט  
עַד-יֵצֵא כְנֻגָהּ צְדָקָה  
וַיִּשְׁוַעְתָּהּ כְּלַפִּיד יְבֵעֵר:

For Zion's sake I<sup>2</sup> will not keep silent,

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

Concerning the identity of the speaker, Alexander states that “the prophet constantly assumes the person and expresses the feelings of different characters in this great drama, without any express intimation of the change in the text itself. Kimchi follows the Targum in explaining this verse as the language of [YHWH]...Cocceius supposes the messiah to be speaking...A simpler and more obvious sense is...that the prophet himself declares his resolution not to cease from the prediction of Zion's future glory...Perhaps the most satisfactory conclusion is, that if the prophet here speaks of himself, he also speaks by implication of his associates and successors in the office, not excluding Christ as the last and greatest of the series.” (P. 406)

Achtemeier comments on **verses 1-3** that “One of the principal functions of a prophet, according to the **Old Testament**, was that of intercession for the people before God (compare **Deuteronomy 9:13-29; Amos 7:1-6; Jeremiah 7:16; 14:11; 15:1; Ezekiel 13:5; 22:30**), and here in **verse 1** the prophetic community reassures Judah that it will never cease praying for her life before God until her salvation comes...The prophets will station themselves on Jerusalem's walls, when the walls are rebuilt, and will watch for Yahweh's return to Zion: **Third-Isaiah** is drawing on the Isaianic tradition of **52:7-9**...Indeed, the prophetic community will give Yahweh no rest. They will hammer on His door in prayer, as it were (compare **Luke 18:1-8**). The Lord has been silent (compare **Isaiah 42:14; 57:11**), and so the prophetic intercessors will never be silent, until Yahweh breaks His silence and saves His people by returning to them...

“This reassurance was perhaps intended to answer the skepticism of the Judean community about the grand promises of salvation offered in the two preceding oracles... That the Levitical-prophetic community [our ‘followers of **Jeremiah, Second and Third Isaiah** over against the legalistic followers of the kind of program later to be set forth explicitly by **Ezra-Nehemiah**] offers such continual intercession, despite the calumny heaped upon it by the Judeans, is testimony to their pure love for their people and for God. Only those who are pure in heart can exercise such selfless forgiveness...(compare **Matthew 5:11-12...43-48**).” (Pp. 96-7)

<sup>2</sup>Oswalt states that “Many 20<sup>th</sup>-century commentators...have concluded that these words are those of the prophet, who asserts that he will continue to intercede for Zion and Jerusalem until God brings the promises to pass (as per **verses 6c-7**). By contrast, most earlier writers...considered that it was God speaking here, as in **verse**

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and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,  
until her righteousness / righteousness goes forth like the brightness,  
and her deliverance / salvation burns like a torch!<sup>3</sup>

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

**6ab**, promising that despite His apparent silence, He was actively working to bring about the bright dawn...Both points of view have arguments in their favor, but in view of **verse 6** the latter is somewhat more convincing...However it might appear, God insists that He will be at work unceasingly for Zion's sake." (P. 578)

<sup>3</sup>Hebrew readers can find in this verse a classic example of Hebrew parallelism.

Slotki notes that "As the burning torch can be seen far and wide, so will Zion's salvation be visible to all." (P. 301)

It is important to note what **Third Isaiah** states will cause the returnees to Jerusalem to shine brightly, like a torch—it is her "righteousness," and her "deliverance / salvation." What that means has been shown powerfully in **Isaiah 58**—it is the community of the returned Israelites practicing genuine love and care for those needing it most—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, reaching out to the homeless and poor, delivering them from their wretched condition. Such loving care would result in "deliverance / salva-tion" for those in need, and would become a shining light, a burning torch declaring to all what it means to be the people of YHWH! As the next verse goes on to say, nations and kings can see and understand that kind of selfless love—and will be attracted to its light.

Compare our view with that of Oswalt, who states "The righteousness of God is going to be seen in the character of saved Israel...Here ['righteousness'] expresses the presence of the Divine character as reflected in His people by His grace...It is God's character dawning on an Israel that confesses its inability to do righteousness that will draw all the nations to its light." (Pp. 578-79)

We do not think a confession of inability to do righteousness will attract nations and kings. What will attract the nations is to see YHWH's steadfast-love actively at work in Israel's life—as Israel practices the kind of righteousness taught / commanded in **Isaiah 58**.

What do you think? Are people attracted to a community that confesses its inability to practice God's righteousness? What is attractive about such a confession, even if it claims that nevertheless God has saved them by His grace? The fact is that people are drawn to a community where love is in action, where those most in need are being actively welcomed and helped at their point of need, where religion is more than talk, but is seen as the heart of the community's life!

Such a community is just the opposite of the community advocated by **Ezra / Nehemiah**, and the Pharisees in the time of Jesus, Who devoted His ministry to the

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62:2 וְרָאוּ גוֹיִם צְדִקְתְּךָ

וְכָל-מְלָכִים כְּבוֹדְךָ

וְקָרָא לְךָ שֵׁם חָדָשׁ

אֲשֶׁר פִּי יְהוָה יִקְבְּנוּ:

And nations will see your righteousness,  
and all kings your glory;<sup>4</sup>  
and a name will be called<sup>5</sup> for you, a new name<sup>6</sup>

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

kind of righteousness taught by **Third Isaiah**, and as a result, many nations have come to his light!

<sup>4</sup>Note here how “righteousness” is identified as Israel’s “glory.” If Israel will turn away from the segregated policies advocated by the legalistic segregationists and instead of divorcing foreign wives with their half-breed children, and building walls and exclusive temples to keep out “foreigners,” will reach out to all who suffer or who are in need of self-giving service, regardless of their race or nationality, it will truly be “glory” for Israel. Being an exclusive, legalistic group that rejects people who differ from them is not the way to such “glory.”

<sup>5</sup>Our Hebrew text has the pual perfect verb with waw-conversive, וְקָרָא, “and it will be called.” 1QIs<sup>a</sup> has וְקָרְאוּ, “and they will call,” while 1QIs<sup>b</sup> agrees with our Hebrew text.

<sup>6</sup>Slotki comments that “The name, according to one opinion, is not disclosed; according to another view, it is given in **verse 4**. The change of name indicates the alteration in condition and status.” (P. 302)

Achtemeier states that “A new name will be given Judah...and this has been a frequent motif in **Third-Isaiah** (compare **58:12; 60:14, 18; 61:3, 6, 9**). But the difference is that this is now a new name that Yahweh will give her...

“A name, according to the **Old Testament**, is the bearer of essence...Yahweh will appoint a new name for Judah, signifying a fundamental change in Judah’s nature and circumstances.” (P. 97)

Alexander states that “The new name may be that which is afterwards stated in **verse 4**, or the expression may be understood more generally as denoting change of

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

condition for the better...Some suppose an allusion to the change in the name of the chosen people from Jew to Christian.” (P. 427)

But see the following passages from **Third Isaiah** which suggest names by which the returnees from Babylon will be called:

**Isaiah 58:12,**

And they will build up the long-time wasted places because of you,  
foundations for generation after generation you will cause to stand!  
And you will be called “Repairer (of) Broken Walls,”  
“Restorer of Pathways for Living”!

**Isaiah 60:14,**

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

**Isaiah 61:3,**

to place for the mourners of Zion--  
to give to them a (joyous) turban instead of ashes,  
oil of rejoicing instead of mourning,  
a mantle / wrap of praise instead of a faint spirit;  
and calling them “Oaks of the Righteousness,”  
“Planting of YHWH for Glorifying Himself.”

**Isaiah 61:6,**

And you (plural) will be called “Priests of YHWH”;  
“Ministers of our God,” it will be said to you.  
Wealth of nations you shall eat,  
and in their abundance you shall boast.

**Isaiah 62:4,**

It will no longer be said to you, Forsaken;  
and to your land it will no longer be said, “Devastation.”  
Because to you it will be called, “My Delight (Is) In Her!”  
And to your land, Married!

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which YHWH's mouth will designate.<sup>7</sup>

62:3 וְהִיִּית עֲטָרַת תְּפֹאֲרֹת בְּיַד־יְהוָה

(וְצִנּוֹף) [וְצִנּוֹף] מְלוּכָה בְּכַף־אֱלֹהִים:

And you will be a crown of beauty in YHWH's hand,  
and a turban of royalty in your God's hand.<sup>8</sup>

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

Because YHWH delighted in you,  
and your land will be married / ruled over!

In the light of this abundance of new names that are to be given the returnees in their wondrous future, there is no need to reach out six centuries later to the disciples being called “Christians” in Antioch of Syria (**Acts 11:26**), to find the name intended here in **Isaiah 62:2!** The passage in **Acts** says nothing about the name being given by God, and may only mean that this is the name that they were given by others, or even that they gave themselves.

Oswalt asks, “What will be the manifestation of that *glory*? It will be a change of condition and character as evidenced by a *new name*...The proclamation of a new name for Zion indicates the new condition and character that God's salvation will provide for her.” (P. 579)

We say the new name will be associated with Israel's practicing the righteousness that YHWH has commanded the people in **Isaiah 58**. What do you say? See **Jeremiah 33:16**,

<sup>7</sup>Where our Hebrew text has אֲשֶׁר פִּי יְהוָה יִקְבְּנוּ, “which (the) mouth of YHWH will designate it,” **Rahfs** has “which the Lord will name it.”

<sup>8</sup>Slotki takes the two-fold mention of Israel's being in the hand of God means “held up for everybody's admiration, or looked at with affection.” (P. 302) Do you agree?

We say that when the returnees from Babylon refuse to walk in the pathway of legalism and segregation / separation from the people of the land, and instead reach out to foreigners, and their half-breed children, and everyone that is in need, or suffering, to care for them with loving deeds of compassion—which is for Third Isaiah genuine “righteousness”—they will truly become YHWH's servants, instruments in the hand of God, who will be admired, looked at with affection. What do you think it means?

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62:4<sup>9</sup> לֹא־יֹאמֶר לְךָ עוֹד עֲזוּבָה

וּלְאַרְצֶךָ לֹא־יֹאמֶר עוֹד שְׁמָמָה

כִּי לְךָ יִקְרָא חֶפְצִי־בָהּ

וּלְאַרְצֶךָ בְּעוֹלָה

כִּי־חֶפֶץ יִהְיֶה לְךָ

וְאַרְצֶךָ תִּבְעַל:

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

Achtemeier observes that “Here in **verse 3**, Yahweh holds Jerusalem in His hand—a figure expressive of the most tender care of the King for His city.” (P. 97)

Oswalt comments that “The people of God, Zion / Jerusalem, are in His hand, i.e., in His care and under His control. But they are not in His hand as slaves or lumps of wood or stone. They are there as a priceless possession, a thing of delight, honor, and beauty...Zion does not need to fear that God will forget His promises concerning her; she is His dearest possession.” (P. 580)

But the biblical ideal of Israel is that she is in fact YHWH’s “slave / servant,” who delights to be used in fulfilling the Divine will, being willing to die on behalf of sinners. Such slavery is “perfect freedom.” The ideal Israel is not a slave who is forced to do God’s will—she lovingly and willingly chooses to practice God’s righteousness, bringing salvation / deliverance to those in need. And in so doing, Israel becomes a “crown of beauty” and a “turban of royalty” in God’s hand—she becomes the kingdom of God, with all its symbols of royalty, truly the “priestly people of God”! That is exactly what Jesus did, as he embodied the “true Israel,” living by YHWH’s righteousness!

<sup>9</sup>Oswalt comments on **verses 4-5** that “The language throughout these two verses continues the marriage imagery of **61:10**. The connotations of joy, exclusive choice, surrender, and commitment that surround marriage make it a good vehicle for conveying what God clearly wants to say. Whatever the faithful in Israel might feel in the long dark years following the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E., they should remember that *Forsaken* is not the name by which God remembers them, nor is *Desolate* the way He views their land. He does not see Himself as Zion’s Destroyer, but as her Husband, Who will care for her, nourish her, and protect her.” (P. 581)

Achtemeier comments on **verses 4-6** that “Now the new name for Judah is given...Now Yahweh will call her ‘Hephzibah’ (‘My Delight Is In Her’) and ‘Beulah’ (‘Married’)...These new names will express the new reality: Yahweh will delight in Judah, i.e., He will now show favor toward her rather than wrath (compare **60:10; 61:2**).” (P. 98)



It will no longer be said to you, Forsaken;<sup>10</sup>

and to your land it will no longer be said, Devastation.<sup>11</sup>

Because to you it will be called,<sup>12</sup> My Delight (Is) In Her!<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>The Hebrew word for “forsaken” is עֲזֹבָה, and it seems impossible that such a name would be given to anyone, especially a woman, unless she had in fact been forsaken by a husband, or perhaps by her family. But in fact, this was the name of the Judean King Jehoshaphat’s mother (**1 Kings 22:42; 2 Chronicles 20:31**), and the name of the wife of Caleb of Hezron (**1 Chronicles 2:18, 19**).

**Isaiah 54:6** uses the word for a wife who has been cast off; **Isaiah 60:15** states that Jerusalem has been “forsaken and hated”; but this passage, **Isaiah 62:4** tells Jerusalem / Zion that she shall no longer be termed “Forsaken.” **Jeremiah 4:29** depicts many cities as being forsaken. **Zephaniah 2:4** predicts that Gaza will be forsaken.

And here, we think of the context in which **Third Isaiah** is written. The program being advocated by the legalistic segregationists was calling on the returning Israelites to divorce their foreign wives with their half-breed children, making of them single mothers with fatherless children—i.e., making them truly “forsaken and hated,” just as Jerusalem herself had been. But **Third Isaiah** is convinced that such a program is contrary to the will of God—the Israelites should treat those women and children in the same graceful manner in which YHWH had treated them! The result will be that the Land of Israel will no longer be named “Devastation,” but “YHWH’s Delight Is In Her,” and “Married,” that is, not “Divorced.”

We are puzzled that none of the commentaries we have consulted make this connection that seems so obvious to us. What do you think? Are we reading all of this into the text, without any real basis in **Third Isaiah**? Do you see the conflict between **Ezra / Nehemiah’s** program, and the program advocated by **Third Isaiah**?

<sup>11</sup>Where our Hebrew text has the noun שְׁמָמָה, “devastation,” “waste,” our Greek translation has the noun ἔρημος, “wilderness,” “desert.” 1QIs<sup>a</sup> has שׁוֹמְמָה, a feminine participle, “being devastated / wasted.”

<sup>12</sup>Where our Hebrew text has the niphal imperfect יִקְרָא, “it will be called,” 1QIs<sup>a</sup> has the qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine plural, יִקְרְאוּ, “they will call.”

<sup>13</sup>This Hebrew phrase is חִפְצֵי-בָהּ, which as a name means “My Delight (Is) In Her.” See **2 Kings 21:1**, where it is given as the name of the Judean King Manasseh’s mother.

And to your land, Married!<sup>14</sup>  
Because YHWH delighted in you,  
and your land will be married / ruled over.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>The Hebrew noun for “married” is **בְּעוּלָה**, the qal passive feminine singular participle from the verb **בָּעַל**, “to marry / rule over / own.” The church I grew up in sang a song entitled “Beulah Land,” based on this passage, written by Edgar Page Stites.

See **Isaiah 54:1-6**,

- 1 Give a ringing cry, barren woman, she (who) did not give birth;  
break forth a ringing shout, and cry out, (you who) did not have labor-pains!  
Because more (are the) children of her who is desolate, than the married woman’s children!  
YHWH said (it)!
- 2 Enlarge your tent’s place, and your dwelling-places’ curtains,  
spread out—don’t hold back;  
lengthen your cords, and strengthen your tent-pegs!
- 3 Because (to the) right and (to the) left you will spread out;  
and your descendants will possess nations!  
And desolated cities they will inhabit!
- 4 Do not be afraid, because you will not be put to shame;  
and you will not be humiliated—because you will not be caused shame!  
Because your youth’s shame, you will forget,  
and (the) reproach of your widowhood you will not remember again!
- 5 Because (the) One marrying you (is) your Maker--  
YHWH of Armies (is) His name;  
and your Next-of-Kin / Redeemer (is) Israel’s Set-apart One--  
“God all the earth” He will be called!
- 6 Because like a forsaken woman and pained of spirit, YHWH called you,  
and a wife (married in) youth when she is rejected, said your God.

<sup>15</sup>Knight gives an extended comment on **verse 4**, including the following statements:

“Whilst Israel was in exile they had believed themselves to be ‘forsaken’ by God (**54:6**), and the holy land to be ‘desolate.’ But that unhappy situation is now evidently at an end (**verses 4-6**).. Says God again, ‘You shall be called My delight is in her.’ But **יְפֵי** meant more than mere ‘delight.’ What delights God is His choice of Israel, chosen...for the redemption of the world. So now God Himself will place that purpose of His ‘in her’—that is to say, His purpose is to work out—in and through Zion and nowhere else—what today we call evidence of God’s particularistic plan of love...

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

“We cannot help but compare **Isaiah 62**, written in ecstatic poetry, with Ezekiel’s vision of the restored Jerusalem, temple, and land, written in prose and described in a series of very pedestrian blueprints (**Ezekiel 40-48**). But then Ezekiel wrote before God’s act of ‘resurrection’ had taken place through which He created the New Israel, Israel that had now been born again. Experiencing existentially in his own bones God’s act of grace and renewal, Trito-Isaiah therefore is able to go beyond Ezekiel’s vision and speak ecstatically of the theological *significance* of the city of God. So at **Isaiah 60:1** he had said, ‘Your light has come.’ Again, Ezekiel had limited the possession of holiness to the self-righteous group of priests, the Zadokites. Trito-Isaiah now knows that God’s holiness has been granted to the whole of His people Israel....

“The new name that Israel is to bear must represent to the nations of the earth what God has now done for His people, in that they have been forgiven and empowered ‘to do unto others what God has done for them’...

“The Christian reader of the **Old Testament** should take note of a reality at this point that prejudice and inherited presuppositions may have prevented him from grasping. It is that the New Israel begins its existence at this point in history, and not in the **New Testament** period. Nowhere in the **Gospels** do we find Jesus recognizing anything else. ‘Jesus did not found a church,’ theologians say today, ‘he found one.’ And nowhere in his letters does Paul ever say that it is the Church which is really the New Israel—for Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. What he does say is that the Church had now become the Israel of the New *Covenant*, in this way agreeing with Jeremiah’s great outlook at **Jeremiah 31:33**. And even then Paul is only saying that the new covenant is but the renewal of the ancient (παλιός, [‘old’] a word which does not mean ‘outdated’) covenant that God had made with Israel through Moses (**2 Corinthians 3:14**). If God’s action in Christ remains valid forwards in time to our day, then it has been equally valid backwards to the period through which Trito-Isaiah lived (compare **John 8:58** [...before Abraham was, I am]).

“The last two verses of this section contain an ecstatic mixture of metaphors, each of them conveying a most attractive picture, yet none of them taken alone being able to offer us a clear and logical theme. We are to remember, however, that throughout history the poets have often been able to express the meaning of things more decisively than the precise scientific theologians can. Our writer was a theologian who well knew the potency of the imagery of the Divine marriage first expressed by Hosea and added to by Jeremiah and Ezekiel...

“Zion ‘shall no more be termed Forsaken’...’And your land shall no more be termed Desolate’...**Isaiah 62:4** continues, the land that was ‘desolation’...waste, negation, like the primal chaos of **Genesis 1:2**—is to receive new life as a result of being ‘Married’ to God...Incarnational language such as this cannot be dismissed as ‘mere poetry,’ but must be engaged sincerely by the biblical theologian...It is the land this time, not the People of God, whom God will marry!...

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62:5 כִּי־יִבְעַל בְּחֹרֶר בְּתוּלָה

יִבְעֲלוּךְ בְּנֵיךְ

וּמְשׁוֹשׁ חֲתָן עַל־כַּלָּה

יִשֵּׁשׂ עֲלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

Because a young man will marry<sup>16</sup> a virgin;

your sons / children will marry you.<sup>17</sup>

And (with the) rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride,

your God will rejoice over you!<sup>18</sup>

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

“Our poet’s whole series of images is seeking to declare that God is now actually promising a new covenant. This covenant will not be with the ‘souls’ of individuals amongst His people (there is no ‘saving of souls’ in the **Old Testament**) but with His beloved partner, Israel, as a whole, renewed through having been forgiven and altogether joined up with the physical environment.” (Pp. 63-66)

<sup>16</sup>Where our Hebrew text has כִּי־יִבְעַל, “Because he will marry,” 1QIs<sup>a</sup> has כִּי־כַבְעוּל, “Because like marrying.”

<sup>17</sup>Slotki comments on this prediction of Israel’s sons marrying their mother, that “The harshness of the expression to which commentators point is perhaps more apparent than real if it is realized that the *bride* is Zion and the *sons* are the returning exiles. The comparison is not between the act of espousal [marriage], but rather between the loyalty, devotion and complete attachment which motivate it. Bearing in mind that the original Hebrew root, **baal**, signifies both ‘espousal’ and ‘possession,’ the prophet, it may be suggested, is here merely playing with the word, and the rendering might be: ‘as a young man espouses a virgin so shall your sons possess you.’” (P. 302)

We do not agree that the expression is “harsh.” What do you think? It is certainly not being said of a literal “marriage.”

<sup>18</sup>Knight comments on **verse 5**, that “Finally, after using the analogy of sheer joy that a young man experiences when he marries, or becomes one with, his virgin bride, our poet declares that this is how the young men of Jerusalem will feel about Zion...God Himself will exult in His saving act of union with Zion. This then is that joy of the Lord of which the whole **Bible** speaks (e.g., **Isaiah 51:11**; **Matthew 25:21**).” (P. 66)

What does God think about / feel for His forgiven people? Third Isaiah’s poetic language takes up the imagery of what a young man thinks about / feels for his virgin

(continued...)

עַל-חֹמֹתֶיךָ יְרוּשָׁלַם הַפְּקֹדֵתַי שְׁמֵרִים 62:6<sup>19</sup>

כָּל-הַיּוֹם וְכָל-הַלַּיְלָה

<sup>18</sup>(...continued)

bride. It is the language of ecstasy, of self-giving love, of the enchantment that is felt when a man and a woman become one! Third Isaiah exclaims, “Our God loves us!”

<sup>19</sup>Slotki comments on **verses 6-9** that “God has set watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem to remind Him constantly of His promises to the city; for He has sworn that never again shall it be plundered by enemies or strangers, but it will enjoy the fruits of its labor in security and peace.” (P. 303) Compare with **verses 6-9 Zechariah 14:11**:

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

Oswalt comments on these verses that “This stanza continues the theme of affirming the promises from the preceding stanza. It picks up the note of persevering prayer (**verses 6-7**), and adds to it the promise that in the new Jerusalem the fruits of one’s labor will not be stolen by enemy aggressors (**verses 8-9**.)” (P. 583)

Knight entitles **verses 6-9** “God Speaks.” He comments that “God had actually appointed human beings to stand on Jerusalem’s ‘walls.’ They must ‘never be silent’... The watchmen’s task is to remind God of His Own nature as love!...The watchmen are ‘never silent,’ ‘day’ or ‘night.’ Therefore, ‘you’ too, Trito-Isaiah declares to his congregation, must never be silent, but ceaselessly ‘put the Lord in remembrance.’

“The Hebrew word **מְזַכֵּר** describes a court official whose task was to help keep a record of events and then to show them to the king as soon as they were written down (**2 Samuel 8:16; Isaiah 36:3**). It was as if this royal servant almost made himself a nuisance to his king, constantly nudging him and insisting that he read what he as ‘recorder’ had written down. In fact, he behaved in the manner of the woman we know of as ‘the importunate widow’ (**Luke 18:1-8**). But then, as Jesus declared, that woman won her case!...

“So Jerusalem’s sons (**Isaiah 62:5**)—people (the nouns and verbs are now plural), not bricks and mortar—are to belabor God with the prayer (compare **Lamentations 2:18**) that ‘Thy kingdom come...on earth as it is in heaven.’” (Pp. 67-68)

Oswalt comments on **verses 6-7** that “Scholars disagree widely as to the identity of the speaker in **verse 6ab**...one affirming it is God, others...it must be the prophet.” (P. 583) Again we note how difficult it is in many passages in **Third Isaiah** to determine who is the speaker.

תְּמִיד לֹא יִחְשׁוּ

הַמְזַכְּרִים אֶת־יְהוָה

אֶל־דְּמֵי לַכֶּם:

Upon your walls, Jerusalem, I<sup>20</sup> appointed watchmen,<sup>21</sup>

all the day and all the night,

continually<sup>22</sup> you shall not be silent!<sup>23</sup>

The ones keeping YHWH in remembrance--<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>We think that the implication of the first-person verb is that YHWH is the Speaker, but this is not necessarily the case. If it is, quickly the Divine speech is ended, and the prophet's words are again heard, at least by the beginning of **verse 8**, perhaps even in the middle of **verse 6**.

<sup>21</sup>Where our Hebrew text reads הַפְּקֹדֵי שְׁמֹרִים, the editor of 1QIs<sup>a</sup> has only the letters ה. ק. ד. י. ש. ו. ם, indicating that the letters in the scroll are illegible.

Slotki comments that the watchmen are “Invisible angelic beings. According to others, the *watchmen* or guardians are the ‘mourners in Zion’ or ‘the company of prophets’ who, by their prayers for the welfare of Jerusalem, remind God of His promises.” (P. 303)

Oswalt states that “In **Ezekiel** it is plain that the function of the watchman is to make his people aware of coming danger so that they can avert the disaster, if they will (**3:17-19; 33:7-9**). As is clear from the context there, ‘watchmen’ are the prophets...But the text here has no hint of the task of warning; indeed, as this entire section has made clear, there will be no enemies for the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem to be warned of.” (P. 584)

<sup>22</sup>1QIs<sup>a</sup> and 1QIs<sup>b</sup> omit the word תְּמִיד, “continually.” **Rahfs** has “the whole day and the whole night they through (the) end will not be silent, making mention / remembering (the) Lord.”

<sup>23</sup>Slotki's translation is “never hold their peace.” Instead, Slotki says, they would “unceasingly intercede on behalf of the city until their prayer had been answered.” (P. 303)

<sup>24</sup>Slotki holds that הַמְזַכְּרִים, “the ‘ones keeping YHWH in remembrance’ are ‘officials with the duty to keep records and bring them to the notice of the authorities when the occasion demanded it (compare **2 Kings 18:18**, where the noun is translated

(continued...)

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

recorder.) As if YHWH is absent-minded, or forgetful, needing to be constantly reminded of His duties!

Alexander says that this noun “admits of three interpretations, all consistent with **Isaiah’s** usage. In **36:3, 22**, it seems to mean an official recorder or historiographer. In **56:3**, it means one burning incense as a memorial oblation...In **63:26** the verb means to remind God of something which He seems to have forgotten; and as this is an appropriate description of importunate intercession, it is here entitled to the preference.” (P. 409)

Oswalt notes that “All the [ancient] versions treat **verses 6-7** in more or less paraphrastic ways, apparently attempting to mitigate the theological difficulties of the idea of having to remind God to do good...None of them is willing to translate מְזַכֵּר, as ‘one who reminds.’ **Rahlf’s**, the Syriac and Latin Vulgate translations have ‘to be mindful (or ‘make mention’) of the Lord,’ and the Aramaic Targum alters the thought completely by making the good deeds of the ancestors of Jerusalem a ‘memorial’ to the Lord.’ Only the Latin Vulgate retains the idea that the Lord is to be given no rest. The Aramaic Targum has ‘Their memorial will not cease before Him...’ The Syriac translation has the people not resting.” (P. 582)

But, Oswalt states, “As **2 Samuel 18:6; 1 Kings 4:3; and Isaiah 36:3** show, the Israelite kings had officials whose title was, as here, ‘The One Who Reminds’ (usually translated as ‘secretary’ or ‘recorder’). This person’s task was probably to be certain that the king remembered what he had committed himself to do. Here then God, the Heavenly King, is reassuring His people with imagery familiar to them that He will not forget what He has promised to do. He has gone so far as to appoint ‘watchers’ whose sole task is not to allow Him to forget how precious Jerusalem...is to Him and what He has promised to do for it.” (Pp. 583-84) Compare:

### **Zechariah 1:12,**

And YHWH’s messenger / angel answered and said, YHWH of Armies,  
as far as when / how long will You not have compassion on Jerusalem,  
and Judah’s cities,  
with whom You have been indignant these seventy years?

### **Isaiah 43:26,**

Cause Me to remember;  
let us enter into judgment together!  
You (singular) relate / tell,  
so that you will be justified!

(continued...)

no rest / silence for you!<sup>25</sup>

62:7 וְאַל־תִּתְּנוּ דְמִי לוֹ

עַד־יִכּוֹנֵן וְעַד־יִשִּׁים אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם

תְּהִלָּה בְּאֶרֶץ:

And you shall not give rest to Him,

until He establishes, and until He places Jerusalem,

a praise in the land!

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

Oswalt adds that “God is asserting that He will never forget what He has promised, no matter how dark the days may become between the hour the prophet speaks it and the day of its fulfillment...”

“As Calvin says frequently, that accomplishment began in the restoration of the Jews from Babylon, continued in their preservation through the perilous intertestamental period, blossomed in the first coming of the servant / messiah, matured in the Christian faith, and will come to full flower in Christ’s return. In that hour Jerusalem will finally have been established and made the source of praise throughout the whole earth.” (P. 585)

Of course, all of this is being read from the standpoint of Christian history and eschatology—and in the text itself not a word is said concerning dark days, mounting up to thousands of years, between the promise and its fulfillment. In fact, as the text goes on, it promises that never again will Israel’s grain be given to enemies, nor will foreigners drink Israel’s wine (**verse 8**), but the Israelites themselves will eat their produce in their temple (**verse 9**)—however, the fact of history is that Israel for the next 2,600 years following this prophecy / promise has been constantly oppressed by numerous enemies, who have stolen her harvests and murdered her people; and her temple was destroyed in 70 C.E., never to be rebuilt to this day. Calvin is greatly mistaken, as is Oswalt!

<sup>25</sup>Alexander comments that “According to the Targum and the Rabbins, [YHWH] is here represented as appointing angels to keep watch over the ruined walls of Zion... Gesenius understands these as the words of the prophet himself, and by watchmen, devout Jews among the ruins of Jerusalem, awaiting the return of the exiles, and praying to God for it. For this limitation of the passage to Jerusalem in ruins, and to the period of the exile, there is not the least foundation in the text [we say, in fact that is the context of **Third Isaiah**, and it is completely arbitrary to take the meaning to be found elsewhere]. The promise is a general one, or rather the command, that those who are constituted guardians of the church should be importunate in prayer to God on her behalf.” (P. 409)



<sup>26</sup>Achtemeier comments on **verses 8-9** that “These promises of salvation are made sure by Yahweh’s solemn oath, quoted here...Never again will the enemies of Judah overrun her land, and eat and drink her produce...That which is promised here...is the full restoration of the covenant with Yahweh; and the meal pictured in **verse 9** is the communion meal of the covenant, to be celebrated in the presence of Yahweh in the rebuilt temple on Zion.” (P. 99)

Do you agree that this is the Divine promise to Judah and its people, given to the former exiles in Babylon? And what do you think this promise meant to the descendants of Judah being hauled in railroad cars to the gas chambers and crematoriums of Auschwitz, Buchenwald, etc. etc.?

Oswalt asks concerning **verses 8-9**, “How secure will the city be when God’s promises are fulfilled? So secure that the curses for covenant breaking will never again apply...Now, instead of the foreigner taking Israel’s crops, he will be helping to grow them (**56:3, 6; 66:23**)...

“God confirms what He is saying with an oath. But, as in **Exodus 34**, it is a unilateral commitment. The promise depends on one thing alone, and that is the strength and faithfulness of God, which is represented by His *arm*...

“This word [*arm*] is particularly associated with the Servant / Messiah and his work (see **40:10; 48:16; 51:5, 9; 52:10; 53:1; 59:16; 63:5, 12**). In the Messiah God’s strength and faithfulness will be shown preeminently, and thus it is on the Messiah himself that the Lord stakes the validity of His promises...The strength of the pharaohs of this world will fail us (**30:3**), but when we cast ourselves on the arm of the Lord (**33:2**), He will never fail us.” (Pp. 585-86)

But this is a very arbitrary, misleading comment. **40:10** is talking about YHWH’s arm that is active in history, with no mention of the messiah; **48:16** does not have the word arm, although **48:14** speaks of YHWH’s arm that is active against the Chaldeans, with no mention of the messiah. **51:5** speaks of YHWH’s arms that will judge the peoples, with no mention of the messiah; **51:9** is a call for the arm of YHWH to awake, as in days of old when YHWH “cut Rahab in pieces,” with no mention of the messiah. **52:10** states that YHWH has bared His arm by letting the captives go free from Babylon, again with no mention of the messiah. **53:1** depicts the suffering servant as YHWH’s arm, but does not mention the messiah, and it is only Oswalt’s view that the suffering-servant and the messiah are identical. **59:16** depicts YHWH’s arm as acting alone, without help from any other—again with no mention of the messiah. **63:5** is almost identical to **59:16**, with no mention of the messiah. **63:12** speaks of YHWH’s arm that went at the right hand of Moses—with no mention of the messiah. It is bizarre for Oswalt to pile up proof-texts like this to prove his point, not one of which does so!

(continued...)

וּבְזִרְעֵ עֵזוֹ  
 אִם־אֶתֶן אֶת־דְּגַנִּי עוֹד מֵאֲכָל לְאִיבִיךָ  
 וְאִם־יִשְׁתּוּ בְנֵי־נֹכַר תִּירוּשֶׁךָ אֲשֶׁר יִגְעַת בּוֹ:

YHWH swore by His right hand,  
 and by (the) arm of His strength,  
 I will not give your grain again (as) food for your enemies,<sup>27</sup>  
 and foreigners will not drink your new wine which you toiled for!

62:9 כִּי מֵאֲסָפִיו יֵאָכְלֶהוּ  
 וְהִלְלוּ אֶת־יְהוָה  
 וּמִקְבְּצָיו יִשְׁתּוּהוּ  
 בַּחֲצֵרוֹת קִדְשָׁיו:

Because<sup>28</sup> those gathering it will eat it,  
 and will praise<sup>29</sup> YHWH.  
 And those gathering (synonym) it will drink it,

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

It is a good lesson to learn—when interpreters refer to passages as proving their point, be careful to examine those passages to see if in fact they do!

In spite of such blunders as this, we have found Oswalt’s work on **Isaiah** to be very helpful. He is a careful student of the Hebrew text and its many variants, which he relentlessly pursues—to our delight. It is when he lets his theological conclusions and assumptions color his comments on the text, that we are troubled—such as this, where he assumes that “arm” means “servant / messiah.”

<sup>27</sup>Here again, the editor of the 1QIs<sup>a</sup> scroll indicates that a couple of the letters are illegible.

<sup>28</sup>Where our Hebrew text reads כִּי, “Because...” 1QIs<sup>a</sup> has כִּי אִם, “Except...”

<sup>29</sup>1QIs<sup>a</sup> interpolates שֵׁם, “(the) name of...” **Rahlfs**, as well as the Syriac and Latin Vulgate translations do not have the interpolation.

in (the) courts of My set-apartness!<sup>30</sup>

62:10<sup>31</sup> עֲבֶרְךָ עֲבֶרְךָ בְּשַׁעְרֵים

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<sup>30</sup>1QIs<sup>a</sup> adds at the end of **verse 9** the phrase “said your God.” It then has a long space separating it from **verse 10**, perhaps indicating a change of subject.

Slotki comments that “The allusion is to the bringing of the tithes to the Temple where they were eaten with rejoicing (compare **Deuteronomy 12:17-18**).” (P. 304)

- 17 You (singular) will not be able to eat within your gates  
(the) tithe of your grain and your new wine; and your fresh oil,  
and your oxen’s and your flock’s first-born;  
and all your vow-offerings, which you shall vow,  
and your free-will offerings and your hand’s offering.
- 18 Instead, before YHWH your God you shall eat them,  
in the place which YHWH your God shall choose,  
you and your son and your daughter  
and your male-slave and your female-slave,  
and the Levite who is within your gates;  
and you shall rejoice before YHWH your God in every sending-forth of  
your hand.

<sup>31</sup>Slotki comments on **verses 10-12** that “The prophet calls for preparation to be made for welcoming the homecoming exiles.” (P. 304)

Achtemeier calls **verses 10-12** a “salvation oracle,” and states that “It is made up almost entirely of quotations or paraphrases of **Second Isaiah**. **Verse 10** is similar to **40:3**; **10e** recalls **49:22**...**verse 11** is similar to **40:9-11**, **11a-d** is like **48:20**, and **11ef** quotes **40:10cd** word for word; **verse 12d** recalls **41:17**; **42:16** and **54:6**. However, though the words are similar, the meanings are quite different from those found in **Second Isaiah**.” (Pp. 100-01)

Alexander comments that “As to the object of address, Eichhorn supposes it to be the Jews still lingering among the ruins of the Holy City...Gesenius, the exiled Jews in Babylon and other lands.” (P. 410) But Alexander insists that “This is not a prediction of the former restoration of the Jews from Babylon, or of their future restoration by the accession of the Gentiles [see Paul’s attempt at predicting the future of Israel in **Romans 9-11**]. The gates are then the gates of the ideal Zion or Jerusalem, the passage is an inward, not an outward passage, and the exhortation of the text is one to all concerned, or all who have the opportunity to take away obstructions and facilitate their entrance.” (P. 411)

Again we think Alexander is arbitrarily reading his view of the Ideal Israel into the text, which clearly, in its context, has reference to the literal city of Jerusalem / Zion, and the command to the returnees from Babylon to clear the way for others returning

(continued...)

פְּנֵי דֶרֶךְ הָעַם  
סֵלֶה סֵלֶה תְּמַסְלֶה

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<sup>31</sup>(...continued)

there—especially for the nations that **Third Isaiah** depicts as already on their way to Jerusalem with other Jewish exiles from all around the world.

Oswalt states that “These verses form the conclusion...of **chapters 60-62**. As such they summarize the import of what has been said, and, like their counterparts in **40:1-11** and **52:1-12**, call the people to an active kind of faith. God has shown them His vision of who they are and what they may become. He has also given them a glimpse of the glorious future that lies at the end of faith’s road. Now He calls them to act on what they have seen and heard, to live in the assurance that God’s promises are true...

“Several elements are highlighted: the highway of salvation, the calling of the nations, the announcement of the arrival of Salvation in the person of the Savior, and the end result of salvation in a relationship of holiness.” (Pp. 587-88)

What do you think? Can you find an announcement of Salvation “in the person of the Savior” in these verses?

Knight entitles **verses 10-12** “The Holy People,” and comments that “Trito-Isaiah now answers the question at issue, ‘What is God doing with us now that we have been rescued from the Babylonian Exile? He answers first in terms of mission—in other words, of Israel’s very *raison d’être* [‘reason for existence’] within the covenant (compare **Isaiah 49:6**,

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

Israel must forget their own problems, go out through the broken-down gates of Jerusalem, and build a road on which the peoples of the earth may tread when on their way up to Zion. Too often people of little faith denounce ‘foreign missions’ on the ground that at home we have not yet put our own house in order. Not so, says this sermon. ‘Go out into the highways and byways’ and bring in ‘the peoples,’ for it is God’s plan that they should help you build a city whose name will be ‘Sought out, a city not forsaken’... Trito-Isaiah assumes that no matter how evil the world is, out of that ‘chaos’ God will ‘bring up’ to Zion all the humanity whom He has made in His likeness.” (P. 68)

Yes! Even though “our own house is not in order,” as we go out in mission to the suffering and dying peoples of humanity, that very going will help us get in order ourselves!

## סְקִלוּ מֵאֲבָן

### הָרִימוּ נֶס עַל-הָעַמִּים:

Cross over, cross over<sup>32</sup> in / through the gates,<sup>33</sup>

clear a way (for) the people;

raise up, raise up the highway,<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Where our Hebrew text has the repeated imperative verb, עָבְרוּ עָבְרוּ, “pass over / through, pass over / through,” **Rahlfs**, along with 1QIs<sup>a</sup> and 1QIs<sup>b</sup> omit the second occurrence of the verb. The other ancient versions have the double verb like the Hebrew text.

<sup>33</sup>Where our Hebrew text has בַּשְּׁעָרִים, “in the gates,” the editor of 1QIs<sup>a</sup> indicates that the letters ע and ר are illegible.

Slotki’s translation is “Go through, go through the gates,” and he holds that this means to go through the gates of the cities of Judah “to make the following proclamation.” (P. 304) Perhaps— but this is not made explicit by the text, which may have reference to the gates of Jerusalem being opened for the returning exiles to go through.

<sup>34</sup>Here again a double imperative verb is used, סְלֹו סְלֹו, “raise up, raise up (the highway).” Both the Syriac and the Latin Vulgate read “Make the highway smooth.”

**Rahlfs** omits this entire line, and inserts the word “road / way” in the next line: “and the stones, the ones out of the road / way, throw / cast!”

Slotki holds that the highway to be raised up is the road homeward for the freed exiles from Babylon. (P. 304)

Oswalt asks “How is the image [of the highway] being used here?...It could speak of preparing the way for God to come and begin to realize His promises among them...Another possibility is that it refers to the highway over which the redeemed people walk to come into the new Jerusalem that God is preparing for them...A third possibility is that this is the highway over which the nations will flow to Zion, bringing Zion’s children with them as they come to worship Zion’s God.” (P. 588) Oswalt suggests that all three possibilities can be combined.

What do you think? We are inclined to agree with Slotki, and think that this is an exhortation to those who have already returned from Babylon to make the way smooth for additional exiles to return, whether from Babylon or elsewhere. But it may be broader than that—see Achtemeier’s view in the next footnote.

get rid of (the) stone(s);<sup>35</sup>  
raise up a signal over the peoples!<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>1QIs<sup>a</sup> interpolates **הַנִּגְיָה**, making the text read “stones of the stumbling,” and then adds the phrase **אִמְרוּ בְעַמִּים**, “say / declare (?) among (the) peoples.”

Slotki says that the Hebrew text means to gather out the stones “from the highway, so that the exiles meet with no obstacles on the road.” (P. 304)

Achtemeier states that “The summons to prepare a way is very much like the summons in **57:14**, but here it is issued to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah as a whole. As Yahweh’s saved people, the Judeans are now to fling wide their gates (which is also the thought of **60:11**) and to prepare a smooth road for foreign peoples (described by both singular ‘the people’ (**10b**), and plural ‘the peoples’ (**10e**), in order that all nations may stream toward Jerusalem. Indeed, a flag or signal is to be lifted up in order to guide the foreign peoples toward Jerusalem (compare **49:22**.” (P. 101)

<sup>36</sup>Slotki states that this command to lift up an ensign (our ‘signal’) is in order “to mark the spot whither the nations are to bring their captives and their gifts.” (P. 304) Compare **Isaiah 49:22**,

In this way my Lord YHWH spoke:  
Look—I will lift up My hand to (the) nations,  
and to peoples I will raise My signal;  
and they will bring your sons in (their) embrace,  
and your daughters they will carry upon (their) shoulder.

Achtemeier holds that “The nature of the signal ...is Yahweh’s proclamation of Israel’s salvation to the end of the earth.” (P. 101) Compare **Isaiah 49:6**,

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

We take this passage (**49:6**) to mean that YHWH is giving His servant to be the light (or signal) and means of YHWH’s deliverance / salvation. YHWH’s proclamation is declaring to the world what His servant has accomplished--his true righteousness (as depicted in **52:13-53:12** and **chapter 58**) urging the nations to come to His servant in order to share in his deliverance / salvation and genuine righteousness. If the returnees will embody that true righteousness, and be willing to die for others, they will truly be YHWH’s suffering servant(s)—a light / signal and means of salvation / deliverance to the world. What do you think?

<sup>37</sup>Slotki states that “The language of [verse 11] is reminiscent of **Isaiah 40:10; 48:20.**” (P. 304)

40:10, Look—my Lord YHWH with strength will come--  
and His arm is reigning for Him!,  
Look—His reward, (is) with Him,  
and His recompense / reward (is) before Him!

48:20, Go forth from Babylon! Flee from (the) Chaldeans!  
With a sound of a ringing-cry make this heard--  
cause it to go forth to the earth's end--  
say, YHWH redeemed / acted as Next-of-Kin to His servant Jacob!

That is, for Slotki, **Isaiah 62:11** is predicting the deliverance of the exiles from Babylon, similar to the message of **Second Isaiah**. But for Achtemeier, the context has changed from that of **Second Isaiah** to that of **Third Isaiah**, for whom the deliverance from Babylon is YHWH's accomplished act on Israel's behalf. Now, the returnees are to be used by YHWH as a light / signal to the nations, calling them to come and participate in YHWH's salvation / deliverance that has been embodied / accomplished in the return of the exiles from Babylon.

Alexander holds that “The plain sense of the words, the context here, and the analogy of **40:10**, are all completely satisfied by the hypothesis that the Messiah [or YHWH] is here described as coming to His people, bringing with Him a vast multitude of strangers, or new converts, the reward of His Own labors, and at the same time the occasion of a vast enlargement to His church.” (P. 412)

We think Achtemeier's interpretation is best. We certainly do not agree that “the plain sense of the words” uphold Alexander's view, but rather, think that Alexander is reading his view into the text.

Oswalt states concerning **verse 11** that “Although Duhm [Bernard Duhm, German commentary on Isaiah, 1892] argued that while it seems to make no sense for the proclamation to be understood as ‘Say to the daughter of Zion...to be heard to the end of the earth,’ it makes good sense in the context of this **Book [of Isaiah]**, on at least two grounds. First, all the nations are to hear of what God has done for Zion so that they can send Zion's children back to her...Second, the **Book [of Isaiah]** has made plain again and again that just as Zion was humiliated in the sight of the nations, the nations were going to witness her salvation by the mighty hand of God (**12:5-6; 14:1; 25:6-8; 30:31; 60:1-3**, etc.)” (P. 589)

Again, Oswalt is piling up proof-texts. **12:5-6** says no such thing; **14:1** mentions temporary residents joining Israel; (**14:2** mentions the peoples bringing Jacob / Israel to its place, there becoming Israel's slaves); **25:6-8** predicts a great feast given by YHWH

(continued...)

אָמְרוּ לְבֵת־צִיּוֹן

הִנֵּה יִשְׁעֶךָ בָּא

הִנֵּה שְׂכָרוֹ אֵתוֹ

וּפַעֲלָתוֹ לִפְנֵי:

Look—YHWH has caused to be heard to (the) end of the earth.<sup>38</sup>

Speak to Zion's daughter,<sup>39</sup>

Look, your salvation / deliverance<sup>40</sup> came / is coming!<sup>41</sup>

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

on Mount Zion for all peoples and nations, as He take away the veil of death, and swallows up death forever, but says nothing concerning the nations' witnessing Zion's salvation; **30:31** only predicts the Assyrians' being terror-stricken at YHWH's stroke; while **60:1-3** supports what Oswalt says.

<sup>38</sup>Knight states that the phrase, "Behold, the Lord has proclaimed it to the end of the earth" ... "occurs twenty-nine times in the second half of the **Book of Isaiah**." (P. 69)

<sup>39</sup>Oswalt holds that the phrase בֵּת־צִיּוֹן, literally "daughter-Zion," should be understood as meaning Zion is YHWH "daughter," just as in the phrase אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, literally "Land Israel," which means "Land of Israel," or "Land which is Israel." See **Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley** 128k, which describes such usage as "a merely formal genitive," added after the noun as a "nearer definition." Examples include נַהַר פְּרָת, *the river Euphrates*; אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, *the land of Canaan*; בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל *the virgin Israel (not of Israel)*, **Amos 5:2**.

<sup>40</sup>Where our Hebrew text reads יִשְׁעֶךָ, "your (singular) salvation / deliverance," all of the ancient versions read as does **Rahlfs**, "the savior / deliverer."

Knight asks, "Is it any wonder then that later writers could take the next step of using the name 'Isaiah' (יִשְׁעֵי־הוֹשֵׁעַ—the name of the whole **Book**), meaning 'YHWH is Savior,' when speaking of Jesus? Indeed, they associated the name of Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) with that of 'Jesus,' for both of these names mean '[YHWH] is Savior' (**Matthew 1:21**)."

<sup>41</sup>The Hebrew text of this line is הִנֵּה יִשְׁעֶךָ בָּא, "Look—your salvation /

(continued...)



Look, his pay / wages (is / are) with Him,  
and his work / recompense before Him!<sup>42</sup>

62:12 וְקָרְאוּ לָהֶם עִם־הַקָּדוֹשׁ

גְּאוּלֵי יְהוָה

וְלִדְּוָתָא יְקָרָא דְרוּשָׁה

עִיר לֹא נֶעְזְבָה:

And they<sup>43</sup> will call to them,<sup>44</sup> “The Set-Apart / Holy People!”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>(...continued)

deliverance came / is coming.” The ambiguity lies in the word **בָּא**, which can be read as qal perfect, “it came,” or as qal active participle, “it is coming” (i.e., in the near future; not the imperfect / future tense “it will come”). Knight asks, “What actually has He proclaimed? ‘Behold your salvation comes.’” (P. 69)

<sup>42</sup>For what is to be said to daughter Zion, **Rahfs** has:

Look, to you the savior / deliverer is coming,  
having his own reward,  
and the work before his face.”

The Hebrew text has

Look—your salvation / deliverance came / is coming;  
look—his pay / wages (is / are) with him,  
and his work / recompense / reward before him!

Knight comments that “This reward was God’s Own presence in person, now, as a foretaste of what is to come. Israel shall then bear their new name of ‘The holy people.’ This actual title occurs nowhere else in the **Old Testament**; yet it is now promised to the New Israel. It does not describe those who search for an individualistic spirituality, as the Hindu **Vedas** demand of their readers or as is popular amongst some Christians today. Rather, it describes those who forget themselves and, leaving the safety of the city, go outside its walls and gates, ‘emptying’ themselves in creative love for those still outside in the realm of ‘chaos.’ Seeing this happen, the nations will thereupon ‘seek you out.’” (P. 69)

<sup>43</sup>Slotki says “they” refers to the nations. (P. 304)

But Achtemeier disagrees, stating that she disagrees radically with most scholars at this point. “I believe the people who are to be called ‘the Holy People’ (compare

(continued...)

“Redeemed Ones of YHWH!”

And to you it will be called, “Sought For!”

“City Not Forsaken!”<sup>46</sup>

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

**Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 7:6; Isaiah 4:3; 1 Peter 2:9**) and the ‘Redeemed of Yahweh’ are the foreigners who come to Jerusalem...

“As in the oracle of **56:1-8**, **Third-Isaiah** here breaks all nationalistic and exclusivistic bounds and sees the vision of a united humanity, worshipping in ‘a house of prayer for all peoples’...It is...a vision of the coming kingdom of God on earth (compare similar universalistic views in **Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:9-10; 44:5; 45:22-25**). And the means by which it is to be achieved—namely through the salvation and exaltation of Israel—is precisely that which is found in **Isaiah 52:13-53:12** (compare **61:9; 62:2**). **Third-Isaiah** holds out to the whole of Judah and Jerusalem the possibility still of joining the Levitical-prophetic community in the role of performing the functions of the Servant of the Lord in bringing salvation to the world.” (P. 102)

<sup>44</sup>Slotki says “them” refers to the returning Israelites. (P. 304) Achtemeier, as seen in the preceding footnote, holds that it refers to the nations who come to share with Israel.

<sup>45</sup>Oswalt states that “holy behavior is clearly at the heart of what this division of the **Book of Isaiah** is about.” (P. 590)

We think this is overstatement. **Third Isaiah** is about much more than “holy behavior,” and “holy behavior” can be easily understood in terms of Israel’s segregating itself from the impure and unclean people of the land / nations of the earth, which is just the opposite of the kind of righteousness which **Third Isaiah** so powerfully advocates here and in **chapter 58**, and which is the very opposite of segregated “holiness” as it goes to the people most in need—of whatever race or religion, to meet their needs with compassionate grace, with no fear of becoming contaminated or made “unclean” by such contact.

<sup>46</sup>Slotki comments on p. 305 that these words are spoken to Zion, “the city which all the nations will seek to know and have dealings with. Compare the saying of Israel’s adversaries which God promises to reverse [in **Jeremiah 30:17**:]

Because I will bring up healing for you (feminine singular);  
and I will heal you from your wounds! (It is) a saying of YHWH.  
Because they called to you, Banished one!  
She is Zion, there is no one seeking her!

Note that the promise of **62:12** is a repetition of the promise in **62:4**.

(continued...)

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<sup>46</sup>(...continued)

Achtemeier comments that “The section closes, as it began in **chapter 60**, with the picture of abundant life in the kingdom. It is that picture—that glorious vision of the future redeemed by God—which **Third-Isaiah**’s authors want their people to live by and trust.

“One is reminded of the saying of the One who was forsaken, and yet who finally fulfilled the mission of the Suffering Servant: ‘...I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself’ (**John 12:32**). By the exaltation of His Suffering Servant, God works His redemption of the world.” (P. 102)