

The Prophecy of Isaiah

Introduction

Isaiah proclaimed his messages in the 8th century (742 – 687) BCE. The Northern Kingdom (Israel) was being annexed to Assyria as noted in II Kings 17. The Southern Kingdom (Judah) was paying tribute to Assyria in the hope of maintaining independence. (II Chronicles 28:21.)

Nothing is known about the childhood or training of Isaiah. His background is not revealed. The name Isaiah means “God is my Salvation.” Isaiah was married and refers to his wife as “the prophetess” (8:3). They have two sons both of who have symbolic names: “Shear-jashur” and “Maher-hash-baz.” He prophesied over a period of forty years under the kings of Judah who were: Uzziah, (753 – 742 BCE); Jotham, (742 - 745 BCE); Ahaz (735 – 715 BCE); and Hezekiah (715 – 687 BCE). Tradition says he was sawn asunder during the reign of Manasseh, based on The Ascension of Isaiah. Isaiah received the call to become the spokesman for God in chapter 6, verses 1 – 7. As a result scholars feel the first five chapters are introductory material taken from Isaiah’s messages. He may possibly also have been a priest.

Isaiah always thought of himself as simply being the mouthpiece of God. Isaiah is quoted more times in the New Testament than any other Old Testament book.

The message of Isaiah covers a considerable span of time. Since about 1880 there has been considerable question about the unity of the book. Prior to that date the book was considered to be a unity, having been written by Isaiah himself and generally considered to be Isaiah’s message which was thought to have covered his lifetime. In about 1880 a theory was advanced that there was a second writer who wrote chapters 40 – 66 since there is a change in language and thought. Chapters 1 – 39 were assigned to Isaiah. The chapters 40 - 66 which seemed to have covered the period from just prior to the fall of Babylon (October 19, 539 BCE) to the time of the reign of Cyrus of Persia (539 BCE) were assigned to a writer called Second Isaiah.. Later a possible third writer (Third Isaiah) was proposed who wrote chapters 56 – 66 to cover that time period.

In relatively recent years a new theory has been advanced and is, interestingly, being accepted by both conservative and liberal scholars. This assumes that there was an Isaianic School of the Prophets, who, as their understandings increased, expanded the book that had been written by Isaiah. The understandings of this Isaianic School of the Prophets seems to have begun with the control of Assyria and the prophetic understanding that there is to be a perfect king who will rule. Then, as the Persian rule took over the concept developed of a perfect servant who would attain leadership, having deep concern for the people. However, the influence of an alien world and human inadequacy brought about an even wider concept of a perfect conqueror who would conquer the powers of evil and provide the peace and ideal situation that had been longed

for. Thus, in this theory, the great span of history covered by the book of Isaiah is accounted for.

The prophecies of this book present a moving version of the assured hope of God's people in the world, for they are in God's hand. God speaks through Isaiah to impossible people who are its covenant community, the church. Through the work of the "Suffering Servant" incarnate, God's work in the world is foretold.

Isaiah served the people during times of persecution and uncertainty. His writings are historical and prophetic. The language is somber and at times is filled with poetic grandeur and moves one in a powerful way as the book presents messages of redemption and messianic hope.

The Hebrew text has very few problems. The Dead Sea Scrolls have one complete text of the book, along with some additional scroll fragments. To the amazement of scholars the manuscript from the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QIsa) revealed that the MT was virtually an exact copy of the much older manuscript, thus supporting the textual accuracy of Isaiah..

On those occasions when the chapters and verses of the Hebrew text do not correspond with the general English text the variant will be noted as 8 [H. 7] or verse 8 but in Hebrew verse seven. Cf. chapter 9.

Poetry is noted in the first 39 chapters with { }. The remaining chapters are virtually all poetry. In those chapters if there is prose it will be designated. Except for those designated paragraphs poetry is used by the prophet.

Isaiah

<CHAPTER 1>

1. *They Have Rebelled Against Me 1:1 – 5:24a*

A. *Superscription 1:1*

¹ The vision of Isaiah, ¹ the son of Amoz, ² which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. ³

B, A Booklet of Oracles 1:2 – 2:5

1. *Isaiah's Ingratitude 1:2 – 3*

² {“Listen, O heaven, and be attentive, O earth; for the Lord has spoken! ⁴ I have reared children and brought them up but they have rebelled ⁵ against me. ³ The ox knows its owner, ⁶ and the donkey knows its master's feed trough, but Israel does not realize that it does not understand.”} ⁷

2. *Dire Straits for Zion 1:4 – 9*

⁴ {“O sinful nation: The people in leadership are filled with guilt! They are descendants of evil actions! They are sons of those who are perverted! They have abandoned the Lord! They have spurned (*or, despised*) the Holy One of Israel! They are completely estranged! ⁸ ⁵ Where will you look for additional beatings for you continue to rebel? Every head is sick and every heart is afflicted! ⁹ ⁶ From the sole of your foot to your head there is nothing healthy about you, not one sound spot. You are covered with wounds, festering sores and bleeding wounds, none of which have been cleansed, ¹⁰ wrapped or soothed with oil. ¹¹ ⁷ Your country has been devastated, your cities are destroyed by fire; in your very presence aliens have been stripped your land and it has

¹ These first oracles of Isaiah are directed against Judah and Jerusalem.

² There is no connection with the prophet Amos.

³ This verse was the title of the book of Isaiah when it ended with the narratives of the reign of Hezekiah. Apparently somewhat later chapters 36 – 39 were added. See the dates of these king's reigns in the introduction.

⁴ These verses seem to be a rather formal opening to the collection of Isaiah's prophecies.

⁵ LXX: “set me at naught.”

⁶ Literally: “his purchaser.”

⁷ LXX: “The people have not regarded me.” NEB: “But Israel, my own people, has no knowledge, no discernment.”

⁸ Literally: “they have turned backward from him.”

⁹ MFT: “Why will you earn fresh strokes, for holding on in your revolt? Your whole head is sick, your whole heart is diseased.” JB: “where shall I strike you next, since you heap one betrayal on another? The whole head is sick, the whole heart has grown faint.”

¹⁰ Literally: “none have been pressed out” as one might press puss from a wound

¹¹ Another translation would read: “No spot is well. Your entire body is filled with bruises: uncleansed, unbandaged, and not soothed with oil.”

become devastated. ¹² ⁸ The daughter of Zion ¹³ is as defenseless as is an arbor (*or, shanty*) in a vineyard, or a shed in a cucumber (*or, melon*) patch or a besieged city. ¹⁴

⁹ {“If the Lord of hosts ¹⁵ had not left us [a few] ¹⁶ survivors we would have been like Sodom, and no better than Gomorrah.”} ¹⁷

3. God's Primary Concern 1:10- 17 ¹⁸

¹⁰ {“Hear the word of the Lord, O you who rule over Sodom! Listen to the teaching of our God, you priests of Gomorrah! ¹⁹ ¹¹ Do you think I need all your sacrifices? I, the Lord say. I have become fed up with burnt offerings of rams and the suet of fatlings. ²⁰ I am tired of (*or, have no desire for*) the blood of bulls or lambs or male goats. ¹² When you come to enter into my presence who is it that requires you to conduct this trampling within my courts? ²¹ ¹³ Do not bring any unneeded offerings ²² for I am disgusted with your incense. ²³ I cannot endure your new moons, Sabbaths and called assemblies [*for they are all corrupt*]. ²⁴ ¹⁴ Your new moons ²⁵ and appointed feasts fill me with revulsion. They have become a burden to me! I am tired of enduring them! ²⁶ ¹⁵ When you raise your hands ²⁷ I will hide my eyes (*or, I will not be attentive*) even though you repeatedly pray, I will not listen for your hands are stained with crime. ¹⁶ Bathe yourself (*or, Make yourself pure*), cleanse your self, ²⁸ remove from my sight the evil that you do. Cease to do evil! ¹⁷ Learn to do good! Seek justice! Abolish oppression ²⁹ and support the rights of orphans and widows.”}

¹² Literally: “like an overthrow by strangers.” An emendation would read: “overthrown like Sodom.” The devastation caused by the Assyrian army was great for they had become specialists in the techniques of military terrorism. JB: “all is desolate, as after the fall of Sodom.”

¹³ The city is personified as a young woman. Cf.: ANET p. 288.

¹⁴ LXX: “πελιορκουμένη.” So also: Syriac An arbor or shanty in a vineyard would be used during the harvest season. Someone would spend the night there to ward off thieves and wild animals.

¹⁵ This describes the Lord as being over the heavenly court and armies.

¹⁶ This is omitted in the principle manuscripts of the MT.

¹⁷ Cf.: Genesis 9:1 – 29. Isaiah saw the people as being long on religion but short on morality.

¹⁸ These verses are a strong polemic against Jerusalem's cultic practices.

¹⁹ Sodom and Gomorrah are figures of destruction and of wickedness. MFT: “Listen to the Eternal's word, you 'Sodom' of authorities! Listen to our God's directions, you 'Gomorrah' of citizens.”

²⁰ NEB: “buffalos.”

²¹ The verse division in the LXX is slightly different. CEV: “Who asked you to bring all this when you come to worship me? Stay out of my temple!”

²² Hebrew unclear! Literally: “to bring offerings is worthless.” LXX: “fine flour.”

²³ NEB: “the reek of your incense is abhorrent to me.”

²⁴ The Hebrew text is questionable. “For they are all corrupt” is added by the LXX.

²⁵ Some scholars emend the Hebrew to read: “your pilgrimages.”

²⁶ CEV: “They are a burden I am tired of carrying.”

²⁷ This is a gesture used when praying. Literally: “palms.”

²⁸ The reference is not simply to physical cleansing. Cf.: Psalm 73:18.

²⁹ The Hebrew is uncertain. It might mean: “punish evil people.” Some scholars translate this as “restrain evil.”

4. The Alternative: Repent or Be Destroyed 1”18 – 20

¹⁸ {“Come now: let us reason together (*or, let us argue your case*) says the Lord.
³⁰ Even though your life is stained with sin I will wash you so that you will be as clean (*or, white*) as snow. ³¹ Even though you are as red as crimson you will become like [*white*] wool.

¹⁹ {“If you agree and are obedient you will be enabled to eat the best food of the land. ²⁰ However, if you defy me and rebel, you will be killed, being devoured by the sword. I the Lord have spoken!”} ³²

5. Lament Over Jerusalem 1:21 – 23

²¹ {“How is it that the faithful ³³ city behaves like an evil character? ³⁴ She once was filled with justice! Righteousness resided in her but now it is murderers.

²² {“Your silver has become dross (*or, waste material*), your wine sellers have mixed water with their wine. ³⁵ ²³ Your leaders (*or, princes*) are rogues and their cronies are thieves. ³⁶ Everyone is keen on bribes and running after favors. They do not defend orphans and widows for their pleas never reach them.”}

6. The Lord’s Judgment 1:24 – 26

²⁴ {The Lord assuredly says: “I, the Lord of hosts, the mighty one of Israel will take vengeance on you for my wrath will be engaged in a struggle against my foes and I will avenge ³⁷ myself against my enemies. ³⁸

²⁵ {“I will restore ³⁹ your magistrates and your counselors just as you had years ago. ⁴⁰ When that is accomplished you (*Jerusalem*) will be called a city of righteousness: ‘The Faithful City.’”} ⁴¹

³⁰ The Hebrew is uncertain. NEB: “Come, let us argue it out.” It is God who is the judge of the individual and therefore God’s request becomes a demand.

³¹ An alternate translation could be: “Do you think that I will wash you as clean as snow? Your sins are deep red. Do you think you will be as white as wool?”

³² A choice must be made between life and good or death and evil. Isaiah is not speaking of an unconditional promise of forgiveness. He is saying a choice must be made.

³³ LXX: “ΣΙΩΝ.” As in verses 26 & 27.

³⁴ Literally: “a prostitute.”

³⁵ Hebrew uncertain. LXX: “your silver is worthless, your wine merchants mix the wine with water.” Justice is mingled with injustice, thus being spoiled and no longer trustworthy.

³⁶ There is a play on words in Hebrew with the words translated as “leaders” and “rogues.”

³⁷ There is a play on words in Hebrew with the words translated as “wrath” and “avenge.”

³⁸ LXX: “Woe to the mighty men of Israel; for my wrath will not cease against my adversaries. I will seek judgment through my enemies.” TAN: “I will get satisfaction from my foes. I will wreak vengeance on my enemies.”

³⁹ LXX: “establish judges as before.”

⁴⁰ MFT: “I will give you governors as at first, and counselors as at the start, and then a ‘citadel of justice’ shall be, a true and trusty City.”

⁴¹ The punitive and restorative acts of God are bound into one. “Faithful City” could have either of two meanings: 1. A moral force. 2. A firmly established entity.

7. An Addendum 1:27 – 31

²⁷ {“Zion will be ransomed by justice (*or, by my saving power*). Those who repent ⁴² will receive righteousness. ²⁸ However, those who rebel (*or, are apostate*) and those who persist in doing evil will be destroyed together. Those who forsake the Lord will perish. ²⁹ You will be ashamed of your idolatrous worship sites in which you had delighted and you will blush because of the shrines in the gardens which you have enjoyed (*or, cherished*). ⁴³ ³⁰ You will be like an evergreen tree ⁴⁴ whose leaves have withered and like an arid garden. ³¹ Just as the strongest tree ⁴⁵ becomes tinder so also the works done by individuals also will burn from a spark, both will burn together and there will be no one to quench them.”} ⁴⁶

<CHAPTER 2>

8. Turning to the People 2:1 – 5

¹ The word of the Lord which came to Isaiah the son of Amoz which he saw concerning Jerusalem: ⁴⁷ ² {“It will happen in the days to come that the house of the Lord will stand on the mountain and will be lifted up above the hills and will be established so that all the nations will stream toward it. ⁴⁸ ³ Many people will come and say, ‘Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Judah ⁴⁹ that he may instruct us in his ways and that we may walk in his path.’ Instruction issues from Zion. The word of the Lord comes from Jerusalem. ⁵⁰ ⁴ He will judge between nations and will arbitrate between many nations; and they will beat their swords into plow points, ⁵¹ and their spears into pruning hooks; ⁵² nations will not engage in war against other nations and there will no longer be training for war. ⁵³ ⁵ O house of Israel, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.”}

⁴² “Those who repent” could be translated as “her survivors.” LXX: “αιχμαλωσια αυτης.”

⁴³ People believed that dedicating a garden to a fertility god would cause that fertility god to bless their crops.

⁴⁴ Evergreens were suitable symbols of undying life --- as fertility.

⁴⁵ The Hebrew is unclear.

⁴⁶ TAN translates the Hebrew word that is uncertain as “stone walls.” A possible translation might be: “Your wealth will be like dry wood set on fire by its owners.”

⁴⁷ This heading (v. 1) in effect is the heading for chapters 2 – 12. The heading in 1:1 might be considered to be a prefix. Thus v. 1 is a second superscription which heads the collection of prophetic messages in these chapters (2 – 12). These were particularly addressed to Judah and Jerusalem.

⁴⁸ Verses 2 – 5 also appear in a similar form in Micah. Micah 4:4 appears to present the completion of what is being presented here by Isaiah. One discovers that there is no simple linear continuity when dealing with God’s time. “Lifted up above the hills” is omitted in the Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa. “Will be established” in the LXX is “will be glorious” or “conspicuous.”

⁴⁹ NEB: “Come, let us climb up onto the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Judah.”

⁵⁰ To hear and receive the message of God is attainable since God – even now – is speaking.

⁵¹ Plow points would be the iron points that were used on a wooden plow. Plowshares had not yet been invented in Isaiah’s time. NEB: “mattocks and pruning knives.”

⁵² LXX: “sickles.” So: JB.

⁵³ Weapons and instruments of iron were not always available to the people of Israel. Cf. I Samuel 13:19 – 22, Joel 3:10. NAB: “nor shall the train for war again.” OTL Isaiah: “nor ever again be trained for war.” CEV: “They will pound their swords and their spears into rakes and shovels. They will never make war or attack one another.”

C. The Day of the Lord 2:6 – 22

1. Coming doom upon Idolatry 2:6 – 11, 18 – 22

⁶ {“You ⁵⁴ have forsaken your people, the house of Judah, because they are full of diviners from the east and sorcerers like the Philistines, and have struck bargains with foreigners. ⁵⁵ ⁷ Their land is filled with silver and gold and there appears to be an endless amount of their treasures. Their land is filled with horses and there are countless chariots. ⁸ Their land is filled with abominations (*or, idols*). They bow down to this work of their hands – what their fingers have made.⁵⁶ ⁹ In this way humanity is humbled, and brought low. (Do not pardon them!) ⁵⁷ ¹⁰ Enter into the caves in the rock, hide in holes in the ground (*or, in the dust*)! Hide from the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of his majesty. ⁵⁸ ¹¹ The haughty looks of people ⁵⁹ will be brought low and the pride of people will be humbled. At that time the Lord alone will be exalted.”} ⁶⁰

2. Humbling of Human Pride 2:12 – 17

¹² {“The Lord of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, ⁶¹ against all that is haughty, ⁶² ¹³ against all the cedars of Lebanon, ⁶³ tall and majestic, and against all the oaks of Bashan, ⁶⁴ ¹⁴ against all the high mountains, and against all the lofty hills, ¹⁵ against every lofty tower, and against every fortified wall, ¹⁶ against all the ships of Tarshish ⁶⁵ and against all the stately vessels. ⁶⁶ ¹⁷ The haughtiness of individuals will be humbled and their pride will be abased for the Lord will be exalted.”} ⁶⁷

⁵⁴ LXX: “He.”

⁵⁵ Hebrew unclear. NIV: “they are full of superstition from the east; they practice divination like the Philistines and clasp hands with pagans.” Divination was strictly forbidden in Deuteronomy 18:9 – 14. LXX: “For he has forsaken his people, the house of Israel, because their land is filled as at the beginning with divinations, as in the land of the Philistines, and many strange children were born to them.” Some scholars choose to emend the text to read: “do not forgive them” (or, “do not raise them up.”)

⁵⁶ Hebrew uncertain. A possible emendation is: “their idols weep.”

⁵⁷ Verse 9b is omitted in the Dead Sea Scroll MSS. This statement does not add anything to the passage. Some scholars prefer to emend the Hebrew to read: “Therefore men will be abased, and each man brought low and all the idols will disappear.”

⁵⁸ The LXX adds: “When he will rise to strike the world terribly.”

⁵⁹ Literally: “eyes of the loftiness of men.” On that day human pride will lower its eyes and the acceptance of people will become humility.

⁶⁰ Verses 18 – 22 continue this oracle which is interrupted by the oracle of 2:12 – 17.

⁶¹ Some scholars feel this is one of Isaiah’s oldest oracles. OTL Isaiah: “has a day of waiting against all the proud and mighty.” NIV: “the Lord Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled.)”

⁶² The LXX adds: “on everyone that is proud, high and exalted.”

⁶³ This refers to the area north of Palestine which would be the country of Lebanon.

⁶⁴ The wooded uplands east of the Jordan river.

⁶⁵ Tarshish is felt by recent scholars to have been a Phoenician settlement in Spain, about 2000 miles from the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Other scholars feel Tarshish was located along the Arabian Peninsula.

⁶⁶ Literally: “splendid canopy.”

⁶⁷ Human self sufficiency and pride are the mark of the impossible ambition to overcome littleness and finitude, thus making oneself like God. TEV: “Human pride will be ended and human arrogance will be destroyed. Idols will completely disappear, and the Lord alone will be exalted on that day.”

1. Coming Doom of Idolatry (concluded) 218 – 21

¹⁸ {“The idols will vanish completely. ¹⁹ People will slink into caves in the rocks and into holes in the ground, ⁶⁸ attempting to hide from the terror of the Lord and his majestic glory when he appears to terrify the earth. ⁶⁹ ²⁰ In that day people will take their silver and golden idols which they themselves had made to be worshipped, throwing them at moles and bats ⁷⁰ ²¹ so that they might enter the caves and the clefts in the cliffs in hope of escaping the terror of the Lord who comes in the glory of his majesty when he appears to terrify the earth. ²² [Turn away from all persons who are breathing for they are all worthless.] }⁷¹

<CHAPTER 3> ⁷²

D, The Doom of Rulers 3:1 – 15

1. Social Anarchy 1 - 8

¹ {“Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts is taking away ⁷³ the support of every kind ⁷⁴ from Judah and Jerusalem. ² The mighty soldiers and warriors, judges and prophets, ⁷⁵ soothsayers ⁷⁶ and counselors, ³ the captains of fifty and the magistrates, the counselors and the skilled artisans, along with the expert enchanter. ⁴ I will designate immature boys ⁷⁷ as princes ⁷⁸ and the unqualified ⁷⁹ will govern them. ⁵ The people will oppose ⁸⁰ one another: individuals in opposition to one another, neighbors against neighbors, youths insulting their elders and the riffraff will bully their leaders.⁸¹

⁶ {“When a man seizes his brother in his father’s house and says: ‘You have a robe. You will be our leader, and you will ruler over this heap of ruins,’ ⁸² ⁷ he will speak

⁶⁸ Literally: “dust.”

⁶⁹ OTL Isaiah: “the dreaded splendor of his majesty when he rises to terrify the earth.”

⁷⁰ LXX: “having carried them into the cave, and into the cleft of the rocks ...in that day people will throw the silver and gold idols which they had fashioned for worship to the moles and bats.”

⁷¹ This verse is ungrammatical. NEB: “Have no more to do with man, for what is he worth? He is no more than the breath of his nostrils.” TAN: “O cease to glorify man who is only a breath in his nostrils!” TEV: “Put no confidence in mortal men, what are they worth?” NIV: “Stop trusting in man; who hasn’t a breath in his nostrils. O what account is he?”

⁷² Some scholars feel the three sections of chapter 3 were originally independent sections which were combined because of their time substance. Isaiah points out the dependence of society on its key leaders and how quickly the social structure will collapse if left leaderless.

⁷³ LXX: “will take away.”

⁷⁴ LXX: “her mighty men and her mighty women.” TAN: “every prop and stay.” OTL Isaiah “every prop of food and every prop of water.”

⁷⁵ The prophet speaks in opposition to the ruling classes of Jerusalem’s society --- the military, judicial and religious leaders since those were to provide stability for the community.

⁷⁶ Literally: “instructed in whispering.”

⁷⁷ CEV footnote: “worthless nobodies.”

⁷⁸ Possibly the reference is to rulers whose unprofessional and undependable nature resembles immature children.

⁷⁹ LXX: “mockers.”

⁸⁰ The Hebrew word seems to give the thought of: “to fall upon.”

⁸¹ JB: “a lout abuse a noble.” NEB: “and nobodies against men of substance.”

⁸² Leadership is no longer taken seriously.

out at that moment, saying, ‘I will not be the one to heal the wounds of society! I do not have bread nor do I have a robe (*or, With no food and clothing you want to make me to be the ruler?*). You dare not try to make me be a ruler over the people!’”⁸³

⁸ {“Why has Jerusalem stumbled? ⁸⁴ Why has Judah faltered? It is because they have insulted the Lord with their words and their deeds, speaking defiantly in his presence.”⁸⁵

2. A Ruined People 3:9 – 12

⁹ {“Their being partial is evidence (*or, witnesses*) ⁸⁶ against them that they proclaim their sin as did Sodom (*or, is as vile as that of Sodom*),⁸⁷ they do not conceal it. Woe to them! They have earned their own disaster. ⁸⁸ ¹⁰ (Tell the righteous ⁸⁹ that it will be well with them for they will eat the fruit of their deeds.⁹⁰ ¹¹ Woe to the wicked! It will go badly for them, for what their hands have done will be done to them.) ¹² O my children, your oppressors have misled you and women are ruling those oppressors ⁹¹ thereby confusing the course of your path.”⁹²

3. Rapacity for the Rulers 3:13 – 15

¹³ {“The Lord has risen to accuse! He stands as the judge of his people. ¹⁴ The Lord enters into an indictment against the elders and the princes (*or, leaders*) of the people:⁹³ It is you who have ravaged and plundered the poor whose few possessions are no in your houses? ⁹⁴ ¹⁵ How dare you crush and overwhelm my people and grind ⁹⁵ the faces of the poor? I the Lord of hosts declare this!”}

⁸³ Hebrew uncertain.

⁸⁴ This appears grammatically to be a ‘prophetic perfect’ form. “will stumble” or “will totter in ruins.” LXX: “ruined” or “forsaken.”

⁸⁵ LXX: “disobedient as they are toward the Lord.”

⁸⁶ Literally: “the recognition of faces.” An emendation would read: “their partiality and judgment testify against them.”

⁸⁷ JB: “they parade their sin like Sodom.”

⁸⁸ An emendation of the MT could read: “they have blessed their souls.”

⁸⁹ Emended the text can be read: “Happy are those who are righteous and just.”

⁹⁰ LXX: “Woe to their souls, for they have devised an evil council against themselves, saying, Let us bind the just, for he is burdensome to us; therefore they will eat the fruits of their works.”

⁹¹ The thought is possibly that the women of the royal harem wield the power behind the throne. TEV: “Many leaders oppose my people, and your creditors cheat them.”

⁹² Literally: “and the road of your paths they swallow up.” LXX: “O my people who pronounce you to be blessed are leading you astray and preventing the path on which you walk.” The signposts that guild right living and a sound society are gone.

⁹³ These were apparently not members of the royal family but magistrates who would take up any kind of complaint as a legal matter.

⁹⁴ LXX: “but why have you set my vengeance on fire and why is the spoil of the poor in your houses?”

⁹⁵ The reference is like grinding between two millstones.

E. The Proud Women of Jerusalem 3:16 – 4:1 ⁹⁶

¹⁶ {“The Lord said: Because the daughters of Zion are vain and hold their heads high, ⁹⁷ having roving eyes and a mincing gait, ⁹⁸ making a tinkling noise as they go. ¹⁷ The Lord will inflict them with loathsome sores on the foreheads of the daughters of Zion and the Lord will lay bare their private parts. ⁹⁹

¹⁸ {“In that day the Lord will take away all adornments: ¹⁰⁰ ankle bracelets, headbands, ¹⁰¹ crescents, ¹⁰² ¹⁹ pendants, bracelets and shawls, ¹⁰³ ²⁰ turbans, armlets, beaded sashes, perfume boxes, ¹⁰⁴ amulets, ²¹ signet rings, nose rings, ²² festive robes, capes, purses, ²³ lace gowns, linen shawls, kerchiefs and veils. ¹⁰⁵

²⁴ {“Instead of perfume there will be a stench; instead of a girdle (*or, apron*) a rope; instead of a fashionable coiffure, ¹⁰⁶ baldness; instead of a beautiful robe, sack cloth; instead of beauty, shame. ¹⁰⁷ ²⁵ Your men will die in warfare and your warriors in battle. ²⁶ In the square for the purpose of assembly there will be lamentation and wailing for Zion has been ravished and brought low.”} ¹⁰⁸

⁹⁶ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁹⁷ Literally: “throats bent back.”

⁹⁸ R. B. Y. Scott suggests “They walk with chin in the air and roving eye, with mincing steps and jangling their bangles as they go.” TEV: “and their bracelets on the ankles jingle.” Some MSS have “declining eyesight” instead of “roving eyes.”

⁹⁹ LXX: “Therefore the Lord will humiliate the chief daughters from Zion and the Lord will expose them on that day. “ LB: “The Lord will send a plague of scabs to ornament their heads. He will expose the nations for all to see.” To bare a woman’s head and to bare her private parts was a humiliation that was deemed to be intolerable.

¹⁰⁰ Some scholars feel verses 18 - 23 are a later interpolation. Many articles in verses 18 – 24 cannot be identified with certainty.

¹⁰¹ Literally: “buckles.” The Hebrew word is an Ugaritic loan word. Bright metal was a part of this headband which would reflect the sun, thus causing people to describe these as ‘little suns.’

¹⁰² These were either broaches or pendants perhaps related to a moon god.

¹⁰³ This was perhaps either a garment covering the head and hanging down the back or a veil.

¹⁰⁴ Literally: “houses for the soul.” Possibly “talisman.”

¹⁰⁵ LXX: “18 The Lord will take away the glory of their clothing, the curls, fringes and crescents, ¹⁹ chains, facial ornaments, ²⁰ the array of their glorious ornaments and the armlets and bracelets, the wreathed work, finger rings, ornaments for the right hand, ²¹ ear rings, garments having scarlet borders, garments with purple color, shawls worn in the house, and Spartan sheer dresses, fine linen dresses interwoven with gold and purple, light coverings for couches.”

¹⁰⁶ Literally: “a coiffure dressed like artistic metal work.” JB: “instead of hair elaborately done, a shaven scalp.”

¹⁰⁷ Some scholars feel there is a break in the text. The Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa reads: “For shame will take the place of beauty.” Some MSS have “branding” in place of “shame.”

¹⁰⁸ The Hebrew text of verse 26 is uncertain. LXX: “24“Instead of a sweet smell, dust; Instead of a girdle, a rope; instead of golden head ornaments, baldness because of your actions; instead of a scarlet tunic, sackcloth. ²⁵Your most beautiful women whom you love will die by the sword, your mighty men will fall by the sword and be brought low. ²⁶The places where your ornaments are stored will mourn and you [Zion] will be left alone, and leveled to the ground.”

<CHAPTER 4>

¹ {“In that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, ‘We will eat our own bread and provide (*or, wear*) our own clothing if you will let us call ourselves by your name, thus taking away the disgrace of childlessness (*or, our stigma*).”} ¹⁰⁹

F. Zion Purged by Judgment 4:2 – 6

² “In that day ¹¹⁰ the Branch ¹¹¹ of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, ¹¹² and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of Israel’s survivors. ¹¹³ ³ Those who remain in Zion and all those who are destined ¹¹⁴ or remain in Jerusalem have been enrolled in the book of life and will become holy.

⁴ “When the Lord has washed away all the filth ¹¹⁵ of the women of Zion ¹¹⁶ and purged ¹¹⁷ the blood stains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of harsh judgment ¹¹⁸ ⁵ The Lord will create (*or, provide*) ¹¹⁹ a cloud by day and smoke along with a flaming fire by night over the entire site of the mount of Zion for the festive gathering of his people. The festive gathering will be covered with a canopy ¹²⁰ and pavilion. ⁶ It will be a booth for shade by day and a refuge and protection ¹²¹ from storm and rain.” ¹²²

¹⁰⁹ The loss of men because of war was so disproportionate that many women were left without partners. If a woman did not have a husband and children it was felt that God was punishing her.

¹¹⁰ “In that day” is found in 3:18, 4:1, 4:2. The day that Isaiah is referring to is ending but that is not the end for believers.

¹¹¹ Literally; “that which sprouts.” :” Because they feel this is a Messianic reference some translators capitalize the word “Branch” others feel the reference is to David’s branch. The NAB has a footnote, saying: “Branch of the Lord – divine blessings in general which later culminated in the Messiah.”

¹¹² The Lord will shine gloriously in counsel on the earth to exalt and glorify the remnant of Israel.

¹¹³ TAN: “In that day, the radiance of the Lord will provide beauty and glory, and the splendor of the land will give dignity and majesty to the survivors of Israel.” In this translation “the land” could be emended to read “my Lord.”

¹¹⁴ Literally: “written for life.”

¹¹⁵ The Hebrew word almost gives the sense of “vomit.”

¹¹⁶ There are two other possible translations: 1. “woman” which would personify Zion. 2. “people” thinking of one of the traditional concepts for the Hebrew idiom: “daughters of Zion,”

¹¹⁷ Literally: “rinsed away.”

¹¹⁸ This verse deals with inner uncleanness and outer uncleanness. Both are able to be, and are cleansed by the Lord. NEB: “If the Lord washes away the filth of the women of Zion and cleanses Jerusalem from the blood that is in it by the spirit of judgment, a consuming spirit, then over every building on Mount Zion...” NAB: “and purges Jerusalem with a blast of searing judgment.” NAB: “blast of judgment and the blast of destruction.” There is a play on words found in Hebrew with the words: “spirit of judgment” and “spirit of burning” which above is translated as “harsh judgment.”

¹¹⁹ So: LXX & Vulgate. Literally: “will cause.” Another emendation might read: “he will spread” which is based on Psalm 105:10.

¹²⁰ All other references to a “canopy” in the Hebrew Scriptures are those of a wedding. Possibly the intent is to remind the people of the close relationship between the Lord and those who comprise the remnant that was to remain in Jerusalem.

¹²¹ Literally: “hiding place.”

¹²² There are always contrasts in life: heat and cold storms; calmness and threat. Isaiah speaks of a Messianic reference in terms of the bringer of salvation and the return of paradise. God’s presence is not confined to the Holy of Holies in the temple.

G. A Song of the Lord's Vineyard 5:1 – 7

¹ {“Let me sing (*or, I will sing*) a love song about my beloved concerning his vineyard. ¹²⁴ My beloved had a vineyard located on a very fertile hill. ¹²⁵ He broke the ground, cleared it of stones, planted the choicest red grapes, built a watch tower in the center of the vineyard, and hewed out a vine vat (*or, wine press*) and looked hopefully toward a yield of fine grapes. Instead it yielded wild (*or, sour*) grapes. ¹²⁶

³ {“Now, O residents of Jerusalem and people of Judah: Be the judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴ What more could have been done to my vineyard that I failed to do? When I hoped to receive a yield of grapes why did I get a yield of wild grapes?

⁵ {“Now let me tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove the hedge so that it can be ravaged. I will break down the wall and it will be trampled down. ⁶ I will make it a wasteland for it will no longer be pruned or hoed and it will become overgrown with briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that no rain should fall on it. ¹²⁷

⁷ {“The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, ¹²⁸ and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting. ¹²⁹ He looked for justice and instead there was injustice. He looked for righteousness and instead there was a wail of unrighteousness (*or, corruption*).”} ¹³⁰

H. Those who Neither Fear Nor Regard Humanity 5:8 – 24

⁸ {“Woe to those (*or, A curse on those*) ¹³¹ who purchase additional houses, ¹³² add fields to their property until there is no more room for others and one is forced to live alone in the midst of a field. ¹³³ ⁹ The Lord of hosts has sworn ¹³⁴ in my hearing, ‘Assuredly many large and beautiful houses will become desolate, having no occupants. ¹⁰ Ten acres (*or an area that could be plowed in ten days by 1 yoke of oxen*) of vineyard

¹²³ This chapter is unique in that it is a reproach and a threat set in the form of a song. It is perhaps the only occasion in which this was done as a lengthy song. Some scholars feel this chapter was inserted in Isaiah as a *Denkschrift* (Memorial) by Isaianic prophets. The theory is gradually gaining supporters for a variety of reasons.

¹²⁴ A slight emendation would read: “Now hear me sing on behalf of my friend — a song about his vineyard. This would be in accordance with the tone of Isaiah in the other chapters. One can imagine people coming to hear the song, --- listening expectantly. For a brief time their expectations were realized.

¹²⁵ Hebrew uncertain. Literally: “a horn.”

¹²⁶ Literally: “stinking fruit.” LXX: “thorns” here and in verse 4. This was a very costly undertaking!

¹²⁷ In Hebrew there are two plays on words in this verse found in the lines: “I will make...” and “I will command.”

¹²⁸ Here it is made clear. The parable is descriptive of Israel as the vineyard.

¹²⁹ TAN: “for the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the seedlings he lovingly planted are the men of Judah.”

¹³⁰ There is a play on words in this verse with the words “justice” and “righteousness.”

¹³¹ This alternative translation is suitable in each of the six woes in this chapter. Isaiah presents six woes in verses 8 – 30. These fall into pairs. These pairs are: woes 1 & 6; woes 2 & 5; woes 3 & 4.

¹³² The NAB in a footnote describes it clearly: “land grabbers.”

¹³³ LXX: “Woe to those who join house to house and field to field.”

¹³⁴ “Has sworn” is omitted in the LXX.

will yield one bath (6.5 gallons), and an homer (6.5 bushels) of seed will yield an ephah (or, .65 bushel).¹³⁵ 11 Woe to those who go on lengthy drinking bouts that last until late evening when the wine inflames.¹³⁶ 12 Their feasts (or, *banquets*) will have lyres and harps, tambourines and flutes, along with wine but they do not think at all about the deeds of the Lord or pay attention to his deeds.¹³⁷ 13 Therefore my people will certainly go into exile for not caring about those who are victims of hunger and those multitudes who are dying of thirst.¹³⁸ 14 Therefore Sheol¹³⁹ certainly has enlarged its appetite and opened its mouth beyond expectation¹⁴⁰ and the leadership (or, *nobility*) of Jerusalem will go down, along with the entire throng who are revelers.¹⁴¹ 15 [Humanity is bowed down and mortals are brought low, and the pride of the haughty will be humbled. 16 But the Lord of hosts is exalted in justice and the holy God shows himself to be holy through righteousness.]¹⁴² 17 Then the lambs will graze in their pastures and those to be fattened and the kids will graze among the ruins.¹⁴³ 18 Woe to those who are drawn to sin by falsehood and who are ensnared with sinfulness: as if having been tied to sin with ropes,¹⁴⁴ 19 who say, “Let him hurry to do his work that we might see it. Let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel be revealed and let it come that we might know it.”

20 {“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who think of darkness as light and light as darkness, who think of bitter as sweet and sweet as bitter.”¹⁴⁵ 21 Woe to those who consider themselves to be wise in their own opinions and clever in their own sight.¹⁴⁶

22 {“Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and valiant in mixing strong drinks, 23 who vindicate the guilty in return for bribes and deprive the innocent of their rights.¹⁴⁷ 224 Therefore just as the flames devour straw, and hay shrivels as it burns, so

¹³⁵ The harvest will be only 1/10th of what was sown.

¹³⁶ TAN: “...those who chase liquor from early morning until late in the evening and are enflamed with...”

¹³⁷ LXX: “harp, psaltery drums and pipes: but they do not regard the work of the Lord and consider his work.”

¹³⁸ OTL Isaiah: “Therefore my people will go into exile for a lack of knowledge. These men of rank will die of hunger and their masses will be parched with thirst.”

¹³⁹ Sheol was thought to be the abode of the dead where people were a mere shadow of their former selves. LXX: “Hades.” NIV: “The grave enlarges its appetite.”

¹⁴⁰ NAB: “opened its maw without limit.”

¹⁴¹ LXX: “Therefore Sheol has increased its appetite and opened its mouth, its limitless jaws, and the nobility, common people with all brawlers and revelers will go down.”

¹⁴² Some scholars feel verses 15 – 16 are a later interpolation.

¹⁴³ The LXX has the word “kids” as do several other versions. Hebrew: “strangers,” thus reading: “Strangers will eat in the waste places of the wealthy.” LXX: “They that were spoiled will be fed like bulls and lambs. They will feed in the waste places of those who were taken away.” NEB: “Young rams shall feed where fat bullocks once pastured, and kids shall graze on broad acres where cattle grew fat.”

¹⁴⁴ JB: “Woe to those who draw down punishment on themselves with an ox’s halter, and sin as with a chariot race.” The figures of speech used in Hebrew are rather difficult to translate. This is a vivid figure of obstinate attachment of people to their sins. They drag their guilt like a bullock on a rope and their sins like a heifer on a leash.

¹⁴⁵ The depravity of people is evidenced when they do not make moral decisions. The appearance is that the moral code is being rewritten so that personal taste, not the supreme God, rules.

¹⁴⁶ Personal pride stands in the way of God’s will and purpose.

¹⁴⁷ The prophet points out with irony the foolish boasts of those who are under the influence of liquor.

their root will become rotten and their blossoms will wither for they have rejected the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.”} ¹⁴⁸

I. Grace is Exhausted 5:25 – 30 ¹⁴⁹

²⁵ {“Therefore the anger of the Lord was roused against his people. Why did he stretch out his hand against them and strike them, so that the mountains quaked, and the dead bodies were like refuse ¹⁵⁰ in the midst of the streets? His anger was as dung in midst of street! Yet even with this his anger was not burned away and his hand is still stretched out. ¹⁵¹

²⁶ {“He will raise a signal for a nation that is far away and whistle for it from the ends of the earth, that it might come speedily! ²⁷ No one [*from this army*] is weary, no one stumbles, no one is sleepy or asleep, no one’s belt is loose, no one’s sandal strap is torn! ²⁸ Their arrows are sharpened, all their bows are bent (*or, ready to be used*), their horses’ hoofs sound like flint, and their chariot wheels move like a whirlwind! ²⁹ They make a roaring sound like that of a young lion. They growl and seize their prey, carrying it off and no one is able to rescue. ³⁰ They will roar over [*their victory*] on that day, like the roaring of the sea, and if one looks to the land, behold darkness and distress is everywhere for the light is darkened by the clouds!”}

<CHAPTER 6>

II Bind up the Testimony 6:1 – 8:18

A. Isaiah’s Vision of God 6:1 – 13

¹ {“In the year of the death of King Uzziah ¹⁵² I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, ¹⁵³ high and lifted up and the skirts of his robe filled the temple. ¹⁵⁴ ² Above ¹⁵⁵ him stood the attendant Seraphim, ¹⁵⁶ each having six wings: two wings covered their eyes, two wings covered their feet, ¹⁵⁷ and the remaining two wings were used in flying. ³ They continually called to one another saying: {“Holy, holy, holy ¹⁵⁸ is the Lord of hosts, the entire earth ¹⁵⁹ is filled with his glory.”} ⁴ The door pivots ¹⁶⁰ in the threshold shook at the

¹⁴⁸ LXX: “Therefore as stubble will be burned by a coal fire and consumed by violent flame, their root will be chaff, and their flower will go up as dust, for they rejected the law of the Lord of hosts and insulted the word of the Holy One of Israel.”

¹⁴⁹ MFT inserts 5:25 – 29 after 10:4. Verse 30 is omitted. CB inserts 5:25 – 30 after 10:4.

¹⁵⁰ CB: “offal.”

¹⁵¹ LXX: “his hand is not yet raised.”

¹⁵² King Uzziah died in 742 BCE.

¹⁵³ LXX: “highly exalted throne and the house was full of his glory.”

¹⁵⁴ Isaiah speaks in a concrete manner about something that would usually be considered to be spoken of in a figurative manner.

¹⁵⁵ LXX: “around him.”

¹⁵⁶ Some translators choose to describe these beings as “fiery attendants.” Literally: “burning ones.” A small group of commentators feel these attendants of God were previously symbolized in the “fiery serpents” of Numbers 21:6, 8. They then describe them as winged serpents. These seraphim are attendants of God. They are not mentioned again in the Bible until Revelation 4:6 – 8.

¹⁵⁷ CB: “six wings, with two of which he covered his face, with two he covered his loins, and with two he hovered in flight.”

¹⁵⁸ In Hebrew the repetition of words three times would be a super-superlative. The calling to each other might have been a form of antiphonal singing.

¹⁵⁹ Cf.: ANET pp. 385a, 389c.

¹⁶⁰ Literally: “door sockets.” The door pivots reverberated in the sockets located in the sills with the noise of the shout.

voice of the one who called and the entire building was filled with smoke. ¹⁶¹ ⁵ I said, {“Woe is me! I am doomed! ¹⁶² I am a man of unclean lips (*or, I speak impiety*) and I live with people who have unclean lips (*or, who speak impiety*) for my eyes have seen the Lord of hosts!”} ¹⁶³

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having a red hot ember in his hand which he had taken from the altar with a tongs. ⁷ He touched my mouth and said, {“Be assured: when this has touched your mouth your guilt will have been taken away, and your sins are forgiven.”} ¹⁶⁴ ⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying: “Whom shall I send? ¹⁶⁵ Who will go for us?” ¹⁶⁶ Then I said, “Here I am! Send me!” ⁹ The Lord said “Go, and tell the people; {“You hear repeatedly ¹⁶⁷ but you will not understand (*or, How will you understand?*). You will see repeatedly but you will not perceive (*or, How will you understand?*). ¹⁰ The heart of my people will be unreceptive. ¹⁶⁸ They will have hearing problems. They will close their eyes so they will be unable to see. ¹⁶⁹ This will occur so that they will not see, hear or accept what is being revealed.” ¹⁷⁰ ¹¹ Then I said, “How long, O Lord?” and he replied: “Until cities are destroyed and have no inhabitants and houses are forsaken. ¹⁷¹ The land will be completely desolate. ¹⁷² ¹² The Lord removes people to distant locations and within the land there will be many forsaken places. ¹³ Even though a tenth of the people will remain the land will again be ravaged like a terebinth or an oak, the stump of which remains after the tree has fallen. (The stump is the holy seed.) ¹⁷³

¹⁶¹ The smoke possibly harks back to the “pillar of fire” during the time of the Exodus. The effect of the heavenly appearance adds to Isaiah’s terror.

¹⁶² LXX: “I am pricked to the heart.” “I am ruined” would be a natural translation. Isaiah finds himself excluded from the presence of the Divine One. He finds himself totally excluded and recognizes his condition. It was understood in Isaiah’s day that anyone who might see the Divine One would surely die.

¹⁶³ TEV: “There is no hope for me: I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is shameful, and I live among a people whose very way is sinful. And yet, with my own eyes I have seen the king, the Lord Almighty.” In this entire passage is the the Lord who takes the initiative.

¹⁶⁴ LXX: “will take away your iniquity and will purge all your sins.”

¹⁶⁵ The wording of the LXX is such that it could say: “Should I send?”

¹⁶⁶ Hearing is consequent on the act of purification which affects not only the lips but the ears and heart. The immediate effect of atonement is made recognizable by the touching of Isaiah’s lips.

¹⁶⁷ Literally: “Hear and hear” which would have the thought in Hebrew of: “hear again and again.”

¹⁶⁸ LXX: “has become gross and their ears dull.” Literally: “the heart has become fat.”

¹⁶⁹ This could be called “divine hardening.”

¹⁷⁰ NEB: “The people’s wits are dulled, their ears are deafened and their eyes blinded so they cannot see with their eyes nor listen with their ears nor understand with their wits.”

¹⁷¹ LXX: “Until abandoned cities and deserted houses crash into ruins.”

¹⁷² Assyria introduced the concept of deportation of those who were skilled or were opinion makers. Only a remnant of the population would remain.

¹⁷³ The Hebrew is uncertain. LXX: “and yet there is to be a tenth upon it, and against it will be for a spoil, as a terebinth tree, and as an acorn when it falls out of its husk.” The last words of the chapter are omitted in the LXX. The Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa has an even more difficult text which the NEB sought to use in its translation. 1QIsa “As an oak when it is thrown down and as a terebinth by a sacred column of a high place.” NEB: “(like an oak or a terebinth, a sacred pole thrown out from its place on a hill-shrine.)” TAN: “But while the tenth part yet remains in it, it shall repent. It will be ravaged like the terebinth, and the oak, of which stumps are left even when they are felled: its stump will be a holy seed.”

<CHAPTER 7> ¹⁷⁴

B. Israel and the Syro-Ephramites 7:1 – 8:2

1. Sign of Shear-Jashur 7:1 – 9

¹ In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham and the grandson of Uzziah king of Judah a war broke out between Ahaz and Rezin the king of Syria (*or, Aram*) and Pekah the son of Remaliah the king of Israel. The Syrians and Israelites ¹⁷⁵ marched against Jerusalem but they were unable to carry out their attack. ² When the report was received in Judah ¹⁷⁶ that Syria had conspired ¹⁷⁷ with Ephraim (*or, Israel*) the king and his subjects were terrified, shaking like trees shaken by a powerful wind.

³ The Lord said to Isaiah, “You and your son Shear-Jashub are to go to King Ahaz. ¹⁷⁸ He will be at the end of the conduit of the Upper Pool on the street of those who shrink cloth (*or, the laundry men’s field*), ¹⁷⁹ ⁴ and say to him: “Be silent! Stay calm! Do not fear! Do not let yourself become distracted by these two smoldering stubs of firewood ¹⁸⁰ Disregard the raging of Rezin of Syria and the son of Remaliah. ¹⁸¹ ⁵ Syria along with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah have devised a plot against you saying, ⁶ ‘Let us invade Judah and terrorize it. ¹⁸² Let us seize it for ourselves and isolate Jerusalem setting up the son of Tabeal as king within it.’” ¹⁸³ ⁷ The Lord declares: {“It will not succeed, and it will never happen ⁸ because Syria is not more powerful than Damascus and thus is no more powerful than Rezin. [(Within sixty-five years ¹⁸⁴ Israel will be broken into pieces and will no longer be a nation)] ¹⁸⁵ ⁹ Israel is no stronger than Samaria and Samaria is no stronger than Remaliah. If you have no faith you will not survive.’”} ¹⁸⁶

Sign of Immanuel 7:10 – 17 ¹⁸⁷

¹⁰ The Lord spoke to Ahaz again, saying: ¹¹ “Ask the Lord God to give you a sign, let it be as deep as Sheol or as high as heaven.” ¹⁸⁸ ¹² Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will

¹⁷⁴ This chapter points to the hardening of King Ahaz as he rejects the challenge of faith as urged by Isaiah.

¹⁷⁵ These two northerly realms Israel and Syria wanted to be aggressors but Isaiah says they are incapable of doing so. The attack on Judah took place in 734 BCE. Israel was besieged and was unable to engage in battle against Jerusalem. Cf.: II Kings 16:5. MFT: “(though they could not deliver their attack).”

¹⁷⁶ Literally: “When the house of David was told.”

¹⁷⁷ Literally: “had settled in.” CB: “The Syrians lie encamped on Ephramite territory.”

¹⁷⁸ LXX: “Isaiah and his son Jeshab are to go to meet with Ahaz.”

¹⁷⁹ NEB: “Meet Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the Upper Pool by the causeway leading to the Fuller’s Field.”

¹⁸⁰ The two kings of Israel and Syria (*or, Samaria and Damascus*).

¹⁸¹ What a put down as Isaiah says ‘the son of Remaliah’ as if the king of Israel was so insignificant that he had forgotten the king’s name.

¹⁸² Literally: “cause it a sickening dread.”

¹⁸³ BV: “Let us go up against Judah, harass it, create a schism in it to our advantage, and set up the son of Tabeal as king.” The name “Tabeal” means “good for nothing.” This would be an adherent of Jerusalem’s enemies. If he were appointed this would interrupt the lawful succession of rulers from the time of David.

¹⁸⁴ JB: “six or five years more and a shattered Ephraim shall no longer be a people.”

¹⁸⁵ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. Some scholars move the words in () to the end of verse 9, following the word Remaliah.”

¹⁸⁶ There is a play on words in Hebrew. OTL Isaiah: “If you do not stand firm in your faith you will not stand at all.”

¹⁸⁷ Scholars feel this conversation took place in 670 – 669 BCE. Assyria had deported a large number of Ephramites. The rulers in Assyria were Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal.

¹⁸⁸ Literally: “make the request deep and high.” The suggestion is for an extraordinary and miraculous sign that would ensure proof that God’s will is to save the royal house of David from its oppressors.

not put the Lord to the test.”¹⁸⁹ ¹³ Isaiah said, “Hear this, O descendant of the house of David: is it too insignificant for you ¹⁹⁰ that you will wear out the patience of your people and thereby you also wear out the patience of God? ¹⁹¹ ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Be assured: a young woman ¹⁹² who is pregnant will give birth to a son and will call his name Immanuel (that is, God is with us). ¹⁵ [By the time that he knows to reject evil and choose good he will have eaten curds and honey.] ¹⁹³ ¹⁶ Before the child knows how to refuse the evil and chose the good the land the land of those two kings who make you cower will have become desolate. ¹⁷ The Lord will bring such days as you have not seen on you and ancestors that will be like those at the time when Israel separated from Judah. --- The king of Assyria.”¹⁹⁴

3. The Coming Invasion 7:18 – 25

¹⁸ In that day the Lord will call shrilly (*or, whistle*) for the flies ¹⁹⁵ which are at the remotest part of the streams of Egypt, and for a swarm of bees which are in the land of Assyria. ¹⁹⁶ ¹⁹ They will swarm and settle in the steep ravines (*or, desolate valleys*), ¹⁹⁷ in the crags of rock and among the thorn bushes and watered pasture lands.

²⁰ In that day the Lord will have hired those from beyond the River ¹⁹⁸ to be as a razor (*or, knife*) [the king of Assyria] ¹⁹⁹ to shave the hair on heads, public hair and beards ²⁰⁰ ²¹ In that day a man will raise a young heifer and two sheep; ²⁰¹ ²² and (because of the abundance of milk which they give, he will eat curds and honey.) ²⁰² ²³ In that day where there had been a thousand vines worth a thousand shekels (*or, pieces*) of silver

¹⁸⁹ Ahaz would prefer to rely on the King of Assyria, rather than relying on God.

¹⁹⁰ MFT: “Then I said, ‘Listen, you royalties, I am tired of you.’”

¹⁹¹ One senses the exasperation of the king and the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

¹⁹² The Hebrew word used here is: *wmlh* which means a young woman of marriageable age. Hebrew has a different word for “virgin” though the word “*almah*” is sometimes used for someone in the Hebrew Scriptures that is assuredly a virgin. The root word means “to be full of vigor” or “to have reached the age of puberty.” The Hebrew word for virgin is: *hlwtb* which is solely used for a “virgin.” The LXX uses the word “*ἡ παρθένος*.” The LXX was translated about 200 years after the time of Isaiah. What language changes might have taken place during that time are uncertain. The Greek word used in the LXX is the word for “virgin.” The usage of “virgin” stems from Matthew 1:23 which is repeating the LXX.

¹⁹³ Hebrew unclear! Some scholars feel this verse should precede verse 14. Some scholars feel this verse is a later interpolation. The land had been fruitful and now it has been so devastated that only absolutely basic food supplies are available.

¹⁹⁴ The words “The king of Assyria” seem superfluous. To turn to Assyria is taking the tiger by the tail. Damascus fell to Assyria three years later. Samaria (Israel) fell thirteen years later.

¹⁹⁵ JB: “mosquitoes.”

¹⁹⁶ The armies that come as mercenaries are described as “flies” for Egypt and “bees” for Assyria. They will come with so many warriors that they are likened by the prophet to swarming and stinging insects.

¹⁹⁷ TAN: “rugged wadis.”

¹⁹⁸ The reference is to the Euphrates River.

¹⁹⁹ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

²⁰⁰ Literally the words used are a euphemism: “the hair off the feet.” God will use the Assyrians as his instrument; described here as a razor, to inflict disgrace and suffering on the people. Ahaz paid tribute to the Assyrian king who in return promised protection. Yet the people suffered indignities as subject people. People and land suffer --- no one escapes the power of the enemy. To have one’s hair shaved off was thought to be a horrible insult.

²⁰¹ This would signify a very poor peasant.

²⁰² LXX: “from them they derive an abundance of milk.” This was the food of nomadic wanderers. It is also the food that can be obtained by the survivors of the remnant.

there will be briars and thorns.²⁰³ ²⁴ People will hunt with bows and arrows, coming there to hunt for all the land will have reverted to briars and thorn bushes.²⁰⁴ ²⁵ The hills²⁰⁵ which in the past had been hoed with a mattock will be avoided because of the dense growth of the briars and thorn bushes, but they will become grazing land for cattle and sheep.”

<CHAPTER 8>²⁰⁶

4. *Sign of Maher-Shalal-Hash-baz* 8:1 – 4

¹ Then the Lord said to me, “Get a large tablet²⁰⁷ and write ‘Belonging to Maher-Shalal-hash-baz.’”²⁰⁸ ² Have it attested by two reliable witnesses,²⁰⁹ Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. ³ I was intimate with the prophetess (*my wife*) and she conceived and gave birth to a son. Then the Lord said to me: “Name him Maher-Shalal-hash-baz,”²¹⁰ ⁴ for before the child knows how to call out, “Daddy” or “Mommie” the wealth²¹¹ of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria will have been carried away, being taken to the king of Assyria.”²¹²

5. *Oracle of the Two Rivers* 8:5 – 8a

⁵ The Lord spoke to me again, saying: ⁶ “{Because the people rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah²¹³ they will melt in fear before Rezin and the son of Remaliah. ⁷ Therefore take note! The Lord is bringing up against them the waters of the [*Euphrates*] River — mighty and abundant --- and it will rise over all its channels and

²⁰³ LXX: “A barren waste.” Literally: “for land and for a thorn.”

²⁰⁴ Instead of fruitful fields it will become a place for hunting with bows and arrows. Thorns and briars will cover the entire land.

²⁰⁵ LXX: “Every mountain will certainly be plowed: fear will not draw near for amid the barren land and thorns cattle will feed and oxen will walk.” The hills would be marginal land. The writing style of verses 21 & 25 is rather prosaic. This has caused some scholars to question the authorship of these two verses.

²⁰⁶ This chapter apparently fills in the period of the Syro-Ephramite war.

²⁰⁷ Presumably this is to be a large board, placard or plain writing surface. The writing is to be with “common letters”, the meaning of which is uncertain. The Hebrew wording for “write on it” has the thought of a stylus. LXX: “write with a man’s pen concerning the making of plunder (or, spoils) for it is near at hand.” The large tablet in the LXX is “κατινου.”

²⁰⁸ The message that is inscribed is quite ambiguous. The possible translations are: “Swift the spoiling: Prompt the plundering,” or “Speed – spoil – haste – bounty.” This begins to introduce that two cities will be pillaged in the near future.

²⁰⁹ LXX: “μαρτυρας ... ποιησον.” Vulgate: “et adhibei ... testes.” Cf.: I Kings 16:10 – 16; 18:3. These reliable witnesses would be ready to testify that Isaiah had prophesied the coming disaster.

²¹⁰ The sons who are born to Isaiah are to have names which serve as enigmatic signs. One child is named Shear – Jashub: “A remnant shall return.” The other is Maher – Shalal – hash – baz.” “Swift the spoiling. Prompt the plundering.” Cf.: ANET p. 109d.

²¹¹ LXX: “power.”

²¹² The army of Tiglath – Pileser marched down the Israelite sea coast as far as the Egyptian border. Egyptian aid was cut off. Israel also lost Galilee and the fortified city of Megiddo along with other lesser cities. Damascus fell in 732 BCE.

²¹³ This was the canal that conducted the water from the large spring Gihon to the pool of Siloam. This was the main source of water for Jerusalem prior to the making of Hezekiah’s tunnel. The spring was located on the east side of the city of Jerusalem. The God whom Ahaz distrusted will strike him down with the very same weapon Ahaz had thought would be his defense. The imperialist mind is in itself a sinful thing. Cf. vss 10, 11. That does not mean it is outside the holy rule of God.

overflow its banks. [The king of Assyria will [attack] with all his pomp.] ²¹⁴ 8 He will swirl through Judah like a flash flood and pass on, rising to shoulder high!” ²¹⁵

6. Faith dictates Defiance 8:8b – 11

Outspread wings ²¹⁶ will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel. ²¹⁷ 9 {Band together O people, and be broken! All countries listen! You may arm yourselves but you will be dismayed. You may arm yourselves but you will be dismayed! ²¹⁸ 10 Conspire together but in spite of that you will be foiled. Say whatever you want but it will not take place for God is with us (or, Immanuel).”}

7. The Fear of Man and the Fear of God 8:11 – 15

¹¹ With his mighty power the Lord spoke to me as follows: ²¹⁹ “Be warned not to walk in the way of these people by saying, ¹² ‘Do not call an alliance [with Assyria] sedition, or a conspiracy. Do not fear what they fear or be filled with dread.’ ²²⁰ ¹³ The Lord of hosts alone is holy! Hold him in awe! ¹⁴ He will become a sanctuary ²²¹ and a stone of offence, a rock of stumbling ²²² to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to those who reside in Jerusalem. ¹⁵ Many will trip over these. They will fall and be injured. They will be snared and captured.” ²²³

C. Confession of a Prophet 9:16 – 18

¹⁶ {Bind up and seal ²²⁴ the teachings to my disciples (like a package). ²²⁵ ¹⁷ I will wait for the Lord who is showing his displeasure ²²⁶ of the house of Jacob, though I will hope for him. ¹⁸ Behold: the children whom the Lord has given me, along with myself are signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of hosts who dwells on Mount Zion.” ²²⁷

²¹⁴ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

²¹⁵ Judah will be conquered. Within five years Syria and Israel will be destroyed. Cf.: Psalm 46 as a commentary on this verse.

²¹⁶ The reference has been to the extending flood of troops in the Assyrian invasion. Now the metaphor changes to a bird of prey that looms but does not kill.

²¹⁷ Immanuel means “God with us.” The metaphor has God’s outstretched wings protecting the land.

²¹⁸ LXX: “Know, O Gentiles and be conquered. Hasten even to the ends of the land to be conquered. Even if you have strong armaments you will again be conquered.”

²¹⁹ This is a warning that clearly states: “Do not follow in the way of these people.”

²²⁰ The MT text of verses 12 – 14 are almost unintelligible. The text can be interpreted in two ways. 1. Don’t you call conspiring all that the people call conspiracy, but the Lord of Hosts makes a conspiracy (or, alliance) with him. 2. Do not you call holy all that the people call holy.

²²¹ The Hebrew word for “sanctuary” can mean either “A place of worship” or “A place of refuge which emanates from a holy domain.”

²²² TAN: “He will be a sanctuary, a stone men strike against, a rock men stumble over.”

²²³ God has become to the people of Israel a “trap” or “snare” on which they will stumble and be broken.

²²⁴ LXX: “Those who seal themselves.”

²²⁵ The prophet withdraws from public debate because Ahaz has continually rejected the prophet and his message. With the death of King Ahaz he makes this confession. “Of my disciples” is omitted in the LXX.

²²⁶ Literally: “hiding his face.”

²²⁷ LB: “I and the children God has given me have symbolic names that reveal the plans of the Lord of heaven’s armies for his people. Isaiah means “Jehovah will save (his people).” Shear-jashub means “A remnant shall return.” Maher-halal-hash-baz means “Your enemies will soon be destroyed.”

III. His Anger is Not Turned Away 8:19 – 10:4; 5:24b - 30

A. The Fragment of Ominous Prophecy 8:19 – 22

¹⁹ "When they say to you 'Consult the mediums ²²⁸ and the wizards ²²⁹ who chirp and gibber,' ²³⁰ should the people not be consulting their God? Should they consult the dead of Israel on behalf of the living? ²³¹ ²⁰ As to the teaching and testimony: ²³² There is certainly no future ²³³ for the words they teach. ²¹ They will go through the land, wretched and famished and in their hunger they will look up and curse their king and their God. ²² Because distress, darkness, gloom and anguish are inescapable they will be thrust into deep depression." ²³⁴

<CHAPTER 9>

B. The Messianic King 9:1 – 7 [Hebrew 8:23 – 9:6]

1. A Transitional Verse 9:1 [Hebrew 8:23]

¹ [H: 8:23] "There will be no gloom for her that was in darkness. In the past he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, ²³⁵ but in the later days he will make the way to the land beyond Judah, and Galilee of the nations glorious." ²³⁶

2. Oracle of the Messianic King 9:2 - 7 [Hebrew 9:1 – 6] ²³⁷

² [H: 1] {"The people who walked in darkness have seen a brilliant light. To those who live in a land of intense darkness a light has dawned. ²³⁸ ³ [H: 2] You have enlarged ²³⁹ the nation; you have increased its joy. They rejoice before you just as people are filled with joy at the time of harvest or as elated as those who are dividing spoils. ⁴ [H: 3] You have shattered the oppressing yoke they bore and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of the taskmaster as had been done on the day of Midian. ²⁴⁰ ⁵ [H: 4] Every boot of the

²²⁸ LXX: "Ventriloquists who have the divining spirit." The Hebrew word means "to have a spirit of control." Cf. I Samuel 28.

²²⁹ TAN: "ghosts and familiar spirits." Literally: "the knowing one." These are people who claim insider knowledge.

²³⁰ These are people who the prophet feels have turned from plain words to mumbo-jumbo.

²³¹ This is a warning against the most popular superstitions, some of which are mentioned in verses 12 & 19.

²³² TAN: "For instruction and message."

²³³ LXX: "Surely they speak of this fashion which is profitless." "δωμα."

²³⁴ The Hebrew in verses 21 – 22 seem to be fragmentary and thus become difficult to translate.

²³⁵ Tiglath-Pileser invaded in 733 – 732 BCE and incorporated these two tribal lands into the Assyrian Empire.

²³⁶ The grammar and meaning of the last phrase is uncertain. LXX: "Drink this first, act quickly about the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali: all who reside at the sea coast and those who reside in the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles." The "way of the sea" was an ancient caravan route from Damascus to Egypt. The areas named in this verse were captured by the Assyrians in 733 – 732 BCE. Cf.: II Kings 13:29.

²³⁷ Scholars are divided as to whether the reference is to a 'real' king or a 'messianic' king. This has been a continuing difference among scholars over the years: Are there references to the Messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures? This is due to a difference in the 'terminus ad quo' of the scholars.

²³⁸ The text of verse 2 is extremely difficult and controversial.

²³⁹ Hebrew literally: "not increased." The rabbis felt this was an error and read it as the Qere, meaning "as read." "You have increased." The Kethiv (or, as written) was "not increased." TAN: "given great joy."

²⁴⁰ Cf.: Judges 6 - 8. The Lord's act of deliverance provides hope for the people. The people are able to enjoy the fruits of victory. They did not win for it was the Lord who acted.

tramping warrior in the tumult of battle and every garment that is stained ²⁴¹ with blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. ²⁴² 6 [H. 5] For a child is born to us, a son is given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. ²⁴³ His name will be proclaimed ²⁴⁴ ‘Wonderful Counselor, ²⁴⁵ Mighty God, ²⁴⁶ Everlasting Father, ²⁴⁷ Prince of Peace.’ ²⁴⁸ 7 [H. 6] His ever expanding peaceful government ²⁴⁹ and peace will have no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from now on, forever. ²⁵⁰ The zeal of the Lord has spoken!”}

C. The Judgment on Ephraim and Its Lessons for Judah 9:8 [H. 7] – 10:4; 8:24 – 30

Stanza 1. National Disaster 9:8 – 12 [H. 7 – 11]

8 {“The Lord has sent ²⁵¹ a word ²⁵² against Judah it will rest on Israel: 9 [H. 8] and all the people will ²⁵³ experience it! Ephraim and the residents of Samaria, who say with pride and arrogance: 10 [H. 9] ‘The mud bricks have fallen but we will build anew with dressed stone. The sycamores have been cut down but we will plant cedars to replace them.’ ²⁵⁴ 11 [H. 10] So the Lord raises adversaries against them ²⁵⁵ and stirs up their foes. ²⁵⁶

²⁴¹ This is a slight emendation. Literally: “rolled in blood.”

²⁴² OTL Isaiah: “For every warrior’s boot issued in battle, and every garment rolled in blood, will be burned as fuel for the fire.” TAN: “garment donned in infamy.” MFT: “the stomping warrior’s boot, the bloodstained war attire shall all be burnt, as fuel for the fire.”

²⁴³ This is either the burden of certainty or a symbol of majesty such as a rosette emblazoned on a royal robe.

²⁴⁴ Literally: “one will call his name.”

²⁴⁵ “Wonderful Counselor” is the supreme foundation of wisdom. All the names are in pairs. In the KJV this was two titles: “Wonderful, Counselor.” Scholars feel it should be: “Wonderful Counselor.”

²⁴⁶ “Mighty God” declares that one of the possessions of this being is “divine might.”

²⁴⁷ I.e.: “A father forever.”

²⁴⁸ A possible translation might be “Prince beneficent.” MFT: “For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us, the royal dignity he wears and this is the title that he bears --- ‘A wonder of a counselor, a divine hero, a father for all time, a peaceful prince!’ Great is his authority, endless is his peace, over David’s throne and his dominion, to base it from and stable on justice and good order, from henceforth and for ever --- thanks to the jealous care of the Eternal.” NEB: “For a boy has been born for us, a son given to us, to bear the symbol of dominion on his shoulder; and he shall be called in purpose wonderful, in battle God-like, Father of all time, Prince of peace.” Following the word time a footnote has “or, of a wide realm.” Each title presents an extraordinary quality for this divinely selected ruler. The description of this ruler seems to make clear that the subject is to be a Messianic ruler! The Hebrew word for “peace” can mean: 1. Suspension of war, 2. A condition of rich, harmonious and positive wellbeing.”

²⁴⁹ Vulgate: “vet reliquum nomine proprii.” JB: “Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity. From this time onward and for ever, the jealous love of Yahweh Sabaoth will do this.”

²⁵⁰ Justice and right (or, righteousness) must accompany any sovereignty if it is to endure. MFT: “thanks to the zealous care of the Eternal.”

²⁵¹ Literally: “hurled.”

²⁵² LXX: “θauατον.” “Plague.”

²⁵³ The Hebrew word could be translated: “have known.”

²⁵⁴ Mud brick and sycamore timbers were the most widely used materials for an ordinary house. Hewn stone and cedar were used in palaces.

²⁵⁵ So: Versions. Hebrew: “the adversaries” or “Rezin.” Omitted in BHS. The enemies of Rezin would surely be the Assyrians.

²⁵⁶ It can not be determined exactly what historic event is referred to by the prophet. There are several possibilities.

12 [H.11] The Syrians toward the east and the Philistines toward the west will devour Israel with open, gaping jaws.²⁵⁷

{Despite all this his anger is not turned away, and his hand is still stretched out.”}

Stanza 2. Political Collapse 9:13 – 17 [H. 12 – 16]

13 {“The people did not return to him who struck them, nor did they seek the Lord of hosts. 14 [H. 13] In a single day the Lord cut the head and tail from Israel: palm branches and bulrushes. 15 [H. 14] [Then the elder, the person of leadership,²⁵⁸ and false prophet who teach falsehoods are the tail. 16 [H. 15] If this sort of person is to lead, the people will be misled and those who are led will be swallowed up.]²⁵⁹ 17 [H. 16] Therefore the Lord does not in any way take pleasure in the young men and he does not show pity for the orphans and widows for everyone is ungodly and wicked and every mouth speaks profanity.²⁶¹

{Despite all this anger is not turned away, and his hand is still stretched out.”}

Stanza 3. Social Anarchy 9:18 – 21 [H. 9:17 – 20]

18 [H. 17] {“Wickedness burns like a fire, it consumes briars and thorns: it burns the underbrush of the forest and the smoke rises in columns.²⁶² 19 Yet the fury of the Lord of hosts has scorched the land and the people have become like fuel for the fire! No one shows concern for his brother. 20 [H. 19] They destroy on the right and are still famished and they devour on the left and are not satisfied --- each seeks to devour his neighbor’s flesh.²⁶³ 21 [H. 20] Manasseh opposes Ephraim and Ephraim opposes Manasseh.²⁶⁴ Together they are against Judah.²⁶⁵

{Despite this his anger is not turned away, and his hand is still stretched out.”}

<CHAPTER 10>

Stanza 4 Blatant Misrule 10: 1 - 4

1 {“Woe to those who issue unjust decrees and writers who keep on writing oppressive²⁶⁶ documents, 2 to deprive (*or, cheat*) the needy of justice and rob my people who are poor of their rights: that widows may become their prey, and those who are

²⁵⁷ Literally: “the whole mouth.”

²⁵⁸ TAN: “magnates.” Possibly the uneducated who possess potentiality.

²⁵⁹ Emended it would read: “palm branches.”

²⁶⁰ Some scholars feel that verse 15 is a later interpolation. Other scholars feel both verses 15 & 16 are later interpolations.

²⁶¹ LXX: “The Lord will not take pleasure in their young men, nor will he have pity on the orphans or widows for they are all transgressors and wicked and every mouth speaks unjustly. In spite of this his anger is turned away, but his hand is still stretched out.”

²⁶² The Hebrew is uncertain.

²⁶³ Literally: “the flesh of his arm.” The translation is based on the versions & Targum.

²⁶⁴ Possibly this is a reference to II Kings 15:10; 14 – 16, 25

²⁶⁵ The reference is to the overthrow and murder of Pekahiah by Pekah, a Gileadite.

²⁶⁶ Literally: “turn aside from.” In the Hebrew Scriptures the word is often translated as “grievousness” or “more grief.” LXX: “Woe to them who write wickedness; for when they write they do write wickedness.”

CB: “Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, And the recorders who make mischievous records.”

OTL Isaiah: “Woe to those who execute evil writs and issue oppressive decrees.”

orphans become their booty.²⁶⁷ 3. What will you do in the day of punishment, when the storm (*or, calamity*) will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? To whom will you leave your riches?²⁶⁸ 4 When this occurs the only solution for you will be to crouch among the captives or to lie among²⁶⁹ the corpses.²⁷⁰

{“Yet the anger of the Lord is not turned away and his hand is still stretched out.”}²⁷¹

A. The Assyrian Threat 10:5 – 34

1. Boasting of the Assyrians 10:5 – 16

5 [*The Lord says:*] {“Ah²⁷² Assyria, the rod of my wrath, the staff of my fury!²⁷³ 6 I sent Assyria against a godless nation (*i.e. Israel*) and against the people of my wrath I commanded the taking of spoil and the seizing of booty along with trampling them into the mud of their streets!²⁷⁴ 7 But this was not his intention; surely not what he had in mind for he had not intended. Thus he intended to destroy and wipe out many nations.

8 [*The king of Assyria says:*]²⁷⁵ {“I have kings as the commanders of my armies.²⁷⁶ 9 Is Calno any different from Carchemish? Is Hamath any different from Arpad? Is Samaria any different from Damascus?²⁷⁷ 10 [My hand has reached the kingdoms having idols whose sculpted images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria.²⁷⁸ 11 I will surely do to Jerusalem and her idols what I have already done to Samaria and her images.”}²⁷⁹

12 ”However when the Lord has carried out all his work in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem he will punish the arrogant boasting of the king of Assyria and his haughty

²⁶⁷ If people refuse the rule of God they end up under unprincipled human rule. Another translation would be: “The arbitrary decisions made by rulers and judges are iniquitous because they destroy justice for the widows and rob the poor among my people of justice.”

²⁶⁸ LXX: “glory.” TAN: “And how will you save your carcasses?”

²⁶⁹ Literally: “under.”

²⁷⁰ LXX: “that you may not fall into captivity.” Codex A adds: “and they will fall under the slain.”

²⁷¹ Some scholars transfer 5:24b – 30 to this point, feeling that it suits the context better than its traditional location in chapter 5.

²⁷² The Hebrew word is almost impossible to represent as one word as “Ah,” “For shame!” The thought is that of undisguised indignation.

²⁷³ The Assyrian invasions took place in 734 – 701 BCE. The specific event referred to here is uncertain. TAN: “in whose hand, the staff, is my fury!” OTL Isaiah “the staff --- in their hands --- of my anger.”

²⁷⁴ Literally: “making them a trampled place.” The Hebrew is obscure, possibly caused by a corrupt text. This verse seems to present the divine moral purpose found in 8:1 – 4.

²⁷⁵ Obviously the prophet is saying what he feels the Assyrian king says to his people.

²⁷⁶ Emended it would read: “all the kingdoms fared alike.”

²⁷⁷ Calno was located in northern Syria and destroyed by Tiglath-Pileser in 738 BCE. Carchemish was a Hittite city destroyed in 717 BCE by Sargon, Hamath was destroyed in 720 BCE by Sargon. Arpad was near Aleppo and was destroyed twice: 738 and 720 BCE. The proud monarch is boasting of the vassal kings he has as army commanders and the territory he has conquered.

²⁷⁸ Verses 10 – 11 seem to reveal some inner tension in Assyria. Some scholars feel verses 10 – 12 are a later interpolation. The idols are not an issue. Even though Assyria is much more powerful than Samaria it is God who sets the limits to its power. An emendation would read: “Since I was able to seize those kingdoms and their images, why is Jerusalem better than Samaria?” LXX: “As my hand has subdued these kingdoms will Judah’s images succeed? Will they protect her?” Since Samaria had already fallen to the Assyrians they were certain, without any doubt, that they would conquer Jerusalem.

²⁷⁹ The prophet is certain that it is not armaments that render them helpless before Assyria but spiritual falsity – idols (no gods).

pride.] ²⁸⁰ [*The king of Assyria says:*] {By my might I have done it! By my wisdom, for my understanding is great, I have erased the borders of the nations and have plundered their treasures --- like a bull I have trampled those who sat on thrones. ²⁸¹ ¹⁴ The nations were like bird's nests. I gathered their wealth as one would gather eggs. There was not even the flutter of wings or a squawk from any beak to disturb me."}

¹⁵ [*The Lord says*] {"Can an axe claim to be greater than the one who uses it? Can a saw be more important than the person who uses it? This is as if a rod could wield the one who lifts it or as if a cudgel could lift a person that is not made of wood.

¹⁶ {"Therefore the Lord of hosts, will send an enervating illness among his sturdy warriors, and despite his glory the bodies of his warriors will be burning with fever."}

2. *The Believing, Obeying Remnant 10:17 – 19*

¹⁷ {"The light of Israel will become a fire and the Holy One of will be a flame; and it will come and consume his throne and it will burn and consume its thorns and briars in a single day. ²⁸² ¹⁸ The luxuriant growth of its forest and its fruitful country-side will be destroyed by the Lord: both soul and body and will be destroyed just as if an ill person's body wastes away. ²⁸³ ¹⁹ What remain of the trees in the forest will be so few that even a child will be able to count them without help."}

3. *The Escaped Remnant and the Destroyed Remnant 10:20 – 23* ²⁸⁴

²⁰ "In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no longer rely on the one who conquered them but will lean on the Lord the Holy One of Israel. ²⁸⁵ ²¹ A remnant will return: the remnant of Jacob which will return to the mighty God. ²² Though your people Israel are as numerous as the sand on the seashore, only a remnant of them will return. Destruction has been decreed but there will also be overflowing righteousness. ²³ The Lord, the Lord of hosts will carry out a complete destruction within the world, as has been decreed." ²⁸⁶

a. *The Encouragement 10:24 – 27*

²⁴ Therefore the Lord, the Lord of hosts declares: "O my people who live in Zion, do not be fearful of the Assyrians when they strike with their rod and raise their staff

²⁸⁰ Literally: "the haughtiness of his eyes." It is God who sets the limit of power.

²⁸¹ The MT has: "My strong hand did it all through my clever strategy! I shifted the borders of nations. I plundered their treasures. I reduced them to ashes, and felled those who sat on thrones as would a bullock' The prophet views the Assyrian king as speaking as a victor though in reality he is only an instrument and powerless in himself. Verses 13 – 14 present the Assyrian assessment of the situation.

²⁸² Jerusalem is under fire and its light has not gone out.

²⁸³ LXX: "In that day the mountain will be consumed, and the hills and the forests, and fire will destroy both soul and body and whoever flees will be like one fleeing from a burning flame."

²⁸⁴ Isaiah now raises the question of the fate of the faithful remnant. Cf.: Isaiah 28:22.

²⁸⁵ The remnant will experience the terror of judgment and also the promise of new life. King Ahaz's reliance on Assyria is seen as a lack of faith in the Lord of hosts.

²⁸⁶ LXX: "He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because the Lord will make short work in all the world."

against you as the Egyptians did!²⁸⁷ ²⁵ In a very short time my wrath will come to an end²⁸⁸ and my anger will be directed against them.

²⁶ "The Lord of hosts will brandish a whip over them as when he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb;²⁸⁹ and will raise his staff over the waters just as he did in Egypt. ²⁷ In that day the Assyrian burden will be removed from your shoulders, and his yoke will no longer be weighing on your neck."

b. The Approach of the Invader 10:28 – 32

{ "He [Sennacherib] has just come up from Rimmon.²⁹⁰ ²⁸ He has come up from Aiath!²⁹¹ He has passed through Migron!²⁹² At Michmash he deposited his baggage! ²⁹ They have crossed over the pass! At Geba they bivouacked for the night!²⁹³ Ramah trembles, the people of Gibeah of Saul will have fled!²⁹⁴ ³⁰ Scream at the top of your lungs, O daughter of Gallim (*or, Beth-Gallum*)! Listen O Laishah! Respond to her, O Anathoth!²⁹⁵ ³¹ Madmenah has fled.²⁹⁶ The inhabitants of Gebim have sought refuge.²⁹⁷ While it is still today he will halt at Nob.²⁹⁸ From there he will shake his fist at the mount of Zion and the inhabitants of Jerusalem." }

c. Humbling of the Forest 10:33 – 34

³³ { "Behold the Lord, the Lord of hosts will lop off the boughs with terrifying power. Tall trees will be felled and the lofty ones will be cut down with terrifying power. ³⁴ He will cut down the underbrush of the forest with an axe; Lebanon with its stately trees will perish." }²⁹⁹

²⁸⁷ Isaiah calls the people not to yield to fear. LXX: "I am bringing a stroke upon you that you may see the way of Egypt."

²⁸⁸ Beyond this point in the sentence the Hebrew is very obscure. LXX adds: "and my wrath will be against their council." Emended it would read "my anger against the world will cease."

²⁸⁹ Cf.: Judges 7:25.

²⁹⁰ The name "Rimmon" is used by the versions. The Hebrew says: "and his yoke from your neck and a yoke will be destroyed because of fatness."

²⁹¹ Possibly Ai. Cf. Joshua 7:3. Ai was about 15 miles north of Jerusalem.

²⁹² Cf.: I Samuel 14:3.

²⁹³ There is no historical record of the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE going through these places. Some scholars feel these names were chosen in order to recall past battles. Other scholars feel these names were chosen because their meaning provides puns.

²⁹⁴ LXX: "and he will pass by the valley, and will arrive at Angai; fear will seize Rama, the city of Saul."

²⁹⁵ Anathoth was about 5 miles north of Jerusalem. Gallim and Laishah were neighboring towns.

²⁹⁶ The location is unknown.

²⁹⁷ The invasion route described here would be over the most difficult terrain of the area which would be an unexpected route. The Lord of hosts will lop the branches and fell the proud trees – the arrogance and boasting of Assyria will be silenced.

²⁹⁸ Probably Mount Scopus north of Jerusalem.

²⁹⁹ Hebrew: "with a majestic one." Tree is not mentioned. The above translation is based on the Versions. The Hebrew word might have an Akkadian root word which, when translated elsewhere is usually translated as "bronze."

<CHAPTER 11>

B. The Messianic Age 11:1 – 16

1. The Davidic Messiah 11:1 – 9 ³⁰⁰

¹ {“A new shoot will spring from the stump of Jesse, ³⁰¹ and a scion will grow from its ³⁰² roots. ² The spirit of the Lord will rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and insight; the spirit of counsel and valor, the spirit of knowledge and reverence of the Lord. ³⁰³ ³ His delight will be in the reverence of the Lord. He will give no verdict based on appearance nor will he make judgments based on rumors. ³⁰⁴ ⁴ He will judge the poor ³⁰⁵ with righteousness and make decisions concerning the meek of the earth with careful equality. ³⁰⁶ He will strike ³⁰⁷ down those who are ruthless with his word and with his breath the wicked will be slain. ⁵ Righteousness ³⁰⁸ will be his loin cloth around his waist and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

⁶ {“The wolf will live with the lamb and the leopard will lie down ³⁰⁹ with the kid (*or, baby goat*), along with the calf, the lion and the fat steer. ³¹⁰ Their leadership will be that of a little child. ³¹¹ ⁷ The cow and the bear will eat together and their young will lie down together; and the lion will eat grass as does the ox. ⁸ The baby will play over the viper’s hole, and the small child will lay its hand ³¹² on the adder’s den. ⁹ There will be no pain nor destruction in my holy land, ³¹³ for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as full as the water that covers ³¹⁴ the sea.”}

2. The Messiah and the Future Restoration of Israel 11:10 – 16 ³¹⁵

¹⁰ “In that day the scion from the root of Jesse (*or, the branch of Jesse will have grown like a tree*) and will stand as a signal to the people that they should seek him for his resting place will be glorious.

³⁰⁰ This oracle is a companion to 9:2 - 7 [H. 1 – 6]. While every monarch in the Davidic dynasty was anointed as the Lord’s representative the superlative terms dealing with the new ruler it is understandable that this is a reference to the Messianic Age. Verses 1 – 10 have four sections. 1 - 2 The ancestry and endowment of the king. 3 – 5 His rule. 6 – 9 His world. 10. His world wide significance.

³⁰¹ Jesse was the father of King David.

³⁰² Literally: “his.”

³⁰³ TAN: “devotion and reverence.” JB: (“The fear of Yahweh is his breath.”)

³⁰⁴ Hebrew uncertain. Literally: “His smelling (i.e. incense or sacrifice) or delighting is in the fear of the Lord.”

³⁰⁵ LXX: “ο πατωχους.”

³⁰⁶ LXX: “and will reprove the lowly of the earth.”

³⁰⁷ Literally: “he will strike the hand” or an emendation would read: “violent.”

³⁰⁸ JB: “integrity.”

³⁰⁹ The Hebrew word that is used would normally be used for sheep lying down together in a sheep fold.

³¹⁰ The prophet gives an idyllic picture of wild and tame animals and dangerous reptiles all being together in peace. The picture in 6 – 9 has a dramatic quality of universal peace in the future. Isaiah does not place a time table before us. Therefore we must work together for this to become possible.

³¹¹ The Hebrew is somewhat unclear. Some emendations are suggested but none has been popularly accepted. The Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa has “the calf and the beast of prey will feed.”

³¹² NEB: “dance.”

³¹³ Literally: “They will not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.”

³¹⁴ LXX: “may cover.” Cf.: Hosea 2:18 [H. 2:20]

³¹⁵ These are two brief independent oracles which have an eschatological outlook.

¹¹ “In that day the Lord will reach out ³¹⁶ a second time to ransom the remnant of his people which remains: people from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, ³¹⁷ Ethiopia, Elam, ³¹⁸ Shinar, ³¹⁹ Hamath ³²⁰ and the coastline of the sea.

¹² {“A signal ³²¹ for the nations will be hoisted by him and he will assemble those who were banished from Israel, and gather the disbursed of Judah from the four corners of the earth!

¹³ {“Ephraim’s envy will end, ³²² and those who harassed Judah will be cut off. Ephraim will not envy Judah and Judah will not afflict Ephraim. ¹⁴ They will pounce on the backs of the Philistines to the west (*or, the Philistine foothills*) and they will unite in pillaging the people of the east. Edom and Moab will be stretching out their hands seeking mercy and the Ammonites will be besieged.”

¹⁵ {“The Lord will totally destroy the waters of the gulf of Suez (*or, the Red Sea*) ³²³ with the scorching wind of his breath on the River dividing it into seven channels each of which can be crossed when wearing sandals. ³²⁴ ¹⁶ There will be a highway from Assyria which will be available for the remnant of the people to use as they move to Israel and when they come from the land of Egypt.”} ³²⁵

<CHAPTER 12> ³²⁶

C. An Outburst of Thanksgiving 12:1 – 6

¹ {“You will say in that day ‘You, O Lord, though you have been angry with me your anger has abated; and you have consoled me. ³²⁷ ² Be assured! God is my salvation! ³²⁸ I will trust him and I will not fear for the Lord God ³²⁹ is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation! ³³⁰ ³ You will draw water from the wells of salvation with joy.’” ³³¹

³¹⁶ LXX: “show his hand.”

³¹⁷ The location would be Upper Egypt (i.e. southern Egypt).

³¹⁸ The location was east of Babylonia.

³¹⁹ The location of Shinar was possibly slightly north of Baghdad. Three different sites are thought, over the centuries to have been the location of Shinar.

³²⁰ Hamath was located along the Orantes River in Syria. The modern city is Hahr-el-Asi.

³²¹ The “signal” is surely not a reference to the Messiah

³²² LXX: “will be taken away.”

³²³ Literally: “the sea of Egypt.” The Hebrew word translated as “destroy” means: “to put to the ban.” An emendation would read: “dry up.” LXX: “καὶ ἐρημώσει.” MFT: “The Eternal will dry up the tongues of Egypt’s river with his hot breath.”

³²⁴ LXX: “The Lord will make desolate the sea of Egypt: and he will lay his hand on the river with a strong wind and he will smite the seven channels that men will pass through it dry-shod.” NAB: “and wave his hand over the Euphrates in his fierce anger and shatter it into seven streams so that it can be crossed in sandals.”

³²⁵ The work of new creation has been done. The world is ready for the ‘one people.’

³²⁶ Scholars are divided as to the division of this brief chapter. Some feel it is two Psalms with the division being verses 1 – 2 and 3 – 6. Others would divide the chapter with two Psalms divided as 1 – 3 and 4 – 6. Yet other scholars feel it is one Psalm comprised of two strophes. Some scholars feel that the section of Isaiah: 5:1 – 12:6 have 6:1 – 13 is an introduction and that the conclusion is the Psalm found as chapter 12. This would be the conclusion of one section of Isaiah 1 – 39. Other scholars reject this theory.

³²⁷ LXX: “pitied me.” “καὶ ἠλεησας.”

³²⁸ TAN: “gave me triumph.” NEB: “is my deliverer.”

³²⁹ Literally: “for Yah, the Lord.”

³³⁰ LXX: “glory and praise.” TAN: “might.”

³³¹ TAN: “fountains of triumph.” NEB: “the springs of deliverance.”

4 {“In that day you will say, ‘Give thanks to the Lord! Call on his name; proclaim his deeds among the nations, declare that his name is exalted! 5 Sing Psalms (*or praises*) to the Lord, for he has done gloriously. ³³² Declare this to all the earth! 6 Shout! All the inhabitants of Zion should sing for joy for the Holy One of Israel who is in your midst is truly great!”} ³³³

<CHAPTER 13>

V. *The Uproar of Many Nations* 14:1 – 23:18 ³³⁴

A. *The Doom of Babylon* 13:1 – 22

1 The oracle ³³⁵ concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw: 2 {“Raise a signal on a bare hill! ³³⁶ Sound the call for battle! Wave [*the troops on*] to enter the Noble’s Gate! ³³⁷ 3 I myself have commanded my troops that are ceremonially pure, having summoned them, for they are mighty ³³⁸ men to carry out (*or, execute*) my anger.

4 {“Listen! A tumult is on the mountains --- a great multitude is on the mountains! ³³⁹ Hear the uproar as kingdoms and nations gather together! The Lord of hosts is mustering his army for battle. ³⁴⁰ 5 They come from a distant land --- from the farthest horizon. ³⁴¹ The Lord and the weapons of his indignation will destroy the entire earth!

6 {“Howl, for the day of the Lord is near; for destruction from the Almighty ³⁴² will come! 7 Therefore the hands will be powerless and every man’s heart will melt (*or, be dismayed*). ³⁴³ 8 They will be overwhelmed by terror, pain and agony. They will writhe as does a woman during the birth process. ³⁴⁴ They will gaze in terror at one another, their faces displaying their agony. ³⁴⁵

9 {“Assuredly the day of the Lord’s wrath will come in cruelty and fierce anger, in order to make the earth a desolation and destroy its sinners. 10 For the stars of the heavens

³³² NEB: “triumphed.” NASB: “for he has done excellent things.”

³³³ LXX: “the Holy One of Israel is exalted in the midst of you.” NEB: “for the Holy One of Israel is among you in majesty.” This chapter attempts to recover the sense of God’s presence and the resources this provides. God saved a remnant of the people of Israel and Judah and they, therefore, have a duty to declare the glory of God who has provided hope for them.

³³⁴ The oracles in this section of Isaiah are very carefully crafted. They all have 5 distinct sections the themes of which are alike.

³³⁵ The Hebrew word “*Axm*” means “that which is lifted up.” It describes a “burden, oath, curse uttered with uplifted hands.” It often is used for a “doom oracle.”

³³⁶ LXX: “on a mountain of the place.” NEB: “on a windy hill.”

³³⁷ An emendation would read: “let the nobles unsheathe their swords.” LXX: “*ανοζατε*.”

³³⁸ LXX: “giants.” Soldiers often were under orders to purify themselves, ritually, avoiding certain taboos etc., that they might be suitable as warriors and acceptable to their gods.

³³⁹ Hebrew unclear.

³⁴⁰ TAN footnote: “The impending slaughter is spoken of as a sacrificial meal, for which guests were notified to purify themselves ritually.” LXX: “fighting with armor or weapons.”

³⁴¹ LXX: “the utmost foundation of the heavens.” TAN: [*They come*] from the end of the sky.”

³⁴² Hebrew: “Shaddai.”

³⁴³ Cf.: ANET p. 378a LB: “your arms are paralyzed with fear, the strongest hearts will melt.” NEB: “their stomach hollow with fear.”

³⁴⁴ The defeat of Babylon will be a process which will reach an inescapable outcome. The power of the Medes appears to rise in about 539 BCE when Babylon actually falls.

³⁴⁵ Literally: “their faces will be aflame.” Cf.: ANET p. 275a.

and the constellations ³⁴⁶ will not provide hope; the sun will be dark at its rising; and the moon will not shed its light. ¹¹ I will punish the world because of its evil, and the wicked for their sinfulness. I will put an end to the pride of those who are arrogant and cut off the haughtiness of tyrants (*or, the ruthless*). ¹² I will cause men to be more scarce than fine gold and more rare than the gold of Ophir. ³⁴⁷ ¹³ Therefore in the day of my fierce anger I will shake the heavens (*or, the heavens will be shaken*) and the earth will be shaken ³⁴⁸ off its foundation, because of the wrath of the Lord of hosts. ³⁴⁹ ¹⁴ Just as a hunted gazelle or a sheep without a shepherd will flee, so too everyone will turn to one another and will flee to their own native land. ³⁵⁰ ¹⁵ Whoever is found will be stabbed to death with a sword and whoever is caught will also be put to death with the sword. ³⁵¹ ¹⁶ Their infants will be pierced with arrows. ³⁵² In their presence of their husbands their wives will be ravished.

¹⁶ {“I am assuredly stirring up the Medes against [*the Assyrians*] ³⁵³ who have no regard for silver and do not take pleasure in gold. ¹⁸ Their bows ³⁵⁴ will slaughter the young men and they will show no mercy toward infants, ³⁵⁵ nor will they view small children with pity. ³⁵⁶ ¹⁹ Babylon, the most glorious of kingdoms, the splendor and pride of the Chaldeans, will become like Sodom and Gomorrah when God destroyed them. ²⁰ It will never again be inhabited and there will be no dwellings for all generations. Nomads will not pitch their tents there, shepherds will not take their flocks there. ²¹ Wild beasts, ³⁵⁷ will lie down there and its ruined houses will be filled with howling creatures. ³⁵⁸ Ostriches ³⁵⁹ will live there and he goats [*that have been worshiped there*] will dance. ³⁶⁰

³⁴⁶ Literally: “their Orions” (one of the most striking constellations).

³⁴⁷ The location of Ophir is in question. Some scholars feel it was India, others Upper Egypt. LXX: “and they that are left will be more precious than refined gold and a man will be more precious than a stone that is in Suphir.”

³⁴⁸ LXX: “θυμοθησται.”

³⁴⁹ JB: “This is why I am going to shake the heavens - and shake the earth from its place before the wrath of Yahweh Sabaoth: the day when his anger flares.”

³⁵⁰ TEV: “The foreigners in Babylon will run away to their home lands, scattering like deer escaping from hunters, like sheep without a shepherd.”

³⁵¹ The battle seems to have been ‘every man for himself.’ Since the battle formations and plans often fell apart this was the way the battles continued. Humankind without God is without safety and without home.

³⁵² Traditionally the translation is: “infants will be dashed to pieces.” The Hebrew word used here is usually used for arrows that are shot all at one time by a group of soldiers. A volley of arrows would strike and if a child was there its body would be mangled. The LXX has, for the last phrase of the verse: “and they will spoil their houses and take their wives.”

³⁵³ Literally: “them.” The onslaught of the Medes on Babylon is viewed by the prophet as the Lord’s judgment. The Medes had a reputation of being interested only in war, not empire building or commerce. The events of verses 17 – 22 would no doubt have taken place late in the fifth century BCE. Portions of this oracle possibly took place after the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 562 BCE. It presents an awe inspiring picture of the terrors of the approaching Day of the Lord.

³⁵⁴ LXX: “τοξοματα.”

³⁵⁵ Literally: “fruit of the womb.”

³⁵⁶ JB: “the baby boys all cut to pieces, the baby girls all crushed. They have no mercy on the fruit of the womb, no pity in their eyes for children.”

³⁵⁷ Hebrew uncertain. NEB: “marmots.” NASB: “desert creatures.” MFT: “wild cats.”

³⁵⁸ LXX: “ghosts.” NEB: “porcupines shall overrun her houses.” NASB: “owls.”

³⁵⁹ It is very difficult to correctly identify birds and animals. Hebrew is not detailed about these.

³⁶⁰ A traditional translation has been “satyrs.”

22 Hyenas will make their noises in the fortified towers ³⁶¹ and jackals ³⁶² in their pleasant palaces for the time is close at hand. Their days will not last long.”} ³⁶³

<CHAPTER 14>

B. The Downfall of a Tyrant 14:1 – 23 ³⁶⁴

¹ [The Lord will have compassion on Jacob (*or, will pardon Jacob*) and will again choose Israel and will set the Israelites in their own land and aliens will join them and will become faithful members of the house of Jacob. ² These people ³⁶⁵ will take them, escorting them to their place, the house of Israel, and they will remain and serve as male and female slaves for they have been taken into captivity. ³⁶⁶

³ {“When the Lord has given you rest from your pain, turmoil and harsh slavery with which you were forced to serve ⁴ you will take up this taunt (*or, proverb*) against the King of Babylon: ³⁶⁷

{“Oh how the oppressor has ceased! O how the insolent fury ³⁶⁸ has ceased!”} ³⁶⁹ ⁵ The Lord has crushed the yoke of oppression, the scepter of rulers ⁶ that struck the peoples in wrath with unceasing blows for the nations were ruled in anger, with incessant persecution. ³⁷⁰ ⁷ The entire earth is at rest ³⁷¹ and quiet but it will break forth with loud chants. ⁸ The cypresses rejoice and the cedars of Lebanon will say: ‘Since you have been laid low no one has come to cut us down.’

⁹ {“Sheol ³⁷² is stirred up to meet you when you come, it excites the shades of Sheol to greet you who were the leaders ³⁷³ of the earth. It raises those who were kings of

³⁶¹ CB: “Goblins will howl in her palaces.”

³⁶² Hebrew uncertain. TAN: “dragons.”

³⁶³ The more people turn their backs on God, determined to ‘be themselves, to be the masters of their own world’ the less human they become and the less humane.

³⁶⁴ Some scholars have called this ‘A Mocking Dirge’. It is a vivid and powerful poetic oracle. In the “new day” of which Isaiah prophesies cooperation will replace animosity. Some scholars feel verses 1 – 4 are a later interpolation;

³⁶⁵ LXX: “The Israelites.” This is questionable. “The Israelites” seems to refer to “them.” The people who released the Israelites from captivity will escort them to their home land and some will stay despite becoming slaves and serving the Israelites. These apparently came voluntarily, having accepted the faith concepts of the Israelites and are willing even to forego their freedom to be associated with the house of Jacob and God, as understood by the Israelites.

³⁶⁶ TEV: “Many nations will help the people of Israel return to the land which the Lord gave them, and there the nations will serve Israel as slaves. Those who once captured Israel will now be captured by Israel, and the people of Israel will rule over them who once oppressed them.” OTL Isaiah: “They will take captive their captors and rule their oppressors.”

³⁶⁷ LXX Codex A adds: “and you will say in that day.”

³⁶⁸ The Hebrew word is uncertain. IQIsa Dead Sea Scroll, LXX and Syriac have “fury.” The MT has a hapax legomona possibly related to a root word meaning “to be arrogant.” See: ANET p. 106 ff.

³⁶⁹ The poem 4b – 21 is called a Mashal, a taunt, a proverb where everything has a parallel. Some scholars feel it is a taunt song (Spottlied) mocking, as a parody. Others feel this is an assurance of reconstruction. Yet other scholars feel this passage is a 6th century redactional reinterpretation.

³⁷⁰ JB: “which angrily thrashed the people with blow after blow which tyrannized over the nations persecuting without respite.

³⁷¹ LXX: “cries out aloud.”

³⁷² Literally: “Sheol” which is the Hebrew word for “the abode of the dead.” So: here and verses 11 & 15. MFT: “The underworld is astir to meet you rousing all the ghosts for you that on earth were chieftains, moving monarchs of the world, from their thrones.”

the nations from their thrones.³⁷⁴ ¹⁰ All of them will call out to you: ‘You have become weak, like us!’³⁷⁵ ¹¹ Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your lute is stilled. Worms become your bed and maggots your coverlet.³⁷⁶

¹² [“How you have fallen from heaven, O Day Star!³⁷⁷ You laid the nations low have been cut down! ¹³ You said to yourself, ‘I will climb to heaven;³⁷⁸ higher than the stars of God! I will set my throne on high: I will sit on the mountain on which the gods assemble³⁷⁹ which is in the far north.³⁸⁰ ¹⁴ I will ascend to the height of the clouds. I will make myself like the Most High!’³⁸¹ ¹⁵ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the pit.³⁸² ¹⁶ Those who see you will stare at you and peer closely at you --- ³⁸³ the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, ¹⁷ who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities³⁸⁴ who did not let his prisoners return home.¹⁸ All the kings of the nations lie in glory,³⁸⁵ each in his own tomb.³⁸⁶ ¹⁹ You, however, are cast away, with no sepulcher, like an unwelcomed miscarriage,³⁸⁷ covered over with the bodies of foot soldiers who died when they were sent into battle, who fell in battle like stones falling into the Pit,³⁸⁸ like a dead body lying in the path of marching warriors. ²⁰ You will not be united with them in burial because you have destroyed your land. You have murdered your people.

³⁷³ Literally: “he goats” which is surely a bit of irony.

³⁷⁴ LB: “The denizens of hell crowd to meet you as you enter their domain, world leaders and earthly mighty kings, long dead are there to see you. With one voice they cry out, ‘Now you are as weak as we are!’”

³⁷⁵ Literally: “ineffectual.”

³⁷⁶ LXX: ‘κατακαλυμμα σου.: An alternate translation might be: “our pride has become brought down to Sheol to the crowding throng of your dead.”

³⁷⁷ Literally: “light giver.” A foot note in TAN has “a character in some lost myth.” The Vulgate has “Lucifer.” TAN: “How are you fallen from heaven O Strong One, Son of David! How are you felled to earth, O vanquisher of nations!” In Canaanite mythology there was a god Shahar, the god of dawn or the morning star. Ishtar attempted a heavenly coup but failed.

³⁷⁸ In Hebrew there seems to be a play on words with “brought down” (v. 11) and “climb to heaven” (v. 13).

³⁷⁹ The apex of Zaphon in northern Palestine was the seat of the Canaanite gods. It was here that they assembled in council. TAN in a footnote suggests: “A region of the netherworld reserved for those who have not received a decent burial. Cf.: Ezekiel 32:21 ff.”

³⁸⁰ Note the soaring self-esteem of the king. Stars --- mount of assembly --- sacred mountain.

³⁸¹ JB: “I will climb to the top of the thunder clouds. I will rival the Most High.”

³⁸² LXX: “even to the foundations of the earth.” CEV: “but now you are deep in the world of the dead.”

³⁸³ Literally: “show them selves attentive.”

³⁸⁴ JB: “beloved cities, to his captives opened the gates.”

³⁸⁵ TAN suggests a possible emendation in a footnote: “Who chained to his palace gate All the kings of nations? Yet they were all laid in honor...” The practice of chaining captive chieftains to gates is attested in Mesopotamia.

³⁸⁶ Literally: “house.” Tombs for royalty were ornate mausoleums.

³⁸⁷ Literally: “an abhorred branch.” The versions and ancient writers including Symmachus used words that were as descriptive as the above. NRSV: “like loathsome carrion.” It is possible that the text is questionable.

³⁸⁸ Some scholars feel this is a cairn of stones placed over bodies that were being hastily disposed of. The LXX uses the word “θελαιουζ” which is here translated as “stones.”

{“May the descendants of evil doers never again be named! ³⁸⁹ 21 Prepare the slaughter of his sons because of the guilt of their father’ lest they rise up and spread across the face of the earth and fill it with cities.”} ³⁹⁰

22 “I will rise up against them” says the Lord of hosts, “and I will cut off from Babylon name and remnant; offspring and posterity, says the Lord. 23 I will make it a possession of hedgehogs and pools of water. I will sweep it with the broom of destruction, says the Lord of hosts.” ³⁹¹

C, The Divine Purpose in Assyria’s Overthrow 14:24 – 27

24 The Lord of hosts has sworn ³⁹² {“As I have planned, so it will take place! As I have intended, so it will take place. 25 I will break the Assyrians in my land, and on my mountain. They will be trampled under foot ³⁹³ and my ³⁹⁴ yoke will depart from them and a burden taken from their shoulders. 26 This is the purpose that I devised ³⁹⁵ concerning the entire earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out, having power over all the nations. 27 The Lord of hosts has an intended purpose. Who then can foil it? His hand is stretched out and who will be able to turn it back?”}

D. Premature Rejoicing of the Philistines 14:28 – 32

28 In the year that King Ahaz died this oracle came: 29 {“Do not rejoice, O Philistine, all of you, that the Assyrian oppressor ³⁹⁶ who beat you is broken, for from the serpent root will come the an adder, and its fruit will be a flying serpent. ³⁹⁷ 30 The firstborn of the poor ³⁹⁸ will feed and the needy will lie down in safety but I will destroy your root through famine, and your remnant will be slain.³¹ Wail, O gate; cry O city, become demoralized, O Philistia --- all of you, for smoke (*or, a storm cloud*) will come out of the north and there are no stragglers ³⁹⁹ in their ranks.

32 {“What will one answer to the messenger of the nation? “The Lord has founded Zion, and in her those people who are afflicted will find refuge.”}

³⁸⁹ LXX: “Just as a garment defiled with blood will not be pure, because you have destroyed my land and killed my people, you will not endure forever .”

³⁹⁰ This is a horrific description of devastation, disappointed hope and a shattered environment.

³⁹¹ NIV: “I will turn her into a place for owls and into swampland. I will sweep her with the broom of destruction, declares the Lord Almighty.”

³⁹² This becomes a ‘threat oracle.’ Scholars feel the reference is to the time between 725 and 715 BCE.

³⁹³ Some scholars transfer 8:21 – 22 to this sentence feeling the reference is more appropriate here.

³⁹⁴ Literally: “his.”

³⁹⁵ Literally: “planned.”

³⁹⁶ Literally: “the rod.”

³⁹⁷ NIV: “from the root of that snake will spring up a viper, its fruit will be a darting, venomous serpent.” In 734 BCE Gath revolted and was sacked in 720 BCE. The Philistines made a treaty with Egypt to rebel against Assyria and Egypt was defeated by Sargon which resulted in Sargon’s defeating Gath and Ashkelon. Gaza fell in 711 BCE. Ashdod fell to Sennacherib in 701 BCE. The Philistines approached Israel / Judah about an alliance and revolt from the power of Assyria under the guise of sending a mission of condolence upon the death of Ahaz. JB uses the word “basilisk” in place of “adder.”

³⁹⁸ Literally: “the firstborn of the helpless.”

³⁹⁹ Some scholars feel the reference is to deserters.

<CHAPTER 15>

E. Death Throws of Moab 15:1 - 16:14
(Two Examples of Help Being Refused by Pride)
*[An Oracle Concerning Moab]*⁴⁰⁰

¹ {Ar is sacked: destroyed in one night! Moab is ruined! Kir is sacked: destroyed in one night! Moab is ruined! ⁴⁰¹ ² The people of Dibon ⁴⁰² have gone up to the heights to the places of worship to weep ⁴⁰³ as is also done by all of Moab as they wail about Nebo and Medeba. Every head has been shaved and every beard clipped.(*or, shaved*). ⁴⁰⁴ ³ In the streets everyone wears sackcloth; and wailing is heard from every housetop and every market square for the people are prostrate as they weep. ⁴ Heshbon and Elealeh wail so loudly that their wailing is heard as far as Jahaz. Therefore the armed men ⁴⁰⁵ wail: their soul trembles!

⁵ [“I, the Lord, grieve, crying out concerning Moab! Its fugitives flee to Zoar ⁴⁰⁶ going to Eglath – Shelishiyah ⁴⁰⁷ Weeping they go up the road that ascends from Luhith on the road to Horonaim ⁴⁰⁸ As they go they mourn their destruction. ⁴⁰⁹ ⁶ The Waters of Mimim ⁴¹⁰ are desolate: the grass is withered, the new growth fails, and the grasslands no longer exist. ⁷ Therefore what they own and what they have saved they now carry away beyond the Book of the Willows (*or, Poplars*). ⁴¹¹ ⁸ Their cry has encircled the entire land of Moab; their wailing reaches as far as Eglaim and even to Beer-Elim. ⁴¹² ⁹ The waters of Dibon ⁴¹³ are filled with blood, yet --- I will inflict even more on Dibon. A lion ⁴¹⁴ will hunt down those who escape and those who are the remnant in the land.”}

⁴⁰⁰ Sargon attacked Moab in 715 and 711 BCE. Sennacherib attacked in 701 BCE. The lament seems to be the prophet's own lament. This is evident in the Hebrew first person pronouns that are used. The verses 16:6 – 11 and 15:2 – 7 appear in Jeremiah 48.

⁴⁰¹ LXX: “By night the land of Moab will be destroyed; for by night the wall of the land of Moab will be destroyed.” JB: “The night when Ar was ravaged Moab collapsed. The night when Kir was savaged Moab collapsed.”

⁴⁰² So: Versions. Literally: “the house of Dibon.” Dibon was located north of the Arnon River. It was considered to be the principal city of Moab.

⁴⁰³ Some scholars emend the Hebrew to read “daughter of the house.” OTL Isaiah “Dibon went up to the temple.”

⁴⁰⁴ TAN: “He went down to the temple to weep. Dibon [went] to the outdoor shrines. Over Nebo and Medeba Moab is wailing. On every head is baldness, every beard is shorn.” Nebo and Medeba are further north.

⁴⁰⁵ TAN: “shock troops.” Some emend to read: “loins.” The tragedy is so great that even the soldiers are immobilized by grief. LXX: “ἡ οσφύς” uses “loins” as do the NRSV and the NAB.

⁴⁰⁶ NEB: “Whose nobles have fled as far as Zoar.”

⁴⁰⁷ This location is unknown. In this portion of the chapter the towns lie from north to south-west.

⁴⁰⁸ Presumably these towns were close to one another.

⁴⁰⁹ LXX: “The heart of the region of Moab cries within her to Segor for it is as a three year old heifer.”

⁴¹⁰ Probably: Wadi Numeiah.

⁴¹¹ LXX: “Therefore will the Meads be delivered? I will bring the Arabians in the valley and they will conquer it.” MFT: “they must carry (on past the Valley of Willows) what they have saved.” The Valley of Willows is probably Wadi Zerad.

⁴¹² LXX: “the Well of Elim.”

⁴¹³ So: Dead Sea Scroll and Vulgate. Literally: “Dimon.” There is a play on words with the Hebrew “Dibon” and the Hebrew word for “blood.”

⁴¹⁴ Some translators emend to read “I will drench.” TAN: “Ah the waters of Dimon are full of blood for I have added [water] on Dimon. I drench it --- for Moab's refugees --- with soil for its remnant.” NEB: “The

<CHAPTER 16> ⁴¹⁵

¹ {Lambs have been sent from Sela ⁴¹⁶ to the ruler of the land, sending them by way of the desert to the mountain of the people of Zion. ⁴¹⁷ ² The people of Moab linger (*or, the women of Moab*) like fluttering birds, scattered nestlings, at the fords of the Arnon. ³ “Give us advice (*or, Provide sanctuary*). Protect us (*or, Provide justice*.) Spread out your shadow as if it were night, though it is high noon and protect us within your shadow. Hide the fugitives! Do not betray them!” ⁴¹⁸ ⁴ Let the fugitives of Moab find asylum with you. Be a refuge to them from their aggressors. Once oppression has ceased, destruction has ended, and violence ⁴¹⁹ has vanished from the land ⁵ a throne will be established in steadfast love and in it there will be faithfulness like that which was in the tent of David, the one who judged and sought justice and was swift to be righteous. ⁴²⁰

⁶ {(We have heard of the Pride of Moab. How proud Moab was: its arrogance, its pride and its insolence --- all hollow boasts. ⁷ Therefore Moab must wail, let everyone in Moab wail! Moab is being destroyed totally, O for the raisin cakes of Kir-har-eseth.) ⁴²¹

⁸ {“The fields of Heshbon are withered (*or, blighted*) as are the vines of Sibmah. ⁴²² The lords of the nation have destroyed the branches which reached Jezer, extended to the desert and its tendrils spread themselves, reaching as far as the sea. ⁹ Therefore I weep with those weeping for Jezer, ⁴²³ for the vine of Sibmah, I drench you with my tears O Heshbon and Elealeh for the invasion ⁴²⁴ of your fruitful and fertile land has begun. ⁴²⁵ ¹⁰ Joy and gladness are gone from the fruitful fields; and no songs are being sung in the

waters of Dimon already run with blood; yet I have more troubles in store for Dimon for I have a vision of the survivors of Moab, of the remnant of Admah. “ LB: “but I am not through with Dibon yet; lions will hunt down the survivors, both those who escape and those who remain.”

⁴¹⁵ Isaiah now writes as if he is sitting in on the planning by the Moabite leaders. Since lambs were the major product of Moab this was a way of giving tribute to Judah / Jerusalem which would be a request to be a vassal of Judah.

⁴¹⁶ Sela was located in the far southern part of Moab. This was the location to which the government had fled.

⁴¹⁷ LXX: “as it were – reptiles on the land: is not the mount of the daughter of Zion a desolate rock?” NAB: “Send them forth, hugging the earth like reptiles, from Sela across the desert to the mount of the daughter of Zion.”

⁴¹⁸ The Hebrew of verse 3 is difficult. The word for “you” in Hebrew, like English, can be either singular or plural. TAN: “Give advice; offer counsel. At high noon make your shadow like night around the outcasts, betray not the fugitives.”

⁴¹⁹ Literally: “trample under foot.”

⁴²⁰ MFT: “Then shall your throne be based in kindness and in trustworthiness...shall David’s dynasty sit there to rule, built upon justice.” Isaiah replies: Zion’s struggle is in the Lord, not in military power. Some scholars feel 14:32 should be interpolated here.

⁴²¹ LXX: “Moab will howl; for all will howl in the land of Moab; but you will care for them that live in Seth, and you will not be ashamed.” Raisin cakes were raisins compressed together and used as food. They were also used in pagan cults as gifts to idols. Cf.: Hosea 3:1. The national god of Moab was Chemosh. Kir-har-eseth was located in central Moab.

⁴²² The location of these towns is unknown. The Hebrew following the word “Sibmah” is uncertain. This is an attempt to make a possible understanding of the Hebrew words.

⁴²³ Jezer was located in the extreme north of Moab.

⁴²⁴ Literally: “the battle shout.”

⁴²⁵ LXX: “for I will trample on your harvest and in your vintages and all your plants will fail.”

vineyards, no treading of grapes in the wine presses; the harvest joy is hushed. ⁴²⁶ ¹¹ Therefore my soul ⁴²⁷ mourns for Moab as well as for Kir-heres like the sound of a lyre in the breeze.”⁴²⁸

¹² “When Moab presents itself [*before its idols*], going to the shrines intending to pray it will not prevail. ⁴²⁹ ¹³ This is the word the Lord had spoken concerning Moab in the past.”

¹⁴ However, now the Lord declares: “In three years, watch the time [*as does an indentured servant counting down the time left of his servitude*] the glory of Moab will be brought into contempt, in spite of all of its great multitude, those who survive ⁴³⁰ will be very few who also will be feeble.” ⁴³¹

<CHAPTER 17>

F. Doom of the Syro-Ephramite Alliance 17:1 – 6

¹ An oracle concerning Damascus ⁴³²

{“Behold, Damascus will become a desolate ruin. ² Her cities of the Aroer ⁴³³ area will be permanently deserted. Sheep will pasture there, lying down, unafraid. ³ The fortifications will disappear from Ephraim and Damascus will loose its sovereignty. The remnant of Syria will be treated in the same manner as were the children of Israel,” declares the Lord of hosts ⁴³⁴

⁴ {“In that day the glory of Judah will wane, ⁴³⁵ and its prosperity will waste away. ⁵ It will be as when the reapers ⁴³⁶ gather the grain in their arms, and as when one gleans

⁴²⁶ So: LXX. The word “πεπανται.” is used by the LXX.

⁴²⁷ Literally: “my entire being.”

⁴²⁸ LXX: “Therefore my belly will sound like a harp for Moab and you have repaired my inner parts as a wall.”

⁴²⁹ LXX: “It will be to the shame of Moab for it has become weary at its altars, that it will go to its altars to pray, but they will not be able to deliver Moab [*from its enemy*].

⁴³⁰ LXX: “και καταλειφθησεαι.” “And now I say, in three years, of the years of an indentured servant, the glory of Moab will be dishonored with all its great wealth; and it will be left few in number and not honored.”

⁴³¹ The destruction of Moab is imminent.

⁴³² Some scholars feel this line and the additional references to Damascus in verses 1 & 3 are later interpolations. One of the reasons for this is that “Aroen” is a town in Moab, though there might possibly have been a town near Damascus with the same name. This passage is closely related to 7:1 – 8:1. 17:2 – 18:7. This a microcosm of history, the worldwide scale of things. The same question is posed: Who is the real ruler?

⁴³³ An emendation is suggested by BHS: “Her cities will be deserted for ever.” Hebrew: “cities of Aroer.” The LXX in verses 1 & 2 is quite different: LXX: ¹ Damascus will be taken away from among the cities and become abandoned forever, to be a fold and resting place for flocks and there will be no one to tend them. ² There will no longer be a strong place for Ephraim to flee to, and there will no longer be a kingdom of Damascus nor will there be a remnant of Syria for you are no better than the children of Israel even in their glory, says the Lord of hosts.”

⁴³⁴ Virtually the entire verse is omitted by the LXX. NEB: “No longer shall Ephraim boast a fortified city; or Damascus a kingdom.”

⁴³⁵ Literally: “become thin.”

⁴³⁶ Literally: “gatherers of the harvest of standing grain.”

grain in the Valley of Rephaim. ⁴³⁷ ⁶ Only the gleanings will be left to be gathered. Or: when the olive tree is beaten (*or, shaken*) ⁴³⁸ two or three olives are still on the top branches and four or five on the branches of the tree” declares the Lord.”}

G. Idolatrous Worship 17:7 - 11

1. A Turning From Idols 17:7 – 8 ⁴³⁹

⁷ “In that day mankind will regard their maker and their eyes will be fixed on the Holy God of Israel. ⁹ They will not have regard for the altars that their own hands have made, and have no regard for the Asherim or the incense altars they had fabricated.” ⁴⁴⁰

2. The Adonis Cult, a False Security 17:9 – 11

⁹ “In that day their fortified cities will be like deserted places of the Hivites and the Amorites ⁴⁴¹ who abandoned the houses of the children of Israel, leaving them desolate.

¹⁰ {“You have forsaken the God of your salvation! ⁴⁴² In addition you have not remembered the Rock of your refuge. ⁴⁴³ Therefore even though you plant sacred gardens ⁴⁴⁴ and set out vine slips for an alien god ⁴⁴⁵ ¹¹ and force their growth on the day of their planting ⁴⁴⁶ and make them bloom in the morning that you sow, yet the harvest will be as nothing for that day will be a time of grief and incurable pain.”}

H. Rising and Passing of the Storm 17:12 – 14

¹² {“Oh, the thunder of many peoples ⁴⁴⁷ thundering like the noise of the sea. Oh the roar ⁴⁴⁸ of the nations for they roar like the roaring of much water. ⁴⁴⁹ ¹³ The nations roar like the roaring of much water, but he will rebuke them, and they will flee, like chaff

⁴³⁷ This was a bountiful area south west of Jerusalem.

⁴³⁸ Literally: “like the striking of an olive tree.”

⁴³⁹ This gives the appearance of a fragment of a larger oracle that was included here.

⁴⁴⁰ Asherim were cult symbols of the Canaanite goddess Asherah. These apparently were poles dedicated to Asherah and inscribed by the worshiper who erected them. These sacred poles were erected near altars. Their false religion has the identifying mark: it is an exercise in human self reliance. Their entire spiritual support system depends on their own accomplishments and activities.

⁴⁴¹ LXX: “οἱ Ἀμορραῖοι καὶ οἱ Εὐατοῖ.” Hebrew: “The Horeish and the Amir.” One ancient translation has: “like the cities of the Hivites and the Amorites.” CEV: “Israel captured powerful cities and chased out the people who lived there. But these cities will be in ruins, covered with weeds and underbrush.”

⁴⁴² LXX: “You have forsaken God the Savior.” The verbs in verses 10 & 11 are 2nd person singular, feminine. Some scholars feel these verses are a later explanatory interpolation.

⁴⁴³ Failure in remembering God is the cause of spiritual disaster.

⁴⁴⁴ People felt if they planted sacred gardens dedicated to fertility gods that god would come and bless their crops. The Hebrew word translated as “sacred gardens” is literally: “gardens of the desirable one.” LXX: “A faultless plant.”

⁴⁴⁵ Literally: “the strange one.” There was a widespread worship of a fertility cult of Adonis (the vegetation god). He was also called “Dod.”

⁴⁴⁶ The forcing of plants in containers as a present to the desirable one --- was a common practice in the Middle Eastern world.

⁴⁴⁷ Possibly not only the invading army but also the camp followers who traveled with the army.

⁴⁴⁸ LXX: “force.” Complutensian Polyglot: “noise.”

⁴⁴⁹ There was a Canaanite myth of a battle with the god “Yam” (the sea). This was a kind of “Voelkerkamp Motif.”

being blown by the wind ⁴⁵⁰ and whirling dust before a storm. ¹⁴ At dusk there is terror. By morning they are gone. ⁴⁵¹ This is the fate of those who ravage us, and also the lot of those who plunder us.”}

<CHAPTER 18:

I Concerning Egypt 18:1 – 20:6.

1. Reply to the Cushite (or, Nubian) Envoys 18:1 – 7 ⁴⁵²

¹ [“Ah, land of buzzing insects ⁴⁵³ which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia! ² You send envoys who sail the Nile in vessels of reeds (*or papyrus*). Go, swift messengers! Go to nations, you tall ⁴⁵⁴ and smooth ⁴⁵⁵ ones; go to fearful nations far and near, to nations that are powerful and nations that are conquering, ⁴⁵⁶ nations on both sides of the river.

³ {[“All you inhabitants of the entire expanse of the world, you who live on the earth, when a signal is raised on the mountain, speak out! Look! When the ram’s horn is sounded listen! ⁴ This is what the Lord has told me: I will quietly observe from my dwelling, calm and confident, ⁴⁵⁷ like a rain cloud in the heat of harvest. ⁴⁵⁸ ⁵ When the blossom is past and the flower becomes a ripening grape, he will destroy the enemy as easily as cutting grape shoots with a pruning hook and severing the trailing branches. ⁴⁵⁹ ⁶ There will be exposed corpses on the mountains: carrion for the vultures (*or, kites*) in summer and for the wild animals in winter.”}

⁷ [At that time tribute will be brought to the Lord of hosts from people — tall and smooth --- from nations who were afraid, being near or far, nations that were mighty and those conquering, (*or, a nation of strong speech and oppressive*) whose territory is on

⁴⁵⁰ This is an apt description of speedy and total disbursal. It represents swift judgment.

⁴⁵¹ Cf. II Kings 18 - 19.

⁴⁵² “The Cushite (or, Nubian) Envoys” seems out of place under the title “Concerning Egypt.” Piankhi, also known as Piye was a Cushite who conquered Egypt which was undergoing discontent among its leaders. He was the first ruler of the 25th Dynasty. His capital was in Upper Egypt (present day Sudan). He conquered Egypt in about 715 BCE. He seems to have been a world statesman and established an anti-Assyrian conglomerate.

⁴⁵³ Literally: “whirling wings.” The expression is sometimes translated as “locusts.” BV” Tsetse fly.” No doubt there were many insects in the Nile Valley to provide “whirling wings.” Some scholars feel the reference is to ships with sails, and translate “winged fleets” or winged ships.: These would have been like the “feluccas” seen on the Nile even today. LXX: “Woe to you, you wings of the land of ships beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.” TAN: “land of the deep shadowy wings a most sheltered land.”

⁴⁵⁴ The meaning of the Hebrew word is unclear. Literally it is “drawn out.” Possibly the meaning is “long standing.” Some think of it as “battle ready.” The Hebrew of this verse is very uncertain.

⁴⁵⁵ Cf.: Herodotus History 3, 20

⁴⁵⁶ OTL Isaiah “to the nation of strong speech and oppression.”

⁴⁵⁷ Literally: “like clear heat in sunshine.”

⁴⁵⁸ NEB: “When heat shimmers in the summer sun, when dew is heavy at harvest time.” God is the quiet watcher of world affairs. His presence is as natural as heat, dew, light and harvest. The word “harvest” can easily be emended to read “vintage.”

⁴⁵⁹ CEV: “Before the blossoms are turned into grapes God will cut off the sprouts and hack off the branches.” The verse becomes a figure of speech concerning the defeated army.

both sides of the river. This tribute will be given to Mount Zion, the place of the name of the Lord of Hosts.] ⁴⁶⁰

<CHAPTER 19>

2. *The Doom of Egypt 19:1 – 15*

a, *The Smiting of Egypt Foretold 19:1 - 10*

An Oracle Concerning Egypt

¹ {“Behold! The Lord is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt and the idols of Egypt will tremble in his presence and the heart of the Egyptians will dissolve within them. ² I will incite a civil war: Egyptian against Egyptian, neighbor against neighbor, city against city and region against region (*or, kingdom against kingdom*). ⁴⁶¹ ³ Courage within the Egyptians will be drained and I will frustrate their plans. They will consult idols and sorcerers, mediums ⁴⁶² and wizards. ⁴ I will deliver the Egyptians into the hand of a tyrant and despot ⁴⁶³ who will rule over them, declares the Lord of hosts. ⁴⁶⁴

⁵ {“The waters of the Nile will shrivel and dry up ⁴⁶⁵ and their canals will be parched and dry. ⁶ Canals will smell and the canals (*or, streams*) of Egypt’s Nile will dwindle and dry up. Reeds and rushes will wither. ⁴⁶⁶ ⁷ There will be barren areas ⁴⁶⁷ along the Nile, and all those areas along the banks of the Nile that have been sown (*or, the meadow grass along the Nile*) ⁴⁶⁸ will wither and the dead growth will be blown away and vanish. ⁸ The fishermen who fish with hooks will sadly lament, and all who spread nets on the water will become weak. ⁴⁶⁹ ⁹ Those workers who hackle and weave flax will be filled with despair along with the weavers of cloth. ⁴⁷⁰ ¹⁰ Those who are officials in the land ⁴⁷¹ will be complete fools, and all who work for hire will be filled with despair. ⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁰ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. The giving of the gift is an act of submission on the part of the Ethiopian (Nubian, Cushite) ruler of Egypt, witnessing to the Lord’s intention. The entire passage is a testimony to the future rule of God over the nations.

⁴⁶¹ LXX: “land against land.” This might possibly be translated as “district.” Cf.: ANET 443d; 445c.

⁴⁶² LXX: “ventriloquists that have in them a divining spirit.” TAN: “They will consult the idols and the shades, and the ghosts and the familiar spirits.” Cf.: ANET 442b

⁴⁶³ The tyrant and despot might be Piakhi or his successor Shabaka, rulers of the 25th Dynasty.

⁴⁶⁴ The collapse of Egypt covers enterprise, religion and government, all of which decay into dictatorship. In verses 5 – 10 there is also economic collapse.

⁴⁶⁵ LXX: “from the sea” which was presumed to be the source of the Nile river water. Cf.; ANET 445a.

⁴⁶⁶ LXX: “The stream will fail and the canals of the river, and every reservoir of water will be dried up, in every marsh reeds and papyrus will also die.”

⁴⁶⁷ The Hebrew word “**hr**” usually is translated as “bare place” but the root word is possibly an Egyptian Loan Word meaning “reek.” The Hebrew is unclear.

⁴⁶⁸ NEB: “The lotus” is a possible reading. LXX: “All the sedge grass on the banks of the river will shrivel and all that is sown of the Nile will be dried up, driven into nothingness.”

⁴⁶⁹ CF.: ANET 475a.

⁴⁷⁰ The Hebrew word translated as “cloth” actually means “white stuff.” A number of plants that grew in the Nile Valley were used in making fibers for clothing.

⁴⁷¹ A slight emendation would provide: “workers in cloth.”

⁴⁷² LXX: “They that work at them will be in pain and all that make beer will be grieved and pained in their souls.” TAN: “her foundations shall crumble and all who make dams shall be despondent.” The prophet is saying that behind sound economy is proper spirituality.

b. The Taunt of Pharaoh 19:11 – 17

11 {“The leadership of Zoan (*or, Avaris*) ⁴⁷³ is utterly foolish and the wise counselors of Pharaoh give nonsensical advice. How dare you say to pharaoh: ‘I have the credentials to be an advisor for I am the son of one of the ancient kings’? 12 Where are our wise men? Let them speak up ⁴⁷⁴ and make known what the Lord has prepared against Egypt. 13 The princes of Zoan have become toadies and the princes of Memphis (*or, Noph*) are deceived: those who are the cornerstone of truth have led the Egyptians astray. ⁴⁷⁵ 14 The Lord has caused the leaders to have warped judgment and bewilderment. They have made Egypt stagger ⁴⁷⁶ in its actions, like a drunkard who reels in his own vomit. 15 There will be no accomplishments in Egypt about which there might be rejoicing.} ⁴⁷⁷

16 [“In that day the Egyptians will become timid (*or, helpless*) and tremble with terror before the hand of the Lord of hosts that is being shaken over them. 17 The land of Judah will become a source of dread to the Egyptians and to everyone to whom Israel is mentioned for they will be fearful of the Lord of hosts and his intention that will be directed against them.”

3. The Future Worship of the Lord in Egypt and Assyria 19:18 – 25

18 “In that day there will be five cities ⁴⁷⁸ in the land of Egypt which will speak the Hebrew language, ⁴⁷⁹ and swear allegiance to the Lord of hosts. One of these will be called the ‘City of the Sun’. ⁴⁸⁰

19 “In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar to the Lord at its border. ⁴⁸¹ 20 It will be a sign and witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt. When they cry to the Lord, because of oppressors he will send them a savior and will defend ⁴⁸² and deliver them. 21 The Lord will reveal himself to the Egyptians and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day and worship with sacrifices, and burnt offerings. They will make vows to the Lord and fulfill them. 22 The Lord will afflict and will also heal Egypt. They will then return to the Lord, and he will hear their pleas and heal them.

⁴⁷³ The LXX uses the name “Tanis.”

⁴⁷⁴ LXX: “εἰ πατ ὠσαν.”

⁴⁷⁵ Verses 11 – 13 describe political collapse. This is exemplified in folly, bewilderment, uncertainty and helplessness. Leaders are unenlightened, undiscerning and misleading.

⁴⁷⁶ CB: “reel.”

⁴⁷⁷ Hebrew unclear. LXX: “beginning or end.” An emendation would read: “Her distress will be digested and all her brewers despondent.” Some scholars feel this is a reference to the leader of the people whose virtue failed.

⁴⁷⁸ Scholars question whether five cities should be taken literally or ‘a few’. Five marks of true religion are listed in these verses. 1. Altar – signifying the presence of God. 2. Prayer – speaking with God. 3. Revelation – God makes himself known. 4. Worship – a public expression of faith. 5. Discipline – receiving the word of God results in testing for genuineness.

⁴⁷⁹ Literally: “the language of Canaan.”

⁴⁸⁰ The translation above is based on the majority of MSS including IQIsa. LXX: “Asadei.” Egyptian: “On.” Greek: “Heliopolis.” Several Hebrew MSS have “City of Destruction.” Cf.: ANET 248b, 443c.

⁴⁸¹ This would be a symbol of the Lord’s sovereignty over Israel.

⁴⁸² LXX: “κρίνον.”

23 “In that day there will be a highway between Egypt and Assyria and the Assyrians will come into Egypt, and Egypt will go into Assyria and Egypt and Assyria will join together in worship.

24 “In that day there will be a triple alliance: Israel Egypt and Assyria --- a blessing in the midst of the earth! 25 The Lord of hosts blesses them,⁴⁸³ saying: “Blessed be my people Egypt, and my handiwork, the people of Assyria, and my heritage the people of Israel!”]⁴⁸⁴

<CHAPTER 20>⁴⁸⁵

5. An Acted and Spoken Prophecy Against Egypt 20:1 – 6

1 In the year that the supreme commander (*or, governor general*),⁴⁸⁶ who was sent by Sargon II the king of Assyria, came to Ashdod and fought against it⁴⁸⁷ --- 2 (at that time⁴⁸⁸ the Lord had spoken by Isaiah the son of Amos, saying. ‘Go and take the sackcloth from your loins⁴⁸⁹ and remove your sandals from your feet,’” He did as he was instructed, walking naked and barefooted.) 3 The Lord said, “My servant, Isaiah has walked, naked and barefooted for three years as a symbol and warning of an event to come, of what will happen to Egypt and Ethiopia, 4 for the king of Assyria will lead Egyptians away as captives along with Ethiopian exiles, both young and old, naked and barefooted, with their buttocks bare! Oh how shameful⁴⁹⁰ for Egypt! 5 They will be confused and chagrined because Egypt had its hope in Ethiopia and confidently believed Ethiopia’s boasting.

6 “Those who inhabited the coastlands will say in that day,⁴⁹¹ ‘Behold, this is what has happened to those in whom we had hoped and to whom we looked for help that we might be delivered from the power of the king of Assyria. How can we escape?’”

⁴⁸³ LXX: “ην ευλογησε.”

⁴⁸⁴ Some scholars feel verses 16 – 25 are a later interpolation. CEV: “The Egyptians are my people; I created the Assyrians; and chose the Israelites.”

⁴⁸⁵ The new 25th Dynasty had instigated a revolt. This prompted Sargon II of Assyria to engage in battle at Ashdod, Philistia. The anti-Assyria rebellion had developed over a four year period, apparently under the leadership of the Pharaoh Piakhi. In 713 BCE Ashdod became rebellious. Assyria attacked and replaced Ashdod’s king with a puppet. Sargon II reigned from 722 – 705 BCE. The time line in this chapter is a bit difficult to comprehend.

⁴⁸⁶ This military officer was an official next to the king and would have been in line to become king in the event that the king had no heirs.

⁴⁸⁷ LXX: “In the year when Tanathan came to Ozotus, where he was sent by Arna king of the Assyrians, he made war against Azotus, and captured it.”

⁴⁸⁸ TAN: “previously.” It is accepted by many scholars that the year was 711 BCE. Cf. ANET: 286b.

⁴⁸⁹ This hairy mantle may have been the customary garb for prophets. Some scholars feel that he would still have an apron like loin cloth. Prisoners who had been captured in war wore such an apron like loin cloth. The Hebrew words later in this verse: “walking naked” imply being absolutely naked. The modesty of the reader can influence the reader’s decision.

⁴⁹⁰ Literally: “nakedness.”

⁴⁹¹ There seem to have been people in Judah who favored participation with Egypt. The coastline would be the Philistine Plain and its coastal cities. LXX: “and they who reside on this island.”

<CHAPTER 21>
K. The Appalling Vision of Babylon's ⁴⁹² *Fall 21:1 – 10*
The Oracle Concerning the Wildness of the Sea

¹ {“Disaster will sweep across the land just as a whirlwind sweeps across the Negeb, ⁴⁹³ coming from a terrible land. ² I have received a harsh vision of the plunderer plundering and the destroyer destroying. ‘Advance toward Elam, O Media,⁴⁹⁴ I have put an end to her groaning!’ ⁴⁹⁵ ³ Therefore my body is seized with trembling ⁴⁹⁶ for pangs have seized me, like the pangs of a woman giving birth. I am too distressed ⁴⁹⁷ to hear! I am too frightened ⁴⁹⁸ to see! ⁴ My mind ⁴⁹⁹ is confused, I am fearful (*or, I panic*). The night of pleasure, to which I had looked forward has been transformed into horror and violent trembling for me. ⁵⁰⁰ ⁵ Set the table! Spread out the rugs! ⁵⁰¹ Eat and drink! Officers rise! Oil (*or, grease*) your shields!’ ⁵⁰²

⁶ {The Lord spoke to me, saying “Go, set up a watchman (*or, sentry*) and have him announce anything he sees! ⁷ He will see a cavalcade of riders; horsemen in pairs (*or, chariots drawn by two horses*) riders on donkeys, riders on camels. ⁵⁰³ He must listen carefully and be diligent. (*or, When he sees chariots with teams of horses, riders on donkeys or riders on camels have him be alert for a message.*) ⁸ The watchman saw and called out: ‘I constantly stand on the watchtower, O Lord, day and night I remain at my post.’ ⁹ Suddenly ⁵⁰⁴ the riders come: riders in pairs! A rider calls out ‘Fallen! Babylon has fallen! All the images of her gods have crashed ⁵⁰⁵ to the ground!’ ⁵⁰⁶ ¹⁰ O my people, you have been threshed and winnowed! I have told you what I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel’.”} ⁵⁰⁷

⁴⁹² LXX: “desert.” Some scholars feel this is a much later interpolation dating it as late as 534 BCE; Recent scholars have thought of the date as about 540 BCE. Other scholars feel it is a warning of the invasion by Sargon II in 710 BCE. The exact “sitz im leben” is debated by scholars. Chapters 21 – 23 mark a second series of oracles. Isaiah reminds us that world history has its times of doom and darkness. These oracles may be Isaiah’s attempt to dissuade Judah from an alliance with Egypt.

⁴⁹³ The Negeb is the southern desert of Israel.

⁴⁹⁴ Elam and Media were nations that were captured by Babylon under Cyrus in 539 BCE. LXX: “The treacherous deal treacherously, the transgressors transgress. The ambassadors of the Persians come against me; now I will groan and comfort myself.”

⁴⁹⁵ An emendation would read “strives.”

⁴⁹⁶ LXX: “feebleness.” “Anguish” would be a suitable translation of the Hebrew word.

⁴⁹⁷ LXX: “I deal wrongfully.”

⁴⁹⁸ LXX: “hesitant.”

⁴⁹⁹ Literally: “my heart is wounded.”

⁵⁰⁰ An emendation would read: “put an end to merrymaking.” LXX: “My heart wanders, transgression overwhelms me; my soul is occupied with fear.”

⁵⁰¹ Since people ate when lying on their sides rugs were laid out to lie on while eating.

⁵⁰² Shields were coated with oil or grease in hope that they would deflect blows more readily. NEB: “burnish.”

⁵⁰³ LXX: “and I saw two mounted horsemen, and two riders on donkeys, and a rider on a camel.”

⁵⁰⁴ MFT: “Just then.”

⁵⁰⁵ LXX: “συνετριβησαν.”

⁵⁰⁶ LXX: “Listen attentively. Call Urias to the watchtower. The Lord has spoken. I stand constantly during the day. I stood in the camp all night and see --- he comes riding in a chariot, pair of chariots; and he answered and said, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and her images and idols are crushed to the ground.’”

⁵⁰⁷ Hebrew uncertain.

L. A Cry from Edom 21:11 – 12
The Oracle concerning Edom

11 {“Someone is calling to me from Seir: ⁵⁰⁸ ‘Watchman what time is it? Watchman, what time is it?’ ¹² The watchman replies: ‘Morning comes, and the night [*is almost over*]. If you want further information, come back again.”}

M. Doom of Dedan and Kedar 21:13 – 17
The oracle concerning Arabia ⁵⁰⁹

13 {“You will reside in the thickets of Arabia, ⁵¹⁰ O caravans of Dedanitos. ⁵¹¹ ¹⁴ O inhabitants of the land of Tema, ⁵¹² bring the thirsty water! Meet the fugitives, giving food! ¹⁵ They have fled before the swords, the sharpened drawn swords --- from the drawn bows and from the stress of battle.”}

16 [“The Lord has said to me: ‘Within one year, watch the time (*as does an indentured servant counting down the time left of his servitude*) for all the glory of Kedar ⁵¹³ will vanish; ¹⁷ and the remaining archers of the mighty army of the nation of Kedar will be few; for the Lord the God of Israel has spoken!’”] ⁵¹⁴

<CHAPTER 22>

N. Reckless Revelry on the Eve of Calamity 22:1 – 14
The Oracle Concerning the Valley of Vision

1 {“What is the meaning of all of you having gone up to the housetops ⁵¹⁵ ² and being filled with shouting as a tumultuous city and exultant town? ⁵¹⁶ Those who have been killed were not killed in warfare. ⁵¹⁷ ³ All of your officers (*or, rulers*) have fled together, without even trying to use their bows. All of those who fled have been captured. All others who tried to flee were captured no matter where they fled.” ⁵¹⁸ ⁴ Therefore I said, “Do not look at me. ⁵¹⁹ Let me weep bitter tears. Do not insist on comforting me for the destruction of the daughter of my people is at hand.” ⁵ The Lord God of hosts has a

⁵⁰⁸ Seir is another name for Edom. It was located in north central Arabia. The LXX calls it Idumaea.

⁵⁰⁹ This title is omitted in the LXX. This oracle consists of two parts: 1. Help for fleeing refugees; 2. A prophetic word announcing the defeat of Kedar. These are the judgments of the Lord that are to be fulfilled.

⁵¹⁰ LXX: “εσπερας.”

⁵¹¹ These were a tribe of Bedouin.

⁵¹² Tema was a region in northern Arabia.

⁵¹³ Kedar was a nomadic tribe from Arabia.

⁵¹⁴ Some scholars feel verses 16 – 17 are a later interpolation. The prophesies of chapter 21 still see the Lord’s people as crushed on the threshing floor. (v. 19).

⁵¹⁵ The rooftop often was used for a place of private celebration. This could also possibly be a reference to using the roof top as a place to carry on divination or some form of worship that was not acceptable. The tone of verses 1 – 4 is reproach. The LXX adds: “which does not help you at all.”

⁵¹⁶ OTL Isaiah: “you boisterous, noisy city, exultant town.”

⁵¹⁷ Several reasons can be suggested. Among them are: plague, being executed, or being overcome with wine (cf. 28:1).

⁵¹⁸ NEB: “Your commanders are all in flight, huddled together out of bow shot, all your stoutest warriors are huddled together. They have taken to their heels.”

⁵¹⁹ LXX: “Let me alone.”

day of panic, trampling and confusion ⁵²⁰ in the Valley of Vision, a battering down of the wall and shouts in the mountains (*or, raising a shout and crying out to the mountains*). ⁵²¹
⁶ Elam ⁵²² carried the quivers in their war chariots for the infantry ⁵²³ and Kir ⁵²⁴ advanced bearing the wall of shields. ⁷ The regions choicest valleys were filled with chariots and cavalry, taking up positions at the gates [*of the city*]. ⁸ All the defenses of Jerusalem have crumbled. }

“In that day you looked for the weapons in the House of the Forest ⁵²⁵ ⁹ You saw that there were many breaches in the wall of the City of David; you collected the water in the lower pool, ¹⁰ and you listed the houses of Jerusalem. [You demolished some of the houses to make the walls of Jerusalem more defensible. ¹¹ You made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool.] ⁵²⁶ However you did not look to the one who planned it, nor did you regard the one who determined this long ago.” ⁵²⁷

¹² {“ In that day the Lord God of hosts, called for a time of grief and mourning, of shaved heads and of the wearing of sackcloth ¹³ instead of joy and gladness, feasts of roast ox and sheep --- eating flesh and drinking wine. [*The people said,*] ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die’” ⁵²⁸ ¹⁴ The Lord of hosts has revealed to me ⁵²⁹ ‘Surely, this evil will not be atoned for until your dying day.’ The Lord, the God of hosts has spoken.”} ⁵³⁰

O. Downfall of Shebna the King's Steward 22:15 – 25 ⁵³¹

¹⁵ “The Lord God of hosts says: Come! Go to steward Shebna who is over the household (*the major domo*) and say: ¹⁶ What have you to do here and what is this--- for

⁵²⁰ JB: “a day of panic and rout.” NASB: “a day of panic, subjection, and confusion.”

⁵²¹ The Hebrew in the last portion of this verse is obscure. Perhaps the Hebrew says: “In the Vision Valley Koa makes an uproar and Shoa against the mountain.” These were people who were subjected by Assyria. Cf. Ezekiel 23:23. LXX: “There is perplexity sent from the Lord of hosts. They wander in the valley of Sion; they wander from the least to the greatest on the mountains.”

⁵²² The Elamites were apparently mercenaries in the Assyrian army.

⁵²³ The Hebrew word is obscure. It may mean “cavalry.” These were mounted horsemen from the region of the Iranian highlands.

⁵²⁴ Kir was a tribe of Bedouin.

⁵²⁵ The people of Jerusalem, under the guidance of Shebna relied on their own arsenal and skills rather than on God. Interestingly Eliakim (vss. 20 – 25) did the same. The House of the Forest was one of Solomon's buildings, so named because of the many pillars to support the roof. It served as the armory.

⁵²⁶ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁵²⁷ Judah has no concept of the irresistible force of judgment set in motion by her faithlessness. The people relied on their arsenal. They (1) cannibalized the city to strengthen the walls (8b); (2) secured a water supply (10). In the end Jerusalem was defenseless. Isaiah is saying the Lord, God of hosts is the only source of defense.

⁵²⁸ Cf.: ANET: p. 425d.

⁵²⁹ Literally: “in my ears.”

⁵³⁰ Isaiah's question is: Where is security found? Isaiah is saying for a city, family or individual to become self-sufficient is to commit an unforgivable sin.

⁵³¹ Whether to live by faith or self-reliance is an individual as well as a national choice. Isaiah presents two case studies: Shebna and Eliakim. These are also mentioned in chapters 36 and 37. Shebna is self-reliant. Eliakim has power and authority. However an individual no matter how powerful, is not sufficient --- only the Lord is sufficient.

you have hewed a tomb (*or, sepulcher*) for yourself, you who are hewing it high on the side of the rock? ⁵³² 17 Be assured: the Lord will strike you violently; ⁵³³ O you strong man: he will seize you firmly! ⁵³⁴ 18 Then he will bundle you up as tightly as a turban is wound and toss you, like a ball, into the open country where you will die. Your splendid chariots will be destroyed for you are a source of shame. ⁵³⁵ 19 I will hurl you from your office and you will be removed from your position. ⁵³⁶

20 “In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, ²¹ and I will install him into office with your robe and bind your sash on him, and will commit all your authority to his hand, and he will be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. ²² I will place the keys of the house of David on his shoulder; he will open and no one will shut; and he will shut and no one will open.. ⁵³⁷ ²³ I will keep him as surely as a peg that is solidly fastened, and he will have the seat of honor in his father’s house. ²⁴ His extended family will become a burden to him. They will hold fast to him like pots and pans hanging from a peg. ²⁵ When the weight of his ancestral house, like every issue large or small, becomes excessive the peg that was firmly fastened will give way and fall. This will result in doom for all who were hanging on.” The Lord declares this! ⁵³⁸

<CHAPTER 23>
P. Concerning Tyre 23:1 - 18
Doom on Tyre and Sidon 23:1 – 14
The Oracle Concerning Tyre

1 {“Wail O ships of Tarshish, ⁵³⁹ for Tyre ⁵⁴⁰ is destroyed, not a house is standing. The ships came to the land of Cyprus ⁵⁴¹ where they learned of the destruction. 2 Do not moan, O coastal inhabitants, traders from Sidon, your messengers who cross the sea are your envoys [*who have transported the grain of Shitor, the house of the Nile*]. ⁵⁴² 3 Your envoys have transported the harvest of the Nile, the grain of Shitor, as traders to all

⁵³² The tomb was located where it would be seen by all, the sort of tomb and location that might be used for royalty.

⁵³³ The text could easily be emended to read “as a garment is shaken out.” The emended word would be used to shake out a garment to rid it of lice.”

⁵³⁴ Hebrew unclear. An emendation would read “walk off with you.”

⁵³⁵ TAN: “you will die there beside the chariots you were so proud of.”

⁵³⁶ Shebna will have no use for the splendid private tomb. God will hurl him out of the land and he will die in shame because he abused his office. Shebna apparently supported the anti-Assyrian alliance with Egypt.

⁵³⁷ An alternate translation would read: I will grant him the honor of being the authorized leader of the house of David. He will have the keys and what he opens will remain open and what he closes will remain closed. His position will be firmly established, like a peg that is firmly fastened in a wall.”

⁵³⁸ CB: “They shall hang upon him the whole weight of his father’s house. The offshoot and the off-scourings, even the meanest vessels, both bowls and pitchers of every kind.”

⁵³⁹ Cf.: footnote 65. The ships were ocean-going and engaged in trade with Phoenician settlements in the western Mediterranean. LXX: “Carthage.”

⁵⁴⁰ The name “Tyre” is omitted in the MT Mss. Tyre was a city south of Sidon. Tyre began as a colony of Sidon and later became a competing trade center along the coast of present day Lebanon.

⁵⁴¹ Cyprus would have been the last port of call before reaching their home port of Tyre. This would have been the earliest opportunity to learn of the destruction.

⁵⁴² The words in italics are found in the Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa. Shitor is a synonym for the Nile.

nations. ⁴ Be ashamed, O Sidon, for the sea has spoken. The sea fortress cries out in disappointment: ‘Am I the only one who has not been in labor or given birth? Am I the only one who has never reared young sons or nourished daughters?’ ⁵ [When the report ⁵⁴³ reaches Egypt even they will be in anguish over the report about Tyre.] ⁵⁴⁴

⁶ {“Cross over to Tarshish. Wail O inhabitants of the coast. ⁷ This is your exultant ⁵⁴⁵ city whose origin is in the ancient past, whose feet carried her to settle in distant lands. ⁸ Who has planned this destruction of Tyre ⁵⁴⁶ which has bestowed crowns, and whose merchants were princes, whose traders were honored by the earth? ⁵⁴⁷ ⁹ The Lord of hosts has planned it, to debase the pride of all glorious beauty, to humble all those who were honored by the earth.

¹⁰ {“Overflow your land ⁵⁴⁸ like the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish, there is no harbor any more. ⁵⁴⁹ ¹¹ The Lord has stretched out his hand over the sea, he has caused the nations to crumble. ⁵⁵⁰ The Lord has given a command concerning Canaan to destroy its fortified places. ¹² He declared: “You will not celebrate anymore, O oppressed virgin ⁵⁵¹ daughter of Sidon. Rise! Go to Cyprus; however even there you will not find rest.)

¹³ [“Look at the land of the Chaldeans! These are the people, not the Assyrians], ⁵⁵² who have caused Tyre to no longer exist and it has been destined to be a habitat for wild animals. They erected their siege towers and stripped her palaces. They made Tyre into a ruin.] ⁵⁵³ ¹⁴ Shriek, O ships of Tarshish for your stronghold has been destroyed.”}

2. Restoration of Tyre After Seventy Years 23:15 – 18

¹⁵ [“When that time comes Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, the span of a king’s lifetime. At the end of the seventy years what will happen to Tyre will be like the words of the song of the prostitute:”⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁴³ LXX: “ακουστων γενηται.”

⁵⁴⁴ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁵⁴⁵ NAB: “wanton.” LXX: “wasn’t this the pride of.”

⁵⁴⁶ LXX adds: “Is she inferior?” or “Has she no strength?”

⁵⁴⁷ MFT: “Whoever planned this doom for Tyre, the crowned queen, whose merchants were very princes, honored in all the world.” Tyre had no imperialist aims but was anxious to profit from its export/import market.

⁵⁴⁸ Literally: “pass over.” The Dead Sea Scoll 1QIsa and one Hebrew Ms have: “Tell your land along the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish, for you no longer have a harbor.”

⁵⁴⁹ The Hebrew is unclear. An emendation would have the line read: “cross over from your land, O ships of Tarshish there is no harbor any more.” Some scholars feel this is dittography. The harbor would not only be a place to tie up and shelter ships but would also be a site for ship-building. The Hebrew word seems to imply more than an anchorage.

⁵⁵⁰ The outstretched hand of God over Tyre has 2 consequences. 1. loss of joy and 2. loss of power. Tyre had been a vassal of Assyria but rebelled and was attacked by Shalmaneser 727 – 722 and destroyed by Sennacherib in 701. Later, in 586 Nebuchadnezzar began a thirteen year siege without success. Tyre later fell to Alexander the Great in 332. The destruction referred to here brought Tyre to a standstill. NIV: “He had given one order concerning Phoenicia that her fortresses be destroyed.”

⁵⁵¹ “Oppressed” is translated as “ravished one” by JB. MFT translates “virgin” as “a maiden deflowered.”

⁵⁵² Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁵⁵³ Hebrew obscure. Some scholars feel the entire 13th verse is a later interpolation.

⁵⁵⁴ The word ‘prostitute’ was no doubt an apt description since in Tyre everything was done for money --- financial gain.

¹⁶ {‘Take a harp. Go about the city, O long forgotten prostitute. Make sweet melody, sing many songs, that you might possibly not be forgotten.’} ⁵⁵⁵

¹⁷ “At the end of seventy years the Lord will deal with Tyre, and she will return to her trading, and will prostitute herself with all the kingdoms of the world --- all kingdoms on the face of the earth. ⁵⁵⁶ ¹⁸ Her profits and her earnings will be consecrated to the Lord; Her profits will not be stored or hoarded, but the merchandise will supply abundant food and fine clothing for those who live in the presence of the Lord.”]

<CHAPTER 24>

VI. Awake and Sing, You who Dwell in the Dust 24:1 - 27:13 ⁵⁵⁷

A. First Cycle 24:1 – 23

1. The Land Desolate Because of Sin 24:1 – 12

¹ {Behold, the Lord will lay the earth waste, ⁵⁵⁸ making it desolate, and he will distort (*or, buckle*) its ⁵⁵⁹ surface, and scatter its inhabitants. ⁵⁶⁰ ² It will be as it will be. ⁵⁶¹ Therefore as it will be with the people, so it will be with the priests; as it will be with the slave, so will it be with the master; as it will be with the servant girl, so it will be with her mistress; as it will be with the buyer, so it will be with the seller; as it will be with the lender, so will it be for the borrower; as it will be with the creditor, so it will be for the debtor. ³ The earth will be completely emptied and utterly looted, for the Lord has spoken this message! ⁵⁶²

⁴ {“The land mourns and fades away: the world loses its vitality and withers, ⁵⁶³ the heavens languish with the earth. ⁵ The earth has become polluted under ⁵⁶⁴ its inhabitants for they have disobeyed our laws, violated the statutes and broken every one of God’s commands that were given to all of humanity. ⁶ Therefore a curse consumes the earth, and all its inhabitants suffer for their guilt! Thus the inhabitants of the earth are scorched and very few men remain. ⁷ The new wine fails and the vines wither; none the festivals at the time of vintage exist.

⁵⁵⁵ LXX; “Take a harp, go about, O city, you prostitute who has been forgotten; play well on the harp, sing many songs that you might not be forgotten.” NAB: “take the harp; go about the city: O forgotten harlot; pluck the strings skillfully, sing many songs; that they may remind.”

⁵⁵⁶ Literally: of one earth or the face of the land.” God has a different sort of Tyre in mind. Instead of only concern for self a new spirit is to replicate the old mercenary, acquiring spirit.

⁵⁵⁷ The passage 24:1 – 27:10 It sometimes called The Apocalypse of Isaiah. While it has some apocalyptic flavor it can hardly be called a true apocalypse as found in Ezekiel or Revelation.

⁵⁵⁸ TAN: “strip the earth bare.” OTL Isaiah “Behold the Lord will empty out the earth and devastate it.”

⁵⁵⁹ LXX: “lay bare the surface.”

⁵⁶⁰ Cf.: ANET p. 286b.

⁵⁶¹ OTL Isaiah: “These will be no different.” TAN: “will fare alike.” LXX: “And the people will be as the priest; the servant will be as the lord; the maid will be as the mistress; the buyer will be as the seller; the lender will be as the borrower; and the debtor will be as the creditor.”

⁵⁶² Cf.: ANET p. 445d.

⁵⁶³ LXX: “The earth mourns, the world is ruined, the lofty ones of the earth are mourning.” NEB: “The earth itself is desecrated by the feet of those who live in it.” OTL Isaiah: “the exalted of the earth languish.” TAN: “the most exalted people on the earth languish.”

⁵⁶⁴ So: literally. An emendation would be: “both sky and earth.”

8 {“The noise of the tambourines is silent,⁵⁶⁵ (the noise of celebration has ceased,) ⁵⁶⁶ the mirth of the lyre’s music is stilled. 9 They no longer drink wine with joyful singing, and strong drink has a bitter taste to those who drink it. ⁵⁶⁷ 10 The city is in chaos, with broken doors though every house is shut up so that no one might enter. ⁵⁶⁸ 11 There is shouting in the streets for the lack of wine; all joy has vanished; ⁵⁶⁹ gladness has disappeared from the earth. 12 The city is left in desolation: the gates are battered and ruined.”}

2. The Shout of Expectant Triumph 24:13 – 16a

13 {“Thus it will be in the midst of the earth among the nations, for it will be as when an olive tree has been beaten ⁵⁷⁰ at the time of gleanings, when the vintage is done.

14 {“The faithful remnant will lift up their voices even more loudly than the sea, singing for joy about the majesty of the Lord. 15 Let the east (*or, the region of light*) give glory to the Lord and let the region of the sea’s coastland give praise to the Lord, the God of Israel! 16 We have songs of praise that are to the glory of the Righteous One ⁵⁷¹ which reach to the ends of the earth.”}

3. The Terror of the Lord 24:16b – 18b

{“But I say: ⁵⁷² I pine away, for the treacherous ⁵⁷³ deal treacherously (*or, Can anyone be trusted? So many persons are treacherous*). ⁵⁷⁴ 17 Terror, the pit, and the snare are yours, O inhabitants of the earth! 18 Whoever flees at the hint of terror will fall into the pit, and whoever climbs out ⁵⁷⁵ of the pit will be caught in the snare.”}

4. The Final Cataclysm, the Judgment, and the New Age 24:18c – 23

The windows ⁵⁷⁶ of heaven are opened and the foundations of the earth tremble, ⁵⁷⁷ 19 The earth is utterly broken. The earth is shattered and violently shaken. 20 The earth

⁵⁶⁵ LXX: “the sound of the harp has ceased.”

⁵⁶⁶ Omitted in the LXX.

⁵⁶⁷ OTL Isaiah: “beer has turned sour to those drinking it.” JB: “the drunkard finds strong drink revolting.”

⁵⁶⁸ LXX: “the entire city has become desolate, godlessness has become apparent in Jerusalem, the city of God.” Ultimately the entire failure of life that is built on human resources, --- without calling on God nor acknowledging him --- will collapse.

⁵⁶⁹ Literally: “is darkened.”

⁵⁷⁰ Literally: “struck.” LXX: “stripped.”

⁵⁷¹ CEV: “the God of Justice (*or, the God of people who are right*).”

⁵⁷² A very slight emendation would read: “they will say.” LXX: “They will say Woe to the despisers that despise the law.” The Hebrew is uncertain. “Pine away” in Hebrew can mean “villain of foolish ridicule.” The faithless who acted foolishly have been betrayed in turn.

⁵⁷³ LXX: “τοις αθετουσιν.”

⁵⁷⁴ CB: “The robbers rob. The robbers run riot in robbery.”

⁵⁷⁵ Literally: “goes up from the midst.”

⁵⁷⁶ Literally: “from the heights.”

⁵⁷⁷ Cf.: Genesis 7:11.

reels like a drunken person, it sways like a tent,⁵⁷⁸ for its transgressions weigh heavily on it and it falls and will not rise again.

21 {“On that day the Lord will punish the host of heaven⁵⁷⁹ in heaven, and the rulers of the earth on the earth. 22 They will be gathered together like prisoners who are held in a pit. They will be incarcerated and after some time will be punished. 23 Then the moon will fail and the sun ashamed for the Lord of hosts (*or, the Lord All-powerful*) will reign in Zion and in Jerusalem, and before all his faithful believers he will manifest his glory!”}⁵⁸⁰

<CHAPTER 25>⁵⁸¹

B. The Second Cycle 25:1 – 9

1. Thanks Given for Victory 25:11 – 5

1 {“O Lord, you are my God. I will exalt you! I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things. The plans you formulated in the past have been faithful and sure.⁵⁸² 2 You have made the city⁵⁸³ a pile of rubble.⁵⁸⁴ The walled town is a ruin; the stronghold of the insolent (*or, arrogant*) foreigners has become rubble, never to be rebuilt.⁵⁸⁵ 3 Therefore fierce nations will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will be in awe of you!⁵⁸⁶ 4 You have been a refuge to the helpless, a shelter for the needy in their distress, protection from the storms and a shade from the heat for the blast of the ruthless is like a winter storm against a wall; 5 like heat in a dry place you subdue the noise of aliens as surely as heat is subdued by the shade of a cloud: the voice of the ruthless is quieted.”}⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁷⁸ Literally: “hut.” CB: “it sways like a hammock.”

⁵⁷⁹ This is a reference to idol worship an idol worshippers who turned to idols instead of worshipping the Lord of hosts.

⁵⁸⁰ NEB: “On that day the Lord will punish the host of heaven in heaven, and on earth the kings of the earth, herded together, close packed like prisoners in a dungeon; shut up in a gaol, after a long time they shall be punished.”

⁵⁸¹ Some scholars feel this passage is a better read if portions are placed in other locations of Isaiah. The suggested order is: 24:1 – 23; 25:6 – 8; 26:20 – 21; 27:1, 12 – 13; 25:1 - 5, 9 – 11; 26:1 - 19.

⁵⁸² The intervention of God is not accidental but fellows a divine plan, thus demonstrating God’s faithfulness and constancy. TAN: “For you have planned graciousness of old, councils of steadfast faithfulness.” TEV: “You have done amazing things; you have faithfully carried out the plan you made long ago.” LXX: “even an ancient faithful counsel.” The Hebrew word translated as “in the past” literally is: “from afar.”

⁵⁸³ LXX: “πολεεις.”

⁵⁸⁴ LXX: “χωμα.”

⁵⁸⁵ LXX: “You have made cities a heap, even cities made strong that their foundation should not fail; the city of ungodly men will not be built for us.”

⁵⁸⁶ LXX: “Therefore the poor people will bless you and cities of injured people will bless you. You have been a helper to every lowly city and a shelter to them that were disheartened by reason of poverty: you will deliver them from wicked men: you have been a shelter to them that thirst, and a refreshing air to injured people.”

⁵⁸⁷ The Hebrew is unclear. The poor and needy who remain find themselves under the heel of foreigners who treat them as underdogs. JB: “You will repress the clamor of the proud; like heat by the shadow of the cloud, the singing of despots will be subdued.” CB: “the noise of the proud thou quietest, the song of the ruthless thou stillest.”

2. The Feast of Triumph and the End of Sorrow 25:6 – 9

⁶ “On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make a feast for all people --- a banquet of rich food ⁵⁸⁸ and aged wine: ⁵⁸⁹ food with choice pieces of marrow and refined wine. ⁷ On the mountain he will strip away the mourning shroud ⁵⁹⁰ removing the veil of sorrow that has enveloped all the nations like a pall. ⁸ He will take away ⁵⁹¹ death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe tears from the face of everyone, and everything that darkens life will vanish.

⁹ ”On that day it will be said, ‘Look! There is our God! We have waited for him that he might save us! This is the Lord! We have waited for him! Let us be glad! Let us rejoice in his salvation’.”

C. Third Cycle 25 10 – 27:1

1. Doom of Moab 25:10 – 12 ⁵⁹²

¹⁰ “The hand of the Lord ⁵⁹³ will rest on this mountain and the people of Moab ⁵⁹⁴ will be trodden down within their land like straw that is trodden down into a manure pit. ⁵⁹⁵ ¹¹ He will spread out his hands in the midst of it ⁵⁹⁶ just as a swimmer spreads his hands to swim, but the Lord will lay low the pride in spite of the cleverness of his hands. ⁵⁹⁷ ¹² The unstable fortifications of its defending walls he will level to the ground --- leveled to the dust.”

<CHAPTER 26>

2. A Hymn of Thanksgiving for Victory 26:1 – 6

¹ In that day the song will be sung to the land of Judah: {“We have a mighty city! The Lord brings about victory through walls and bulwarks (*or, inner and outer walls*). ⁵⁹⁸ ² Open the gates that the righteous nations which keep faith may enter. ³ The Lord keeps those in perfect peace (*or, safety*) ⁵⁹⁹ whose mind is stayed on God. ⁶⁰⁰ ⁴ Always trust in

⁵⁸⁸ Literally: “a feast of fat things in abundance.” This seems to be descriptive of a Messianic banquet. Every restriction is lifted. MFT: “A banquet of rich food and of rare wines, of marrowy dainties and of choice old wine.”

⁵⁸⁹ Literally: “wine on the lees.”

⁵⁹⁰ Literally: “face of the cover.”

⁵⁹¹ Literally: “swallow up.” LXX: “Death has prevailed.” Some scholars feel this is a reference to 10:7; 14:20 concerning the Assyrian power which has collapsed.

⁵⁹² Moab has been guilty of pride. Cf.: 16:6.

⁵⁹³ LXX: “God.”

⁵⁹⁴ Some scholars emend this to read “Assyria.”

⁵⁹⁵ LXX adds: “with wagons.” TAN: “as straw gets threshed to bits at Madmenah. {a town near Jerusalem}.” Emended it could be read: “as straw gets shredded in the threshing.”

⁵⁹⁶ TAN: “homeland.”

⁵⁹⁷ Hebrew uncertain! TAN: “He will humble their pride along with the emblems of their power.” CEV: “They will struggle to get out but God will humiliate them no matter how hard they try.” NASB: “The Lord will lay low his pride together with the trickery of his hands.”

⁵⁹⁸ In Isaiah’s eyes the sin of the people of God throughout history has been leaving the way of faith.

⁵⁹⁹ Literally: “peace, peace.”

⁶⁰⁰ LXX: “οτι επι σοι.” OTL Isaiah: “the calm mind you will keep in perfect peace because it trusts in you.”

the Lord; for the Lord God ⁶⁰¹ is an everlasting rock. ⁶⁰² 5 For the Lord has humbled the residents of the heights, the lofty city. He has brought it low --- to the ground, even making it to be dust. 6 The foot tramples it, even the feet of the needy.”}

3. *A Prayer of Entreaty and Faith 26:7 – 19*

7 {“The way of the righteous is level. ⁶⁰³ You ⁶⁰⁴ make the path of the righteous smooth. 8 We wait for you in the path of your judgments, O Lord, we wait for you. Your glorious name is the desire of our soul. ⁶⁰⁵ 9 At night my soul yearns ⁶⁰⁶ for you, my spirit within me earnestly seeks you, ⁶⁰⁷ 10 for when your judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world become righteous. ⁶⁰⁸ 10 If favor is shown ⁶⁰⁹ to the wicked, he does not learn righteousness; in the land of integrity he deals wrongly and fails to see the majesty of the Lord.

11 {“O Lord: your hand is lifted up, but they do not pay attention to it. Let them see your zeal for your people, and let them be ashamed. Let the fire consume your adversaries. 12 O Lord, you will provide peace for us (*or, In every way what we have we have because of what you have done*). ⁶¹⁰

13 {“O Lord our God, other lords beside you have ruled over us, ⁶¹¹ but we only acknowledge your name. 14 You have dealt with them. They are destroyed and therefore will be forgotten. 15 You have caused the nation to increase, O Lord, you have increased the nation; you are glorified! You have enlarged all the boundaries of the land. ⁶¹²

16 {“O Lord, they sought you in their distress, pouring out prayer, ⁶¹³ when you chastened them. ⁶¹⁴ 17 Because of what you, O Lord, have done to us we are like a pregnant woman who screams while the delivery is taking place. So are we because of you O Lord 18 We writhed as if we were pregnant, as if we gave birth to the wind. We have accomplished no victory in the earth and have no descendants to take over the earth.

⁶⁰¹ The Hebrew word is “Yah, the Lord.” “Yah” would be a term of endearment.

⁶⁰² LXX: “They have trusted the great, eternal God with eternal confidence.” Faith is a lifelong commitment, not a flash in the pan. MFT: “Always rely on the Eternal, for the Eternal’s strength endures.”

⁶⁰³ LXX: “The way of all the Godly is made straight.”

⁶⁰⁴ So: versions. Hebrew: “you who are upright.”

⁶⁰⁵ TAN: “we long for the name by which you have been called.” “Name” as used here could be considered as a sort of shorthand for what the Lord has revealed about himself.

⁶⁰⁶ Literally: “with my soul I long.”

⁶⁰⁷ Literally: “with my spirit...I seek.” Some scholars emend the text to read: “my spirit in the morning.” This is supported by BHS.

⁶⁰⁸ MFT: “For thy judgments bring men light, till very pagans learn the right.”

⁶⁰⁹ The Hebrew of his verse is very obscure.

⁶¹⁰ MFT: “But oh maintain our welfare for whatsoever we achieve is all thy doing.”

⁶¹¹ These other lords would, foreexample, be Pharaoh of Egypt, alien rulers, assimilation of all or portions of the beliefs of other nations and their national gods. The call is for fidelity in the Lord.

⁶¹² The meaning of verses 15 – 16 is uncertain. LXX: “bring more evils on the glorious one of the earth.” TAN adds: “you were honored.”

⁶¹³ Some scholars translate : “they barely whispered in prayer.” Literally: “send forth a whisper.” LXX: “εν θλψει.” “in distress.”

⁶¹⁴ Hebrew obscure! “Them” in LXX: “ημιν.” “your anguish.”

⁶¹⁵ 19 Your dead will live, their ⁶¹⁶ corpses will rise (*or, come back to life*); all those who are resting in the grave will awake and sing for joy! Just as the dew sparkles in the light and refreshes the earth, so too the Lord will receive those who have died.”} ⁶¹⁷

4. *Slaying of Leviathan 20:20 – 27:1*

²⁰ {“My people, come and enter your chambers, and lock your doors behind you! Hide yourselves briefly, until the indignation passes! ⁶¹⁸ ²¹ Behold! The Lord is coming from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will give evidence to the bloodshed on it, for it will be impossible to conceal those who were slain.”} ⁶¹⁹

<CHAPTER 27> ⁶²⁰

¹ “In that day the Lord will punish with his powerful sword! He will slay the fleeing ⁶²¹ serpent Leviathan: this twisting serpent --- for he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.” ⁶²²

D. *The Fourth Cycle 27: 2 – 13*

² In that day: {“Sing of a fruitful vineyard (*or, Vineyard of Delight*). ⁶²³ ³ I, the Lord, am its keeper. I water it at all times lest any harm ⁶²⁴ should befall it. I guard it

⁶¹⁵ The Hebrew is obscure. JB: “We have conceived, we writhe as if we were giving birth, we have not given the spirit of salvation and the earth no more inhabitants of the world are born.” NRSV: “we gave birth, as it were, only to wind.”

⁶¹⁶ Literally: “my.”

⁶¹⁷ Beginning here one finds a ‘Heilsorakel’ in its classic form of reassurance that salvation will come. This understanding has been very popular among scholars but seems to be fading in its popularity. The reference is to the restoration of Israel in Messianic times. The Hebrew grammar in this verse is strange. LXX: “the dead will rise and they that are in tombs will be raised, and they that are in the earth will rejoice for the dew from you.”

⁶¹⁸ Chapter 26 began with “Open the gates”. Now it ends with “lock your doors.” Some feel this wording is reminiscent of Noah’s being told to shut the doors of the Ark.

⁶¹⁹ NEB: “Then the earth shall uncover her blood-stains and hide her slain no more.” TAN: “The murders that were secretly committed on the earth will be revealed, and the ground will no longer hide those who have been killed.” Isaiah sees this as a time of accounting in the Lord’s coming in the Messianic age. The ultimate vision for Isaiah includes faith, belief in the resurrection of the dead, which sustains the faithful who await the consummation of the age.

⁶²⁰ The LXX appears to be based on a different recension. A translation of this chapter from the LXX is added in footnote 640.

⁶²¹ The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain.

⁶²² The Leviathan stands for immense power raged against the Creator God. Here it is presented by Isaiah as an actual forces against a powerful anti-Godly force depicted in the serpent/dragon Leviathan. The Leviathan is representative of God’s victory over the monster, sometimes represented as God’s power over all creation, sometimes for his defeat of the enemies – in some cases Egypt. This monster is the embodiment of chaos. It stands for the forces of evil in the present world. In Ugaritic texts found in northern Syria there are references to a mythological serpent “Tiamar” or “Rahab.” CB: “Leviathan the fleeing serpent. Leviathan the coiled serpent and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.” TAN: pp. 137b, 138d. Some scholars place 27:1, 12 – 13 after 25:21.

⁶²³ This is a reinterpretation of the vineyard of 5:1 – 10.

night and day. ⁴ I have no wrath. ⁶²⁵ If I were offered (*or, if I would find*) thorns and briers to struggle with I would go out to destroy them, burning them completely, ⁶²⁶ ⁵ or let them rely on my protection, making peace with them and letting them make peace with me. ⁶²⁷ ⁶ [The days are coming when Jacob will take root, Israel will bloom and sprout, filling the entire world with its fruit.”}] ⁶²⁸

2. Meaning of Israel's Suffering 27:7 – 11

⁷ {“Has he beaten ⁶²⁹ [Israel] as he had beaten those who had beaten [Israel]? Has [Israel] been slaughtered as those who had slaughtered [Israel] had been slaughtered? ⁶³⁰ ⁸ Measure by measure, ⁶³¹ through exile you contended with them; they were removed by him from his fierce blast on the day of the east wind. ⁹ Therefore the guilt of Jacob was expiated, ⁶³² and this will be full result ⁶³³ of the removal of sin: he will pulverize the stones of the altar like pieces of chalk. There will no longer be any Asherim (*or, sacred poles*) ⁶³⁴ nor will any incense altars remain. ¹⁰ The fortified cities will become desolate and its houses will be abandoned. It will be a forsaken wilderness where calves graze, lying down to sleep in its abandoned buildings ⁶³⁵ and browsing on its twigs. ¹¹ When these twigs ⁶³⁶ on which the calves have browsed have become dead women will come and gather them for firewood. These are people who have limited understanding, therefore the Lord who made them will have compassion on them, showing them his favor.”} ⁶³⁷

⁶²⁴ Translators generally feel the Hebrew is uncertain. Some emend to read: “my eye is on it.” JB: “for fear its harvest will fail.”

⁶²⁵ The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain. NEB: “no wine.”

⁶²⁶ The Hebrew is unclear.

⁶²⁷ TAN: “But if he holds fast to my refuge, he makes me his friend. He makes me his friend [in the] days to come. I shall strike root. Israel shall sprout and blossom, and the face of the world shall be covered with fruit.” NEB: “night and day I tend it but get no wine. I would as soon have briars and thorns. Then I could wage war upon it and burn it all up.” The vineyard membership is open to all.

⁶²⁸ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁶²⁹ LXX: “πληγισαται, και.”

⁶³⁰ The Hebrew in this verse is very clumsy. The Lord has never been as harsh with Israel as with its enemies. The same mercy is displayed in atonement. CEV: “The Lord did not punish the people of Israel as fiercely as he punished their enemies.” Some translators emend and have the sentence read “In warfare they were able to frighten off their opponents by shouting.”

⁶³¹ The meaning of the Hebrew word is unknown. The versions and the Targums read “measure.” JB: “assailing.” The word is thought by some to be “assail.” It might be an Arabic word root which means “to drive on with cries.”

⁶³² Some scholars rearrange the verses as follows: 10a, 8, 10b. The Lord will pay the atonement price for the guilt of his people. Additionally the atonement will purge out erroneous religious practices.

⁶³³ Literally: “full fruit.”

⁶³⁴ These sacred poles depicted the goddess Astarte, a fertility goddess.

⁶³⁵ The Hebrew is uncertain.

⁶³⁶ Vulgate: “messes illcua.”

⁶³⁷ NEB: “For they are people without sense; therefore their maker will show no mercy, he who formed them will show them no favor. On that day the Lord will beat out the grain, from the streams of the Eupharates to the torrent of Egypt; but you Israelites will be gleaned, one by one.”

3. Day of Harvest and the Last Trumpet 27:12 – 13 I⁶³⁸

¹² “In that day from the Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt I will thresh out specially selected (*or, hand picked*) grain that will be gathered, O people of Israel. ¹³ In that day a great trumpet will be sounded and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who had been driven to the land of Egypt will return and will worship the Lord on the holy mountain of Jerusalem.” ⁶³⁹ ⁶⁴⁰

<CHAPTER 28>

VII. Do Not be Sufferers, Lest Your Bones be Made Strong 28:1 – 32:20

A. No Refuge From the Storm 28:1 – 22

1. A Lesson the Dissolute Must Learn 28:1 - 13

¹ {“Woe to the proud crown of the drunkards ⁶⁴¹ of Ephraim! ⁶⁴² They are the fading flower of glorious beauty located at the head of the valley ⁶⁴³ of those who are overcome with wine. ⁶⁴⁴ ² Be assured that the Lord has one who is mighty and strong to

⁶³⁸ This section of Isaiah concludes with an eschatological promise of deliverance. Very likely it is a reference to the 50th year, the year of Jubilee in Leviticus 25:8ff.

⁶³⁹ All will gather to worship God. There is to be full participation in the holy community. Israel will be peaceful but the full purification will not come until it produces fruits of righteousness. There is a sequence in God’s purpose which is hinted at in chapter 27. This is, however, no ‘ordo solatus’; but is typically of an apocalyptic nature.

⁶⁴⁰ The LXX apparently used a different recension which is translated as follows:

2. In that day there will be a pleasant vineyard and a desire to sing a song concerning it. 3. I am a strong city, a city under siege. I will water it in vain for it will be captured. It will be taken by night, and by morning the wall will fall. 4 There is no woman that has taken hold of it; who will set me to watch stubble in the field. Because of this enemy I have set her aside; therefore on this account the Lord has done all that he had planned. 5 “I am burned up” is the cry of those who live in the city will call out. ‘Let us make peace with him, let us make peace.’ They that are coming are the children of Jacob. Israel will bud and blossom, and the world will be filled with its fruit. 7 Will he himself be struck as the enemy had been struck? And will he slay as the enemy had slain? 8 He will reproach those who are fighting and dismiss them. Didn’t you meditate with a harsh spirit that you might kill them with wrath? 9 Therefore the iniquity of Jacob will be taken away and this will be his blessing when I will have taken away his sins, when they will have broken into pieces all the stones of the altar into fine dust. And their trees will not remain, their idols will be cut down as one would a distant thicket. 10 The flock that had grazed there will be left, a deserted flock, and the land will be used as pasture for a long time and it will be the resting place for the flock. 11 In time there will be no green because the grass will have become parched. Come you women that come from a site, for these are people who have no understanding. These are people whom he formed but he will have no pity them nor any mercy. 12 In that day it will come to pass that God will fence men off from the channel of the river as far as Rhinocorura; but he will gather the children of Israel one by one. 13 It will come to pass at that time that they will blow a great trumpet, and the lost ones from the land of Assyria will come and the lost ones from the land of Egypt, and they will worship the Lord on the mountain of Jerusalem.

⁶⁴¹ LXX: “hirelings.” So also in verse 3.

⁶⁴² In these verses “Ephraim” is a name for Samaria and the area of Israel. Some scholars emend the name to read “Egypt.”

⁶⁴³ Literally: “valley of fatness.” The valley was the most fertile valley in Israel.

⁶⁴⁴ TAN: “whose glorious beauty is but withered flowers on the heads of men bloated with rich food, who are overcome with wine.” TEV: “The kingdom of Israel is doomed! Its glory is fading like the crown of flowers on the heads of drunken leaders. Their proud heads are well perfumed but there they lie, dead drunk.” NEB: “their head dripping with perfumes, overcome with wine.”

do his bidding, one like a hailstorm or driving rain who is powerfully destructive,⁶⁴⁵ like a massive flood that pours down on the earth with violence. ³ That haughty crown of the drunkards of Ephraim will be trampled under foot, ⁴ and the withering flowers of glorious beauty which is on the head of the rich valley ⁶⁴⁶ will become like the first early fig ⁶⁴⁷ to be ripe, before summer, when whoever sees it and gulp it down. ⁶⁴⁸ ⁵ [In that day the Lord of hosts will be a crown of gold and a diadem of glory, ⁶⁴⁹ for the remnant of his people, ⁶ and a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment for those who repel the enemy at the gate.] ⁶⁵⁰

⁷ {“They stagger from wine and reel because of liquor, the priest and prophet reel due to liquor, they are confused by wine, they are dazed with liquor, not seeing clearly and are muddled in their giving of judgments. ⁶⁵¹ ⁸ For all tables are covered with vomit, No place is clean.

⁹ {“Who is Isaiah attempting to teach? ⁶⁵² Is it those who are weaned of the milk, those taken from the breast? ¹⁰ It is ‘precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.’ ⁶⁵³ ¹¹ The Lord will speak to his people through men who speak strangely in a foreign language. ¹² Remember he has told us: ‘This is the resting place; let those who are weary rest, this is a place of relaxation ⁶⁵⁴ yet they would not listen. ¹³ Therefore the word of the Lord will be, for them, muttering and more muttering ⁶⁵⁵ [*on the part of the prophet*] but they will fall backward, injured, snared and captive.”}

⁶⁴⁵ The reference is to Assyria. TAN: “shower of pestilence.”

⁶⁴⁶ Cf.: footnote 643.

⁶⁴⁷ LXX: “ὡς προδρομος συκου.”

⁶⁴⁸ Literally: “who eats it while it is yet in his hand.” Early figs begin to ripen in late May or June, about two months prior to the main crop. TEV: “the fading glory of those proud leaders will disappear like the first figs in the season, picked and eaten as soon as they are ripe.”

⁶⁴⁹ LXX: “crown of hope, a woven crown of glory, the remnant of the people.”

⁶⁵⁰ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁶⁵¹ NAB: “are addicted to wine, clamoring in their cups.” NEB alternate reading: “These too lose their way through wine and are set wandering by strong drink: priest and prophet lose their way through strong drink and are fuddled with wine; and set wandering by strong drink, lose their way through tippling.” The leadership is incapacitated by self-indulgence and therefore their advice becomes lies. There is no great difference between the leadership of Samaria and the priests of Jerusalem.

⁶⁵² LXX: “To whom have we reported evils? To whom have we reported a message?”

⁶⁵³ The Hebrew meaning is uncertain. MFT: “For he does nothing but stammer aloud.” OTL Isaiah: “some senseless refrain, over and over, now here, now there. This is thought to be senseless gibberish in Hebrew, the sound of children reciting the alphabet.” So also in verse 13. JB: “if read in English it would sound like a baby trying to speak.”

⁶⁵⁴ Rest and repose spell out a return to childlike simplicity and irrelevance which can be useful in relieving even the harshest problems.

⁶⁵⁵ The ‘muttering’ of verse 10 is not repeated in this verse of this translation. CEV: “Now his message to you will be senseless sound after senseless sound. They will fall backward, injured and trapped.”

2. The Covenant with Death 28:14 – 22 J⁶⁵⁶

14 {“Now then! Hear the word of the Lord, you mockers (*or, scoffers*)⁶⁵⁷ who rule this nation in Jerusalem. 15 Because you boasted, saying, ‘We have made a covenant with death (*or, Mot*)⁶⁵⁸ and have an agreement with Sheol that when the overwhelming flood passes through it will not reach us, for we have made lies our refuge and our only hope is in treachery.’ 16 Therefore this is what the Lord God says: ‘I am laying a foundation⁶⁵⁹ in Zion a foundation stone, a tested⁶⁶⁰ stone, a precious cornerstone, a solid foundation. Whoever trusts will not panic.⁶⁶¹ 17 I will make judgment the measuring line, and righteousness its plumb bob. A hailstorm will sweep away any refuge of lies and water will flood the shelter.’⁶⁶² 18 Then⁶⁶³ your covenant with death (*or, Mot*) will be annihilated⁶⁶⁴ and your agreement with Sheol will not endure; for you will be victims of the rush of the sweeping flood.⁶⁶⁵ 19 Each time it passes through it will catch you, for morning after morning it will pass through: day and night, and it will be sheer terror to understand the message. 20 An adage says, ‘The bed is too short to stretch out and the blanket is too narrow to cover.’⁶⁶⁶ 21 The Lord will mount up as he did at Perizim⁶⁶⁷ and instead will inflict punishment as in the Valley of Gibeon⁶⁶⁸ to do the work --- strange is his work. To perform his task his toil is unusual.⁶⁶⁹ 22 Now therefore do not mock (*or, refrain from mocking*) lest your bonds be made tighter, for I have heard a decree of destruction from the Lord which will befall the entire land.”}

⁶⁵⁶ In Isaiah’s understanding the voice of God will have its way. No human agreement or treaty can succeed.

⁶⁵⁷ The reference is to people who are cynical and despise spiritual truth.

⁶⁵⁸ “Mot” was the Phoenician equivalent of the Egyptian god “Osiris,” god of the lower world and judge of the dead. A covenant with death and pact with Sheol are thought by some to be caustic references to the alliance with Egypt and its many gods. The rulers however were concerned about protection from any danger.

⁶⁵⁹ The Hebrew can also be translated as “Behold I am the one who laid a stone for a foundation.” “A stone” is omitted in the LXX. Some feel the “stone” is a reference to the salvation that God has promised.

⁶⁶⁰ The Hebrew word is a hapax legomenon. It is perhaps an Egyptian loan word which usually denotes a particularly hard stone (Schist / Gneiss) used in statuary and building.

⁶⁶¹ The Hebrew is uncertain. TAN: “A tower of precious cornerstones, exceedingly firm: he who trusts need not fear.” God is in the process of planning a new foundation stone that is unmovable before the overwhelming scourge of coming judgment. This stone is, for some, a stone of stumbling, and for others a pledge of security.

⁶⁶² LXX: “I will make justice the line and righteousness the plummet; hail will sweep away the refuge of lies and water will overwhelm the shelter.”

⁶⁶³ LXX: “Shall it not be?”

⁶⁶⁴ Some translators emend the Hebrew word to read “be broken.” Literally: “covered over.”

⁶⁶⁵ This could also be translated as: “It will be more than enough in its passing through to overtake you and the news will be nothing but sheer terror.” The rushing flood will be the armies of the Assyrians.

⁶⁶⁶ Attempted human solutions are inadequate. This describes difficulties for which there is no remedy. TAN: “The couch is too short for stretching out, and the cover is too narrow for curling up.” CEV: Your bed is too short and your blanket too skimpy.”

⁶⁶⁷ Cf.: II Samuel 5:14 – 25; 9:20. I Chronicles 14:9 – 16.

⁶⁶⁸ Cf.: Joshua 10:1 – 11.

⁶⁶⁹ Literally: “his work is alien.”

⁶⁷⁰ Some scholars feel Isaiah 10:20 – 23 should be inserted here for a better read.

B. A Parable of the Farmer 28:23 – 29

23 {“Listen to my voice! Listen carefully and hear what I have to say! 24 Does a farmer constantly plow his field to be ready for planting? Does he continually harrow his ground? 25 When he has completed leveling the surface of his field does he not scatter caraway (*or, dill*) and sow cumin and put the wheat into rows and sow barley in its proper location, and spelt ⁶⁷¹ as a border? 26 He is instructed correctly for God has taught him. 27 Caraway (*or, dill*) ⁶⁷² is not threshed with a threshing sled, ⁶⁷³ nor does one roll cart wheels over cumin, but Caraway (*or, dill*) is beaten with a stick and Cumin with a rod. 28 Is it right to crush cereal grain (*or, wheat*) by continually threshing it? (*Or, Grain must be ground for bread so one does not keep on threshing it.*) No it is not threshed for a long time period by driving the cart wheels over it, being drawn by horses! ⁶⁷⁴ He does not crush the grain! ⁶⁷⁵ 29 This also comes from the Lord of hosts. He is wonderful as a counselor and has excellent wisdom!”}

<CHAPTER 29>

C. A Marvelous Work of God 29:1 – 14 ⁶⁷⁶

1. Distress and Deliverance of Ariel 29:1 - 8

1 {“Ah, Ariel, ⁶⁷⁷ Ariel, you are the city where David camped. ⁶⁷⁸ Let some time pass, let the cycle of feasts make its rounds. 2 I will harass ⁶⁷⁹ Ariel and there will be sorrow and sighing for she will be to me like an altar – hearth. ⁶⁸⁰ 3 I will surround you ⁶⁸¹ as I camp and I will besiege you with assault towers and I will raise the siege-works against you. ⁶⁸² 4 Then you will speak from the depths of the ground (*or, your voice will be deep, as if coming from the depths of the earth*), ⁶⁸³ your words coming from low in

⁶⁷¹ The Hebrew word might mean “emmer.” MFT: “vetches.” It is thought that spelt was sown at the border since it was not the most valuable or essential grain. Thus if people walked on the paths that might traverse the field they should not take a handful of the more precious wheat but needed to content themselves with the lesser grain. It was in accordance with the law that this could be done by those who were hungry and passing through a grain field. Cf. Matthew 12:1; Mark 2:23; Luke 6:1.

⁶⁷² LXX: “fennel.” Translators and lexicographers are unclear about the exact variety of the seeds that are listed in this passage.

⁶⁷³ This was a heavy wooden platform with sharp stones or metal studded underneath the sled to tear up the heads of grain by dragging the sled back and forth to release the grain so it could be winnowed.

⁶⁷⁴ Literally: “horsemen.” Possibly this is a textual error. Bullocks would normally be used for this work.

⁶⁷⁵ LXX: “neither shall the voice of my bitterness trample you.”

⁶⁷⁶ This passage presents a double message of hope: eleventh hour deliverance in verses 1 – 8 and a complete spiritual transformation in verses 9 – 14.

⁶⁷⁷ Ariel indicates Jerusalem. The identification is made in verse 8. The word source is mysterious. It may be a play on words with the Hebrew word translated as “altar – hearth.” MFT: “Woe to you, God’s own hearth and altar.”

⁶⁷⁸ LXX: “besieged.”

⁶⁷⁹ LXX: “grievously afflict.”

⁶⁸⁰ NEB: “my fiery hearth.” NRSV: “Yet I will distress Ariel, and there will be mourning and lamentation and Jerusalem will be to me like Ariel.”

⁶⁸¹ LXX adds: “I will raise a mound around her like David.”

⁶⁸² Hebrew uncertain.

⁶⁸³ LXX: “Your words will sink down to the earth.”

the dust, your voice rising from the ground like the high voice of a ghost, and your speech will be whispered out of the dust.⁶⁸⁴

5 [{"Suddenly a horde of your foes⁶⁸⁵ will attack, being like fine dust and this ruthless horde will be like flying chaff which suddenly appears. 6 You will be remembered by the Lord of hosts with thunder, earthquakes, great noise, whirlwinds, tempests, and the flames of devouring fire. 7 The horde of the nations will fight against Ariel; all that besiege her and press hard on her will be like a dream, a vision of the night,⁶⁸⁶ 8 as when a hungry person who dreams of eating awakes with his craving unsatisfied or as when a thirsty person dreams of drinking and awakes to feeling a parched throat,⁶⁸⁷ unquenched! The horde of all the nations that will fight against you will appear in this manner."}]⁶⁸⁸

2. Why People are Unable to Perceive God's Work 29:9 – 12⁶⁸⁹

9 {"You will be amazed⁶⁹⁰ and stupefied! Blind yourselves! Be drunk, but not with wine! Stagger, but not with strong drink!⁶⁹¹ 10 The Lord has poured out a spirit of deep sleep over you, and has shut (*or, blindfolded*) your eyes and covered your heads, [*to block out the message*] of the prophets and seers."}⁶⁹²

11 "The vision of all that has come to you is like the words of a book that is sealed. [When it is given to one who can read saying, 'Read this' and he says, 'I cannot, since it is sealed.' 12 When the book is given to one who cannot read, saying, 'Read this' he says 'I cannot read.']"⁶⁹³

2. Overthrow of Conventional Religion 29:13 – 14

13 {The Lord said, "Because these people approach me verbally, and honor⁶⁹⁴ me by words while their hearts are far from me, their awe of me is only a memorized tradition.⁶⁹⁵ 14 Therefore I will again do marvelous things (*or, battle*)⁶⁹⁶ with this nation, wonderfully and marvelously (*or, battle after battle*). The wisdom of those who are wise will perish and the discernment of their discerning will be hidden."}⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁸⁴ TEV: "You shall speak from lower than the ground, your speech shall be humbler than the soil, your speech shall sound like ghosts from the ground and your voice will chirp from the sod."

⁶⁸⁵ So: versions. Hebrew: "strangers." The Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa "haughty men."

⁶⁸⁶ Cf.: ANET p. 320c. CB: "All the horde of nations that war against Ariel with all their siege-works and forts and storming parties shall be like a dream, a vision in the night."

⁶⁸⁷ TEV: "wakes up with a dry throat."

⁶⁸⁸ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁶⁸⁹ God is not baffled by human intransigence. God is the Lord of transformation.

⁶⁹⁰ LXX: "You faint." "εκλυθητε."

⁶⁹¹ CB: "Daze yourselves and be dazed. Blind yourselves and be blind, you who are drunk, though not with wine..."

⁶⁹² Marginal glosses in some manuscripts note concerning "prophets and seers" feel that this is a self inflicted stupor on the part of the people who are hearers of the word.

⁶⁹³ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁶⁹⁴ LXX: "της χειλεσιν αυτων."

⁶⁹⁵ LXX: "They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."

⁶⁹⁶ Scholars are unclear about the meaning of a Hebrew word.

⁶⁹⁷ Isaiah contends that worship had become perfunctory and superficial. Judah was going through the motions but was devoid of any true devotion.

D. Rejection of Faith's Security 29:15 – 30:17

*1. Conspirators Reproached 29:15 – 16*⁶⁹⁸

15 {“Woe to those who carefully hide from the Lord. They make their plans and seek to carry out their deeds in the dark, saying, ‘Who will see us? Who knows us?’ 16 You turn things upside down! Will the potter be deemed to be the clay? ⁶⁹⁹ Will the thing that is made say of its maker, ‘He did not make me’, or the thing that was formed say to him, ‘He has no understanding’.”}⁷⁰⁰

*2. Two Eschatological Supplements 29:17 – 24*⁷⁰¹

17 “In a little while Lebanon will be turned into a fruitful field, and this fruitful field will be considered to be a forest. ⁷⁰² 18 In that day the deaf will hear the words of a book, ⁷⁰³ and out of the gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will be enabled to see. 19 The meek will obtain fresh joy in the Lord, and the poor will exalt in the Holy One of Israel. 20 The ruthless will vanish and the scoffers will cease. All who determine to do evil will be cut off. 21 Those who testify falsely incriminate someone who is innocent of any crime and thereby deprive the innocent of justice. ⁷⁰⁴

22 [“The Lord who redeemed Abraham, ⁷⁰⁵ concerning the house of Jacob declares: ⁷⁰⁶ {Jacob will no longer be ashamed. His face will no longer become pale. 23 When he sees his children (*or, the increasing birth rate*), the work of my (*i.e. God's*) hands in his midst, they will sanctify my name: they will sanctify the Holy One ⁷⁰⁷ of Jacob and will stand in awe of the God of Israel. 24 Those who err in their understanding of the spirit will arrive at an understanding, and the grumblers will accept instruction.’}]⁷⁰⁸

⁶⁹⁸ While verses 8 – 14 did not make clear how God would act in that situation this passage gives the assurance of transformation of the Lord's people.

⁶⁹⁹ The MT text is in question and appears to be defective. The Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa reads: “Things are upside down because of you.” MT text is uncertain in its meaning. Isaiah recognizes the repetitious worship practices. The stupidity lies in thinking that their plan would be unnoticed by God. Cf.: Isaiah's caricature of false worship 44:9 – 10. God is misunderstood by those who struggle with petty policies. To exclude God and rely solely on the Egyptian Alliance exalts humans and excludes the divine. Isaiah thinks of this as thoughtless stupidity.

⁷⁰⁰ Emended it would read: “He did not fashion me.” NIV: “You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, “He did not make me?” Can the pot say to the potter, “He knows nothing?”

⁷⁰¹ Some scholars insert 17 -24 after 31:9.

⁷⁰² Isaiah abruptly introduces the promise of transformation. TEV: “As the saying goes, before long the dense forest will become farmland, and the farmland will go back to forest.”

⁷⁰³ Some scholars, based on weak MS evidence add, “but he does not understand.”

⁷⁰⁴ TAN: “laying a snare at the arbiter at the gate.” LB: 20 “Bullies will banish and scoffers will cease, and all those plotting evil will be killed: 21 the violent man who fights at the drop of a hat; the man who waits in hiding to beat up the judge who sentenced him; and the man who uses any excuse to be unfair.”

⁷⁰⁵ The text, emended, would read “whose father he redeemed.”

⁷⁰⁶ The Hebrew text of verses 22 – 24 is difficult.

⁷⁰⁷ This expression “the Holy One of...” is used more than twenty times in Isaiah.

⁷⁰⁸ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

3. *An Ill-omened Embassy to Egypt 30:1 – 7*

¹ {“Woe to the obstinate children,” says the Lord, “who carry out plans that are against my will; and who make alliances ⁷¹⁰ that I oppose; for thus they heap up ⁷¹¹ sins ² by sending an embassy to Egypt to secure a mutual protection alliance from Pharaoh, while not asking for my input, not consulting me so that you can take refuge ⁷¹² in Egypt’s shadow. ⁷¹³ ³ Therefore Pharaoh’s protection will bring about disgrace (*or, will be a disgrace*) and a refuge in Egypt’s shadow will bring chagrin. ⁴ Even though his officials are at Zoan (*or, Tanis*) and his envoys reach Hanes, ⁷¹⁴ ⁵ everyone will be humiliated which cannot help them for it does not provide help but rather provides chagrin and disgrace.”} ⁷¹⁵

⁶ *An Oracle of the Beasts of the Negeb.* ⁷¹⁶

{“Through a land of hardship and anguish from which one can come, the lioness and the lion ⁷¹⁷ the viper (*or, asp*) and the flying serpent, ⁷¹⁸ they come carrying their riches on the backs of donkeys, and their treasures on the humps of camels, bringing them to people who are unable to assist them. ⁷¹⁹ ⁷ Egypt’s help is worthless and empty. [Therefore I have called her ‘Rahab’ who sits still.]} ⁷²⁰

⁷⁰⁹ This chapter seems to be from the period of political intrigues against the Assyrians during the reign of King Hezekiah. Some scholars date this at about 714 – 712 BCE. Others feel the date might be 701 BCE.

⁷¹⁰ Literally: “a blanket.”

⁷¹¹⁷¹² LXX: “προσθειναι.” Literally: “to heap up.” The first sin is acting without divine prompting. The second is seeking an alliance covariant that is other than the Divine spirit. TAN: “O, disloyal sons – declares the Lord --- making plans against my wishes, weaving schemes against my will, thereby piling guilt upon guilt.”

⁷¹² LXX: “του βοηθηθηναι.”

⁷¹³ In Isaiah 28:14 - 15 Israel’s ambassador is expected to bring back signed documents.

⁷¹⁴ Zoan (or Tanis) is located in the northern Nile Delta region. Hanes (or Anusis) was located in Middle Egypt, south of Memphis. This was the time of the 25th Dynasty also called the Ethiopian Dynasty. Cf. Isaiah 18:1ff. Cf. footnote 452. In the LXX the word translated as “envoys” is “princes.” The assurance of help was from Egypt’s power rather than the power of God which to Isaiah was an example of folly.

⁷¹⁵ MFT: “Your princes camp at Zoan, and your envoys reach Hanes, all bearing presents to a nation of no use to you, a people that will bring no help or profit, but only shame, disgrace.”

⁷¹⁶ This poem is carefully crafted in Hebrew. The cryptic title would excite interest. The Negeb is the southern desert area of Israel. Some scholars feel this is a representation of the variety of gifts to solicit Egyptian aid. The unusual creatures are thought to be symbols of the deities of Egypt.

⁷¹⁷ An emendation would read “roaring lion.” Literally: from them.”

⁷¹⁸ NAB: “flying seraph” with a notation concerning Numbers 21:6.

⁷¹⁹ The animals emphasize the ineffective nature of the ambassadors going to Egypt. CB: “through the land of trouble and anguish, of lioness and roaring lion, of viper, flying serpent, they carry their wealth on the shoulders of young asses, their treasures on humps of camels, to a people who cannot benefit to Egypt whose help is empty and vain.”

⁷²⁰ The text of this verse is awkward but understandable. The name “Rahab” is a mocking nickname for Egypt. It is also the name of a mythological serpent/dragon destroyer. “Rahab” means “to sit still.” LXX: “Help from the Egyptians is utterly in vain: tell them, ‘Your consolidation is in vain.’” Some scholars feel the sentence in brackets is a later interpolation. MFT translates “Rahab” as “hence the name for a dragon, ‘do nothing’.” These two verses appear to be a mild taunt in the wording of the heading and of the animals that appear in v. 7. There is also a word play in these two sentences in Hebrew. Cf.: ANET p. 320c.

4. A Summation and a Testament 30:8 – 17

8 {“Now go write this on a tablet in the people’s presence on a tablet,⁷²¹ and on a scroll, that it might be a permanent witness. 9 They are a rebellious people, they are lying sons (*or, sons who deny their son-ship*) who will not listen to the Lord’s instructions, 10 who have told the seers: “Do not see!” and told the prophets: “Do not prophesy to us what is right, speak about agreeable things, prophesy delusions.”⁷²² 11 Out of the way! Turn away from the path! Let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel!’ 12 Therefore the Holy One of Israel declares: ‘ Because you reject (*or, despise*) this word and prefer to trust in oppressiveness and deceitfulness and rely on these: 13 therefore for you the iniquity will be like a high wall that is cracked and bulging (*or, spreading out*) and on the verge of collapsing. This will take place suddenly --- in a moment. 14 Its break up will be as total as that of a potter’s bowl which is smashed⁷²³ (*it will not be spared*). Among the fragments there is not even a shard to be found that could be used to scoop up some embers from the hearth (*or, brazier*), not a shard that could be used to ladle water from a puddle (*or, cistern*).”

15 {The Lord God, the Holy One of Israel says: “Your salvation comes through repentance and rest. Your strength comes through calmness,⁷²⁴ but you have rejected this.⁷²⁵ 16 You said, ‘No! We will ride away on fast horses.’ Therefore you will ride away, saying: ‘We will ride away on swift stallions.’ Therefore your pursuers also will be swift. 17 A thousand will flee at the sight of one soldier and five soldiers will be enough to have everyone flee. All that will be left is a flagpole at the top of a mountain, like a signal on a hill.”}

E. The Power of the Unseen God 30:18 – 31:9

A. A Promise to Those in Adversity 30:18 – 26

18 {“In spite of all this the Lord is anticipating being merciful in directing his mercy toward you. Therefore he exalts himself to demonstrate his mercy toward you, for the Lord is a God of justice! Blessed are those who wait for him!”}

19 “Oh you residents of Jerusalem: you will no longer weep for the Lord is compassionate toward you at the sound of your weeping; when he hears he will be with you (*or, answer you*).⁷²⁷ 20 Though the Lord gives you the bread of affliction (*or adversity*) and the water of oppression yet your Teacher (*or, Guide*) will not hide himself any longer, but you will be enabled to see your Teacher (*or, Guide*). 21 Your ears will hear a word coming from behind you, saying, ‘This is the way! Walk in it when you turn to the right or to the left. 22 Then you will desecrate (*or, defile*)⁷²⁸ your silver plated

⁷²¹ Presumably this would be a wooden writing tablet used in Egypt. The size would be about that of a sheet of paper, a kind of wall newspaper which would be a temporary message, whereas a scroll would be a lasting witness. Emended it would read: “disgrace” or “chagrin.”

⁷²² The word translated as “agreeable things” could be translated as “illusions.” JB: “flattering things” which would imply agreeable and false. The word translated as “delusions” would mean to mock or trifle with, instead of what is right. JB: “flattering visions.”

⁷²³ Literally: “crushed.”

⁷²⁴ The concept in Hebrew is the absence of panic and restlessness.

⁷²⁵ Literally: “were not willing for.”

⁷²⁶ Some scholars insert 31:1 – 9 here, followed by 27:17 – 24. Then there is a return to 30:18– 33.

⁷²⁷ Scholars question whether this passage is prose or poetry. *Biblia Hebraica Kittel* has it as prose. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensis* presents it as poetry. If it is poetry the poetry is rather awkward.

⁷²⁸ LXX: “καὶ μανεύς.”

images of your gods and your gold-covered images that have been cast to represent your gods. You will scatter them as one might throw away an unclean menstrual cloth. You will say to them: ‘Be gone!’ ⁷²⁹

²³ “He will give rain for the seed which you sow in the ground, and grain, the produce of the ground, which will be rich ⁷³⁰ and in abundant supply. In that day your cattle will graze in spacious meadows, ²⁴ and the oxen and the donkeys that are used to till the ground will eat salted fodder (*or, grain*), ⁷³¹ which has been winnowed with a shovel and a pitch fork. ²⁵ On every high mountain as well as every high hill there will be brooks with running water. This will occur in the day of great slaughter when the towers fall. ²⁶ Moreover the light of the moon will be as bright as that of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times as bright, ⁷³² These events will take place when the Lord binds up and heals the wounds that have been inflicted by his corrective punishment.”

2. Differences Through the Storm of the Lord’s Anger 30:27 – 33

²⁷ {“Behold, the Name of the Lord ⁷³³ comes from far, with his burning wrath, and thick, rising smoke, ⁷³⁴ with a heavy burden of fury, ⁷³⁵ and his words are like a devastating fire. ⁷³⁶ ²⁸ His breath ⁷³⁷ is like an overflowing stream that reaches up to one’s neck; to sift the nations with destructive winnowing and to place a bridle on the jaws of the people a bridal that leads astray.} ⁷³⁸

²⁹ “You will have a song as in the night when a holy one sets out to the sound of the flute to go to the mountain of the Lord, to the Rock of Israel. ⁷³⁹ ³⁰ The Lord will cause his majestic voice ⁷⁴⁰ to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, in furious anger and consuming fire, with a cloudburst, tempest and hail stones. ³¹ The voice of the Lord will cause the Assyrians to be terror stricken and he will shatter them with his rod. ³² Every blow of the rod of punishment which the Lord inflicts on them will be to the music of tambourines and lyres, as he attacks with blows from his powerful arm for he will fight with them. ⁷⁴¹ ³³ A pyre (*or, Tophet*) already been prepared ⁷⁴² long ago for the

⁷²⁹ LXX: “ὡς ὕδωρ.” “out of my sight.” ‘Separation to the Lord’ must show itself in separation from what is false and wrong.

⁷³⁰ Literally: “fatness.”

⁷³¹ The reference is to a kind of silage made with grain that had been winnowed. Good grain would be plentiful. Instead of poverty there will be abundance.

⁷³² Literally: “like seven days left in one.”

⁷³³ “The Name of the Lord” carries the meaning of “The Lord in the fullness of his revealed character.”

⁷³⁴ LXX: “καὶ βαρὺ τὸ λημμά αὐτοῦ.”

⁷³⁵ i.e. a heavy load of punishment. The Hebrew in this portion of this verse is uncertain.

⁷³⁶ LXX: “The Name of the Lord comes after a long time, burning wrath, the word of his lips is with glory, a word filled with anger, and the anger and wrath will devour with fire.”

⁷³⁷ Literally: “wind.”

⁷³⁸ Hebrew uncertain. LXX: “his breath, as rushing water in a valley, reaching as far as the neck, and be divided, to confound the nations for their vain error; error also will pursue them and overtake (*or, literally: take them to their face*) them.” TAN: “to set a misguiding yoke upon the nations and a misguiding bridle upon the jaws of the people.”

⁷³⁹ OTL Isaiah: “when a festival is celebrated and there will be rejoicing and then the people go up with a flute to the mountain of the Lord, the Rock of Israel.”

⁷⁴⁰ Literally: “the majesty of his voice.”

⁷⁴¹ NIV: “The breath of the Lord is like a stream of burning sulfur set it ablaze.”

⁷⁴² LXX: “πρὸ ἡμερῶν.”

king (*or Molech*). This pyre was made deep and wide, with fire and wood in abundance. for the breath of the Lord is setting it ablaze like a torrent of brimstone.”

<CHAPTER 31> ⁷⁴³

3. *The Strength of Armies of the Power of the Spirit 31: 1 – 8*

1 {“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, trusting in a large number of chariots and the strength of horsemen ⁷⁴⁴ and not looking to the Holy One of Israel or consulting the Lord. 2 Yet he is wise and brings disaster; he does not cancel his words, ⁷⁴⁵ but he will rise in opposition to those who are wicked ⁷⁴⁶ and against the allies of those who do evil. 3 The Egyptians are human, not God, and their horses are flesh and not spirit. ⁷⁴⁷ When the Lord stretches out his hand ⁷⁴⁸ the allies will stumble and those being helped will fall and they will all perish together.”} ⁷⁴⁹

4. *The Lord, Jerusalem’s Defender 31:4 – 9*

4 {The Lord has said to me: “Just as a lion or a lion cub growls over his prey and is not terrified when a band of shepherds gathers to go against it by shouting nor is it cowed by their clamor, ⁷⁵⁰ so too the Lord of hosts will come down to battle on Mount Zion and its heights. ⁷⁵¹ 5 Just as the birds hover overhead [so too the Lord of hosts will shield Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it; he will pass over and rescue it.]} ⁷⁵²

6 “Return to him from whom you have openly revolted, O people of Israel, 7 for in that day every one in contempt will reject their idols of silver and their idols of gold which were sinfully made by their own hands.”

⁷⁴³ Some scholars inset chapter 31 between 29:17a and 29:17b. It has generally been thought that this oracle’s setting is 705 – 701 BCE. Some scholars feel chapter 31 is slightly later than chapter 30, following the disastrous defeat of the Egyptian army at Elrekeh. For Isaiah to search for pagan alliances is a theological problem.

⁷⁴⁴ LXX: “and in horses which are a great multitude.” One of the great needs of the people of Israel was a shortage of horses for warfare. Therefore an alliance with Egypt seemed important. Isaiah reminds the people that the plans of 30:1 – 7 will come to naught because: 1. Their planning forgets the Lord who governs the course of events. 2. They are putting trust in something as weak as themselves which will perish with them.

⁷⁴⁵ LXX: “his word will not be frustrated.”

⁷⁴⁶ They are evildoers not because of evil acts or because of transgressions against social morality, but because there was in them ‘an evil heart of unbelief.’ God never reverses or contradicts or reneges on what he has said for both his thoughts and his promises are unchangeable. The world, under his rule, is accountable.

⁷⁴⁷ LB: “their horses are puny flesh, not mighty spirits.”

⁷⁴⁸ “Clenches his fist” might better convey the concept in the 21st Century.

⁷⁴⁹ The thought of having many horses is part of the defiance of Judah and Jerusalem, making their warfare an act of defiance.

⁷⁵⁰ At that time lions strayed into the hills from the semi-tropical jungle in the Jordan Valley. Phillips: “He is not terrified by their shouting; Nor daunted by their noise. So shall the Lord of hosts come down To fight against Mount Zion and against its hill.”

⁷⁵¹ LXX: “For the Lord said to me: just as a lion or a young lion would roar over the prey it has taken and growl over it until the mountains are filled with its voice; and the animals become awe struck, trembling at the fierceness of its wrath; so the Lord of hosts will descend to fight upon the mount Zion, even on her mountains.”

⁷⁵² Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

8 {“The Assyrians will fall by a sword, not wielded by humans. ⁷⁵³ That sword not wielded by humans will destroy them. They will shrink from the sword, and their young men will be taken into forced labor. 9 In their terror they will abandon their hiding places and their officers will desert their battle flags in panic.” ⁷⁵⁴ This is the word of the Lord whose fire is in Zion whose furnace is in Jerusalem!}

<CHAPTER 32> ⁷⁵⁵

F. An Appendix 32:1 – 20

1. Justice in Return and Wisdom in Society 32:1 – 8

1 {“Be reassured when a king reigns in righteousness, and when princes seek justice! ⁷⁵⁶ 2 Each one will be like a refuge from the wind, like a shelter from torrential rainfall, like a canal that channels water to a dry place, like the shade of a huge rock in a weary ⁷⁵⁷ land. 3 Then the eyes of those who see will not become closed and dim, ⁷⁵⁸ and the ears of those who hear will remain alert. ⁷⁵⁹ 4 The minds of the thoughtless (*or, reckless*) will have good judgment, ⁷⁶⁰ and the tongues of those who stammer will be fluent and clear. ⁷⁶¹ 5 The scoundrel ⁷⁶² will no longer be considered to be a noble, nor the villain be considered to be a gentleman. 6 The villain ⁷⁶³ speaks of villainy, and in his mind plots treachery; ⁷⁶⁴ to practice ungodliness and to continually speak of the Lord falsely, leaving an unsatisfied craving and a deprivation of drink for those who thirst. ⁷⁶⁵ 7 The villainies of the villains are evil, ⁷⁶⁶ desiring wicked plots to destroy the poor with falsehood, and the needy when they plead their case. 8 But the magnanimous are magnanimous in purpose, constantly doing noble deeds.”}

⁷⁵³ LXX: “great men not their sword of a man man.”

⁷⁵⁴ OTL Isaiah: “his officers will panic at the sight of a banner.” MFT: “their very god flies in panic, their princes scatter in sheer terror, their soldiers are made serfs by order of the Eternal whose hearth is in Zion.” LXX: “For he will be surrounded by a trench and will be awesome and all who attempt to flee will be captured. The Lord declares, ‘Blessed is he who has descendants in Zion and household friends in Jerusalem’.” Isaiah is convinced that the grandiose plans of the Jewish leaders will come to nothing since the help of Egypt is illusionary.

⁷⁵⁵ Scholars are divided about the date of this passage and whether or not it is a Messianic prophecy.

⁷⁵⁶ TEV: “Some day there will be a king who rules with integrity.”

⁷⁵⁷ Literally: “exhausted.”

⁷⁵⁸ Vulgate: “caligabunt.”

⁷⁵⁹ LXX: “A man will hide his words, and be hidden, as from rushing water, and will appear in Zion like a rushing river, glorious in a thirsty land. They will no longer rely on persons but will listen carefully.” TEV: “Their eyes and ears will be open to the needs of the people.” People need to be transformed by perception (eyes), reception (ears), grasp (mind), and communication (tongue).

⁷⁶⁰ Literally: “knowledge.”

⁷⁶¹ The difference between a wise person and a fool lies in moral quality rather than in intelligence.

⁷⁶² The concept of the Hebrew word is: “a person who is morally obtuse.” TAN: “villain.”

⁷⁶³ Literally: “fool.” This is a person who lacks moral sensitivity and who is amoral.

⁷⁶⁴ Literally: “makes hungry the empty soul.”

⁷⁶⁵ NEB: “for the scoundrel will speak like a scoundrel, and will hatch evil in his heart; he is an imposter in all his actions, and in his words a liar even to the lord; he starves the hungry of their food and refuses drink to the thirsty.”

⁷⁶⁶ NAB: “The trickster uses wicked trickery, planning crimes.”

2. Frivolous Women Warned of Disaster 32:9 – 14

9 {“Rise up, you women who live in a carefree manner and listen to my words! You are confident maidens but you must hear what I say. 10 In a bit more than a year from now you will shudder, you who are confident women! The time of vintage will have passed but there will have been nothing to harvest. 11 Tremble, you who have been carefree, who are at ease! Shudder, you who are so confident! Strip! Become naked and then wrap sackcloth around your waists. 12 Lament! ⁷⁶⁷ The pleasant fields have no crops for the lack of vintage, 13 for the soil of my people will be growing thorns and briers. Alas for the joyous house in this powerful city. 14 The royal palace will be forsaken, the resident population will have deserted the city, the hill and the watchtower ⁷⁶⁸ will become dens forever: It will be a perpetual place of joy for the wild donkeys and a pasture for flocks.”} ⁷⁶⁹

3/ The Transforming Gift of the Spirit in the Age to Come 32:15 – 20

15 {“Until the spirit is poured out on us from on high and the wilderness becomes so fruitful that things grow like a forest, 16 justice will dwell in the wilderness and righteousness will abide in a fruitful field. 17 The effect of righteousness will be peace and the result of righteousness will be quietness and trust which will remain forever. 18 My people will live together in peaceful communities with safe houses, residing in undisturbed surroundings. 19 The forest will wither completely and the city will be razed. ⁷⁷⁰ 20 Happy are you who sow beside the water ⁷⁷¹ who let the feet of the ox and the donkey roam freely!”} ⁷⁷²

⁷⁶⁷ Literally: “beat your breasts,” which is a way of expressing lamentation. LXX: “κοπτεσθε.” An emendation would have: “Lament for the fields.”

⁷⁶⁸ The JB transliterates the Hebrew words translated here as “hill” and thus reading: “Ophel and Keep become caverns forever.” TAN: “the citadel and tower will become bare places forever.”

⁷⁶⁹ The Hebrew is unclear. LXX: “As for the rich city, the houses are deserted. The will abandon the wealth of the city and the pleasant houses, and the villages will be caves forever, the joy of wild asses, shepherd’s pastures.” Some scholars insert verse 19 between verses 14 and 15.

⁷⁷⁰ The Hebrew appears to possibly be a corrupt text. Possible emendations abound. The verse is omitted by NAB. NEB: “It will be cool in the slopes of the forest then and cities shall lie peacefully in the plain.” Phillips: “No matter what forest is felled by hail, no matter what city is razed to the ground, in happiness you will sow by unfailing waters and let the ox and the ass range free.” NASV: “And it will hail when the forest comes down. And the city will be utterly laid low.” NIV: “Though hail flattens the forest and the city is leveled completely.”

⁷⁷¹ I.e.: without fear of crop failure.

⁷⁷² Literally: “let loose the feet of the ox and the ass.” The results of the spirit of God being poured out are: 1. Transformed creation. 2. True moral and spiritual principles. 3. Society is marked by peace, having a full realization of peace with God, harmonious relationship and personal fulfillment. 4. Peaceful security. In the new creation all that lacks substance in life will be replaced by solid reality.

<CHAPTER 33>

VIII. The Recompense of God 33:1 – 35:10

A. A Prophetic Liturgy of Entreaty 33:1 – 24

1. First Movement 33:1 - 6

1. {“Woe to you, destroyer, who yourself have not been destroyed! ⁷⁷³ You betrayer, who has not been betrayed, with whom time has dealt treacherously; when you have ceased your destruction ⁷⁷⁴ you yourself will be ravaged; for when you have finished betraying you will be betrayed. ⁷⁷⁵

2 {“Be gracious to us O Lord! We await your graciousness toward us your people, who call upon your strength ⁷⁷⁶ every morning ⁷⁷⁷ in these stressful times. 3 People flee at the thunderous noise. At your exalting ⁷⁷⁸ of yourself people flee. 4 Spoils are pounced on just as a grasshopper might gather, and amassed as locusts ⁷⁷⁹ do when they leap. 5 The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high; he has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. 6 He will be the mainstay for your time, providing an abundance of salvation, wisdom and knowledge. The reverent awe of the Lord is his treasure.”} ⁷⁸⁰

2. Second Movement 33:7 – 16

7 {“Our bravest soldiers are running through the streets shouting for help. ⁷⁸¹ The ambassadors who tried to make peace are weeping. ⁷⁸² 8 The highways are deserted and

⁷⁷³ The enemy in this passage has not been named. It is generally assumed that it is Assyria. LXX: “those who afflict you and make you miserable.”

⁷⁷⁴ TEV: “But their time to rob and betray will end, and they themselves will become victims of robbery and treachery.” The Hebrew word in the MT has been in question. The MT has: “**ntik**” but scholars felt the word should be “**ntikk**”. This has been supported by the Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa. Assuming this was Assyria its duplicity was that it accepted Hezekiah’s ransom money (II Kings 18:13 – 18) and then attacked. Isaiah saw this also. The punishment will be based on what the crime has merited.

⁷⁷⁵ TAN: “Ha, you ravager who are not ravaged, you betrayer who have not been betrayed! When you have done ravaging, you shall be ravaged; when you have finished betraying; you shall be betrayed.”

⁷⁷⁶ Literally: “arm.” Emended: “strength.”

⁷⁷⁷ Literally: “be the arm of your people in the morning.”

⁷⁷⁸ LXX: “απο του φοβου σου.” TAN: “At [Your] roaring peoples have fled, Before Your majesty nations have scattered.”

⁷⁷⁹ The locust is an insect much like a grasshopper that travels in swarms, causing great amounts of crop damage. NIV: “your plunder, O nations is harvested as by young locusts, like a swarm of locusts men pounce on it.” The reference is to the plundering of the Assyrian army camp when the Assyrian army suddenly departs.

⁷⁸⁰ The Hebrew is uncertain. NRSV: “The Lord is exalted. The Lord dwells on high/ He filled Zion with justice and righteousness. The stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom and knowledge: the fear of the Lord is Zion’s treasure.” A possible translation might be: “and that which is cherished will be made sure, there will be abundant deliverance; wisdom and knowledge, and the awe of the Lord will be his treasure.”

⁷⁸¹ Hebrew uncertain.

⁷⁸² An alternate text would be translated as: “The messengers of Shalem weep bitterly.” The text seems to be corrupt. Numerous emendations have been suggested but none seems to find much approval.

travelers have halted their travels. Treaties ⁷⁸³ are rejected, witnesses are despised; ⁷⁸⁴ no one is respected any more! Obligations are disregarded. ⁹ The land lies idle, Lebanon is eroded and having a drought; Sharon ⁷⁸⁵ is like a desert; Bashan and Carmel have the leaves falling off the trees. ⁷⁸⁶

¹⁰ {“Now I will arise” says the Lord, “Now I will exalt myself; now I will be exalted. ⁷⁸⁷ ¹¹ You hope by your planning you will produce hay, but all that grows is stubble. My breath will consume you. ¹² Entire nations will crumble like rocks burned in a limekiln, or like brush that is cut down to be burned in the fire.

¹³ {“Listen --- you who are distant to what I have done, and you who are near, acknowledging my might! ¹⁴ The evildoers in Zion are fearful. Trembling has seized the godless, who say, ‘The judgment of God is like fire that burns constantly. Who can survive?’ ¹⁵ It is possible only if all that you do and say is right. Do not carry out any fraudulent dealings (*or, extortions*) and indignantly refuse bribes. Do not be interested in information about opportunities for bloodshed nor look for evil. ⁷⁸⁸ ¹⁶ He will live in the heights; ⁷⁸⁹ his place of refuge will be impregnable; ⁷⁹⁰ his bread will be given to him, his water will be assured.”} ⁷⁹¹

3. Conclusion: A Word of Promise 33:17 – 24

¹⁷ {“Your eyes will once again see the king ⁷⁹² in his majesty. ⁷⁹³ They will behold a vast land. ¹⁸ You will ponder on the days of tyranny, wondering; ‘Where is he who counted our possessions ---who weighed the tribute? Where is he who searched the towns for prisoners?’ ⁷⁹⁴ ¹⁹ You look around but you no longer see the barbarous people, the people whose speech is different, for you cannot comprehend it for their speech is not understandable. ⁷⁹⁵ ²⁰ Look at Zion, the city where our designated festivals are to take place! Your eyes will see Jerusalem: a secure homestead, an unmovable tent ⁷⁹⁶ whose

⁷⁸³ Literally: “cities.” Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa has “for anyone who promises keeps it.” With the collapse of society witnesses are mocked.

⁷⁸⁴ The translation of this phrase is based on one Hebrew MS.

⁷⁸⁵ Sharon was a fertile plain near the Mediterranean Sea.

⁷⁸⁶ Bashan was a fertile area east of the Jordan, noted for its fine cattle. Mount Carmel juts out into the Mediterranean Sea. It was a place of worship in earlier times and had luxuriant vegetation.

⁷⁸⁷ TEV: “Now I will show you how powerful I am.”

⁷⁸⁸ NAB: “brushing his hands free of contact with bribes.” JB: “He who acts with integrity, and rejects extortionate profit, who waves away bribes from his hands, shuts suggestions of murder out of his ears, and closes his eyes against crime,”

⁷⁸⁹ LXX: “in a high cave.”

⁷⁹⁰ Literally: “in a stronghold of rock.”

⁷⁹¹ Some scholars feel verses 14 – 16 are a part of liturgy that was used upon entering the temple. TAN: “Such a one shall dwell in lofty security with inaccessible cliffs for his stronghold, with his food supplied and his water secured.”

⁷⁹² For many scholars this is a prophesy of the Messianic King.

⁷⁹³ Some scholars emend the text to read: “the perfection of beauty.”

⁷⁹⁴ The Hebrew is obscure. This is an attempt to translate.

⁷⁹⁵ Literally: “deepness of lip.”

⁷⁹⁶ The thought remains that the temple was only a more permanent substitute for the original tabernacle or shrine.

walls are never broken down nor will any of its cords be torn.⁷⁹⁷ ²¹ The Lord will provide a place for us, in all his majesty. It will be a place of broad rivers and streams, where no warships (*or, galleys*) can go, where no stately ships can pass.⁷⁹⁸ ²² 'The Lord is our judge! The Lord is our ruler! The Lord is our king! He will save us!' ⁷⁹⁹

²³ {[Your rigging is slack, it cannot steady the mast in its socket nor keep the sail spread out (*or, all the rigging on the ship is useless. The sails are unable to be spread.*).]}
⁸⁰⁰

{“The prey and spoils are in abundance and these will be divided in such a way that even the blind and the lame will be able to carry away some of the plunder.”⁸⁰¹ ²⁴ No inhabitants will say: ‘I am in pain’ for the people who live there will be forgiven of all their iniquity.”}⁸⁰²

<CHAPTER 34>

*B. The Fearful End of the Enemies of God. 34:1 – 17*⁸⁰³

¹ {“Nations: draw near! Hear and listen! Pay attention! Listen, O peoples! Let the earth⁸⁰⁴ listen, and all that live therein; the world and all that come from it. ² The Lord is enraged⁸⁰⁵ against all the nations and is furious against⁸⁰⁶ the entire horde for he has doomed them to the point of extermination. He has given them over for slaughter.⁸⁰⁷ ³ Those who have been killed will be left unburied, and the stench of their corpses will rise

⁷⁹⁷ LXX: “See the city of Zion, our refuge for salvation. Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a rich city, a tabernacle which will not be shattered, nor will the pins of this tabernacle be moved forever, neither will its cords be broken.”

⁷⁹⁸ The Hebrew is unclear. Some scholars substitute the thought of the Lord’s majesty with “the Lord’s threshing floor.” LB: “The glorious Lord will be to us as a wide river of protection, the enemy can’t cross.” TAN: “in a place of rivers and wide streams on which no boat is rowed, where no majestic ship passes.” A footnote adds: “foreign oppressor.” Some scholars insert a portion of v. 23 into this verse for clarity.

⁷⁹⁹ These are evidently the shouts people were giving. Some scholars feel that this is the response that is given by the people when, in the Psalms, the word “Selah” appears. Others feel “Selah” simply signifies a musical interlude.

⁸⁰⁰ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. To whom does this refer:? To the enemy? To the Lord? The message seems to make clear that judgment is e present ship of state is unsafe. It does assure the people that there will be no naval attack.

⁸⁰¹ The Hebrew is unclear.

⁸⁰² Some scholars feel this chapter has within it lines that are intended to clarify the concepts that the prophet had spoken previously.

⁸⁰³ This is a powerful eschatological poem presenting God wreaking vengeance on Edom. Edom is mentioned but the reader should readily receive a broader concept when reading this poem. The time of these events is not the first and most important word from the Lord to this world.

⁸⁰⁴ Literally: “the fullness.”

⁸⁰⁵ The Hebrew word describes a sharp burst of anger. It is a root word also for “segregation.” The added concept of judgment includes removal from human contact.

⁸⁰⁶ Literally: “put under the ban.”

⁸⁰⁷ OTL Isaiah: “the Lord is angry at all the nations and furious at all their hate. He has sentenced them, delivering them over to slaughter.”

up. The mountains will erode because of the outpouring of blood. 4 The entire host of heaven⁸⁰⁸ will dissolve, and the heavens roll up like a scroll. All their armies will fall just as leaves fall from the vines, or leaves⁸⁰⁹ falling from the fig tree.⁸¹⁰ 5 My sword⁸¹¹ will have drunk its fill in the heavens.⁸¹² Be attentive! It will wreak judgment on Edom, for those people have been doomed.⁸¹³ 6 The Lord has a sword; it is coated with (*or, bathed in*)⁸¹⁴ blood, it is besmeared with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with kidney fat from rams, for the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah:⁸¹⁵ a great slaughter in the land of Edom. 7 Wild oxen will fall⁸¹⁶ with them, along with mighty steers and powerful bulls for the land will be soaked⁸¹⁷ with blood, and the dust will become greasy with fat.

8 {“The Lord has a day of retribution, a year of vindication for the cause of Zion. 9 The streams of Edom will be turned into pitch and her soil will become like sulfur for her land will become like burning pitch. 10 Night and day it will not be quenched, its smoke will rise forever! From generation to generation it will lie waste; no one will travel though it for ever and ever. 11 The hawks and owls⁸¹⁸ will possess it. Great owls and ravens will live in it. Confusion will spread over it, and the plumb bob of chaos will come down on the nobles.⁸¹⁹ 12 The kingdom will be named “NO KINGDOM THERE” and its princes will be ineffective.⁸²⁰

13 {“Thorns will grow over the stronghold, nettles and thistles will grow over the fortress, for it will become the haunt of jackals and a home for ostriches. 14 Wild animals will face hyenas⁸²¹ and demons (*or, satyrs*) will scream to their fellow demons (*or, satyrs*) while the night hag (*or, night monster*)⁸²² will land and find a nesting place for

⁸⁰⁸ The reference here is not to the heavenly host as one might think of it with the birth narrative of the angels singing but refers to the fabric of heaven. BHS suggests a possible emendation to “hills” which would suit the parallelism of the poetry much better.

⁸⁰⁹ A number of translators have “shriveled up figs” or a similar translation. TAN: “shriveled fruit.”

⁸¹⁰ One mythological concept was that the stars were fruit on a heavenly tree. IQIsa has: “and the valleys will be split open and all the host of heaven will wither.”

⁸¹¹ Reading “**brx**” as in BHS rather than “**ybrx**” as in Kittel.

⁸¹² Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa has: “appears in the skies above.” LXX: “επεθυσθη.”

⁸¹³ Edom in this verse is a case in point --- not the only nation to experience the end time.

⁸¹⁴ Literally: “made fast.”

⁸¹⁵ Borzra was the principal city of Edom at that time in history. It was located 27 miles south of the Dead Sea. At this point the LXX seems to be using a different recension which will appear at the end of this chapter.

⁸¹⁶ Wild oxen were not used in Hebrew sacrifices. “Will fall” is literally: “go down.”

⁸¹⁷ LXX: “μεθυσθησεται.”

⁸¹⁸ The birds and animals in the next verses are conjectural. It is impossible to be absolutely sure what creatures the Hebrew words describe.

⁸¹⁹ The Hebrew is unclear. One of several questions with this verse is: “nobles.” Is “nobles” a part of verse 11 or is it the beginning of verse 12.

⁸²⁰ No city is named, making “No Kingdom There” the description of the entire kingdom. The Hebrew word “*Choregah*” can be translated also as “her caves.” Edom’s capital was a city of caves. The Hebrew is unclear. The concept seems to be that the Lord will plan chaos and emptiness for the land.

⁸²¹ Literally: “howling creatures.”

⁸²² It was believed on the part of many that a female demon lived in such desolate places. “Lilith,” the storm demon was part of the popular superstition. She haunted and took possession of the former homes of persons.

herself. ¹⁵ The owl ⁸²³ will nest there and lay eggs and hatch and gather her young in the shadows, yes, there the falcons will be gathered, each one with her mate. ¹⁶ Search for and read the book (*or, scroll*) of the Lord, (*or, From the book of the Lord their name will be read*) ⁸²⁴ and not a single one of these names will be missing: none will be without her name! The mouth of the Lord has commanded this and his spirit has gathered them. ¹⁷ He has cast the lot in his hand and portioned it out to them with the line; they will possess it forever, from generation to generation --- they will live in it.”}

LXX: 34: 6 – 17

⁶ ”The sword of the Lord is filled with blood. it is glutted with fat, with the blood of goats and lambs, and with the fat of goats and lambs. For the Lord has a sacrifice in Bosrah, and a great slaughter in Edom. ⁷ The mighty ones will fall with them, along with the rams and the bulls. The land will be soaked (*lit. made drunken*) with blood and it will be filled with their fat.

⁸ ”For it is the day of the judgment of the Lord, and the year of recompense of Zion in judgment. ⁹ Her valleys will be turned into pitch and her land with sulfur; and her land will be like pitch burning night and day. ¹⁰ It will never be quenched and her smoke will go up, causing desolation though all her generations. ¹¹ For a long time birds and hedgehogs, ibises and ravens will live in it and a line of demarcation. Desolation will cover it, and satyrs will live in it. ¹² There will no longer be any princes for her kings and her great leaders will have been destroyed.

¹³ ”Thorns will grow and monsters will find it to be a place of habitation and a court for ostriches. ¹⁴ The devils will meet with satyrs, and they will scream at one another, Satyrs will rest there for they will have found a good resting place for themselves.

¹⁵ ”Hedgehogs have made their nests there and the earth has been protective of their young. Deer have met and looked at each other face to face. ¹⁶ They have moved about and none has died. They did not need to look for one another because the Lord had commanded them and his spirit gathered them. ¹⁷ He has cast lots for them, and his hand has dealt out pasture for each of them, saying, ‘You will inherit the land forever; and they will rest on it through all generations’.”

<CHAPTER 35> ⁸²⁵

C. A Transformed Word and the Return to Zion 35:1 – 10

1. The Manifestation of God in Power and Glory 35:1 - 6

¹ {“The wilderness and dry land ⁸²⁶ will be glad! The desert ⁸²⁷ will rejoice and blossom with crocuses. ⁸²⁸ ² It will blossom abundantly and become a source of joy and singing. It will become the glory of Lebanon (*or, the mountains of Lebanon*) and it will

⁸²³ Many translators use the words: “arrow snake.” TAN: “there the arrow snake shall nest and lay eggs, and shall brood, and hatch in its shade.”

⁸²⁴ What book this might refer to is unknown. John Calvin felt it was the Torah (the five books attributed to Moses).

⁸²⁵ This chapter is an elaborate portrayal of salvation by Isaiah.

⁸²⁶ The reference is possibly to the trackless Syrian Desert.

⁸²⁷ Several translators prefer the word “steppes.”

⁸²⁸ LXX: “and flower as the lily.” NEB: “asphodel.”

be granted the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.⁸²⁹ They will see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of your God! ³ Strengthen the drooping hands, and make firm the trembling knees.⁸³⁰ ⁴ Say to the fainthearted (*or, those with fluttering hearts*) ‘Be strong! Do not be fearful! Be assured your God will come after the oppressors with vengeance! The faithful will receive God’s compassion.’⁸³¹

⁵ {“It is then that the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.⁸³² ⁶ Then the lame will be able to leap like a deer and the tongue of those who are dumb will sing for joy! Then water will flow in the wilderness and streams will be found in the desert.”}⁸³³

2. Prophetic messages of Encouragement 35:7 – 10

⁷ {“The scorching sand will become a pool,⁸³⁴ and the thirsty ground will have springs of water. The lairs of the jackals will become a swamp⁸³⁵ and grass,⁸³⁶ reeds and papyrus will grow. ⁸ A highway⁸³⁷ will be there, and it will be called THE HOLY WAY.⁸³⁸ The unclean will not pass over it (*or, The way will become a way that is free from danger*)⁸³⁹ and will not walk there.⁸⁴⁰ ⁹ No one will be there; neither will any ravenous beast approach it. They will not be found there, but the redeemed will walk there. ¹⁰ The ransomed of the Lord⁸⁴¹ will return, and come to Zion with singing! There will be everlasting joy and gladness within them.⁸⁴² Sorrow and sighing will flee away.”}⁸⁴³

⁸²⁹ Cf.: footnote 786. The name “Carmel” means garden land.” Sharon: cf.: footnote 785.

⁸³⁰ MFT: “Put heart into the listless, and brace all weak-kneed souls.” NIV: “strengthen the knees that give way.” The line could easily be translated as “be active, stable and persistent.” The sentence describes the exhausted prisoners being herded by the enemy.

⁸³¹ NRSV: “Encourage the exhausted: strengthen the feeble. Say to those with a palpitating heart...” Vengeance is coming, It is the retribution of God.

⁸³² The helpless of the exiles will have the greatest reason to praise God!

⁸³³ There must be a transformation from weakness to the use of newly discovered abilities. These include reception (eyes, ears) and action (leaping and joy).

⁸³⁴ Some translators mistakenly translate the Hebrew word for “pool” as “mirage.”

⁸³⁵ “Swamp” is based on the translation of the versions. MT: “in the haunt of jackals is her resting place.” “Swamp” or “marsh” is based on a slight emendation. CB: “In the haunt of jackals your flock shall lie down; And the inclosure of ostriches shall be filled with reeds and rushes.” TEV: “where the jackals used to live marsh grass and reeds will grow.”

⁸³⁶ LXX: “επαυλις.”

⁸³⁷ The Hebrew word could also be translated as “raised causeway.” LXX: “and there will be a pure way.”

⁸³⁸ It was called “The Holy Way” because it led to Zion and the temple. LXX: “καθαρα.”

⁸³⁹ Those who are unfit to walk ‘The Holy Way’ are self-disqualified through failure to see the means of grace offered to them.

⁸⁴⁰ The text of this verse is considered by some scholars to be in disorder.

⁸⁴¹ The “go-el” or redeemer in the Hebrew Scriptures was a person who would take his relative’s needs as his own. Cf. Ruth. Job: “I know that my redeemer lives.” Jesus becomes the ultimate ‘go-el’. It is through the ‘go-el’ that unity between God and humanity is accomplished.

⁸⁴² Literally: “on their heads.”

⁸⁴³ LXX: “καταλημψεται αυτους.”

<CHAPTER 36>

IX. Isaiah and Hezekiah: A Narrative 35:1 – 39:8 ⁸⁴⁴

A, Sennacherib Demands Surrender of Jerusalem 36:1 – 37:4c

1. The First Assyrian Embassy and the Helpless 36:1 – 37:7

a. The First Assyrian Speech 36:1 - 18

¹ In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against all the fortifications ⁸⁴⁵ of Judah and captured them. ² The king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh ⁸⁴⁶ from Lachish ⁸⁴⁷ to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem with the great army of the Assyrians. Rabshakeh stood by ⁸⁴⁸ the conduit of the Upper Pool on the street which led to the field where those who shrunk and bleached cloth laid it out to dry. ⁸⁴⁹ ³ Eliakim the son of Hilkiah who was in charge of the palace, Shebna⁸⁵⁰ the royal secretary and Joah the court recorder went out to meet him. ⁴ Rabshakeh declared: “Say to Hezekiah: ‘This is what the great monarch, the king of Assyria declares! ⁸⁵¹ What is making you so confident? ⁸⁵² ⁵ Do you suppose ⁸⁵³ that mere talk ⁸⁵⁴ and theory will make you ready for combat (*or, take the place of military might*)? Is that what you, having rebelled against me, are relying on? ⁶ Behold, you are relying on Egypt. The staff you are leaning on will splinter and puncture the palm of your hand. That is how the nation of Pharaoh, king of Egypt deals with those who rely on it. ⁸⁵⁵ ⁷ If, on the other hand, you would say to me, ‘We rely on the Lord our God,’ is it not he whose shrines (*or, high places*) and altars were removed by King Hezekiah ⁸⁵⁶ He told the people of Judah and Jerusalem, ‘You are

⁸⁴⁴ Chapters 36 – 39 parallel II Kings 18:13 – 20:19. Many scholars have felt that the Isaiah chapters were adapted from the II Kings passage. The recent trend in scholarship seems to be that the Isaiah passages were the originals and the II Kings passages were adapted. This is based on the assumption that the writer of II Kings had access to King Hezekiah’s records. There is no clear answer to the question, though, for usual reader of Isaiah it presents no problem.

⁸⁴⁵ Sennacherib’s records state that there were 46 walled towns and additional neighborhood villages. Jerusalem, at this point, at become surrounded for a siege but had not yet been attacked.

⁸⁴⁶ This was the title used by the Assyrians for a spokesman of the king. Literally it meant “the chief steward.” LB: “personal representative.” “Field commander” or “Staff commander” might describe his title and function.

⁸⁴⁷ Lachish was about twenty-five miles south-west of Jerusalem. The capture of the city is displayed in a bas relief which is in the British Museum. A pit was found by archaeologists in Lachish with 1500 notations about its capture by Sennacherib’s army. See Appendix A.

⁸⁴⁸ LXX: “in.”

⁸⁴⁹ NIV: “the washermen’s field.”

⁸⁵⁰ The NEB: gives Hilkiah the title “the comptroller” here and in v. 22. Shebna is entitled “the adjutant general” here and in v. 22. CEV: “Three of the king’s highest officials came out of Jerusalem to meet him. One of them was Hilkiah ben Eliakim, who was the prime minister. The other two were Shebna, assistant to the prime minister and Joah son of Asaph, keeper of the government records.”

⁸⁵¹ Rabshakeh’s speech was difficult to oppose by Hezekiah and his people. The opposition can only come from a realistic view: from a pious king and resolute people.

⁸⁵² Literally: “what is the confidence you trust? Rabshakeh has four themes: 1. Egypt is no help. 2. Trusting in the Lord is no longer an option. 3. Hezekiah has no manpower to wage war. 4. Assyria is backed by divine authority.

⁸⁵³ The Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa has “You say.”

⁸⁵⁴ LXX: “words of lips.”

⁸⁵⁵ Cf.: ANET p 25c.

⁸⁵⁶ Rabshakeh preys on the uneasiness of worshipers since it was Hezekiah who sought to centralize religious observance.

only to worship at this altar.’⁸⁵⁷ 8 Come now! Let me make a wager! My master, the King of Assyria will give you two thousand chariots if you can find two thousand warriors to drive them. 9 How can you refuse anything? Dare you even refuse the lowest ranking officer when you are relying on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?”

b. The Second Assyrian Speech: A Popular Appeal for Peace 36:10 – 21

10 “Moreover I have marched to invade and destroy this land for the voice of the Lord himself said to me, ‘Go up! Inade and destroy this land.’ He sanctioned it!”

11 Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah replied to Rabshakeh, saying; “Please speak to us in Aramaic (*or, Syriac*) for we understand it. Do not speak in Hebrew⁸⁵⁸ within earshot of those observers who are sitting on the wall.”⁸⁵⁹ 12 Rabshakeh answered, “It wasn’t your master who sent me to you! The king [*of Assyria*] sent me to speak to everyone, not just to those who are officials. I was sent precisely for the purpose of telling the men sitting on the wall that they are doomed, for you will eat our own excrement and drink your own urine.”

13 Then Rabshakeh stood and called out loudly in the Hebrew language, “Hear the word of the great monarch, the King of Assyria! 14 Thus says the King! Do not let Hezekiah delude you, for he will not be able to save you. 15 Do not be taken in by Hezekiah. He will want you to rely on the Lord by saying, ‘The Lord will surely deliver us; the city will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria.’ 16 Do not listen to Hezekiah, for the king of Assyria declares: Make your peace with me [*through my representative Rebshakeh*] and come out to me. Then each one of you will eat your own grapes, grow your own figs and you will all drink water that comes from your own cistern; 17 for I will come to deport you to a land like your own, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. 18 Beware! Do not let Hezekiah mislead you by saying, ‘The Lord will deliver us.’ Have any of the gods of all the other nations saved them and their land from going into the hands of the king of Assyria? 19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they freed Samaria from my power?⁸⁶⁰ 20 Who is there among all the gods of these countries that I have conquered that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem from my power?”

21 The representatives of the king of Judah were silent and did not say a single word for the king had commanded, “Do not answer him!”

c. The King’s Reaction 36:22 – 37:7

22 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah who was in charge of the palace and Shebna the royal secretary and Joah the son of Asaph, the court recorder came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and told him the message of Rabshakeh.

⁸⁵⁷ The Assyrians try to imply that the removal of the illegal altars and high places insult God.

⁸⁵⁸ Literally: “the language of Judah.”

⁸⁵⁹ These Jewish spokespersons wanted the conversation to be in Aramaic which the populous at that point could not really understand. The people seated on the wall, if they understood the words of Rabshakeh might loose their morale. After the “Babylonian Captivity” the Jewish people were fluent in Aramaic. At this point Aramaic was the language of international business and government transactions.

⁸⁶⁰ Sepharvaim was one of the gods of Samaria. At this point in history Samaria was under Assyrian rule.

<CHAPTER 37> ⁸⁶¹

¹ When King **Hezekiah** heard this, he tore his clothing and covered himself with sack cloth and went into the House of the Lord. ⁸⁶² ² He sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace staff, and Shebna the court secretary, and senior priests, all clothed in sackcloth to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz. ³ They spoke to the prophet saying, “This is the word of Hezekiah: This day is a day of distress, rebuke, punishment and disgrace. Children are ready to be born but there is no strength to accomplish the delivery. ⁸⁶³ ⁴ Perhaps the Lord your God has heard the words of Rabshakeh ⁸⁶⁴ who spoke the words of his master the king of Assyria to the living God, and God will rebuke the words he had spoken. Therefore lift up your prayer on behalf of this remnant of the people. “

B. A Prose Oracle: Sennacherib will Depart and be Killed. 37:5 – 7

⁵ When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, ⁶ **Isaiah** said to them: “Tell your master as follows: The Lord declares: Do not be afraid because of the blasphemous words you have heard, with which the underling of the king of Assyria has spoken evilly of me. ⁷ I will place a spirit (*or, impulse*) within him so that he will hear a rumor (*or, report*) and he will return to his own country and I will cause him to die by the sword in his own country.” ⁸⁶⁵

C. The Second Assyrian Embassy Faces Hezekiah 37:8 – 38

1. The Godly King 37:8 – 9

⁸ The Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria was now besieging Libnah for he had learned that the king had left Lachish. ⁸⁶⁶ ⁹ The king had learned about Tirhakah, ⁸⁶⁷ king of Ethiopia (*or, Nubia. Cush*). The message was: “He has moved his army to attack ⁸⁶⁸ you” When he learned that he sent a message to Hezekiah, saying:

2. Hezekiah, Man of Faith 37:10 – 13

¹⁰ **Sennacherib:** “I will go to the Hebrew king of Judah, saying: Do not let your God on whom you rely mislead you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. ¹¹ Realize! You yourself have heard what the kings of

⁸⁶¹ Being clear concerning the reference in this chapter to the speaker or the one spoken about seems to be a bit difficult. In the text the one(s) referred to are noted in bold type at the beginning of each passage.

⁸⁶² 1. The king admits failure. Hezekiah approaches the Lord with feelings of shame and failure. 2. When Hezekiah prays he bases nothing on his own needs. 3. Hezekiah prays, being concerned only about the needs of the Lord’s people.

⁸⁶³ This was no doubt a proverb. LXX: “Today is a day of affliction, reproach, rebuke, and anger for the birth pangs have come to a woman about to deliver a child but she does not have the strength to give birth” TAN: “The babes have reached the birth-stool, but the strength to give birth is lacking.” TEV: “We are like a woman ready to give birth but too weak to do it.”

⁸⁶⁴ Cf. footnote 846.

⁸⁶⁵ Some scholars rearrange the verses for a better read: 7 – 8, 37, 38., 9/

⁸⁶⁶ These two towns were about ten miles apart. Cf. footnote 847.

⁸⁶⁷ Tirhakah was the 6th Pharaoh of the 25th or Ethiopian Dynasty. In 701 BCE he might have been the general in charge of the Egyptian forces in 701 BCE. He ruled as Pharaoh from 689 (690) – 664 BCE. Prior to that he ruled in Upper Egypt: (Ethiopia and Sudan).

⁸⁶⁸ LXX: “besiege.”

Assyria have done to all the lands, totally annihilating them! Will you be special? (*or, Can you escape?*)¹² Did the gods of the nations protect them from the former rulers of Assyria by saving them from destruction? What about Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden, who were in Telassar?¹³ Where are the kings of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharuaim, Hena or Ivvah?”

3. Hezekiah, Man of Prayer 37:14 – 20

¹⁴ **Hezekiah** received the letter from the messengers and having read it he went up the house of the Lord and unrolled the scroll before the Lord.⁸⁶⁹ ¹⁵ Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: ¹⁶ “O Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim⁸⁷⁰ you yourself are the God! You alone of all the kingdoms of the earth have created heaven and earth. ¹⁷ Be attentive, O Lord, and hear the blasphemous words of Sennacherib, which he sent to mock the living God! ¹⁸ O Lord, the king of Assyria has truly destroyed⁸⁷¹ all the nations and all the lands. ¹⁹ He has thrown gods into the fire, for they were non-gods and only the work of people’s hands, made of wood and stone. Because of this they were destroyed. ²⁰ Now, O Lord our God, save us from his hands so that the kingdoms of the earth may realize that you alone are the Lord.”

4. Isaiah’s Message: the Man of the Word of God 37:21 – 35

²¹ Then **Isaiah** the son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah, saying: “The Lord, the God of Israel, declares: Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib, king of Assyria,⁸⁷² ²² [this is the word that the Lord has spoken against Sennacherib: ⁸⁷³ {Fair virgin, daughter of Zion, you are scorned by those who mock and depress you, O daughter of Jerusalem shake your head in scorn.

²³ {“[O Sennacherib] when have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and rolled your eyes haughtily? Was it against the Holy One of Israel?⁸⁷⁴ ²⁴ Through your servants you have reproached, insulted and defied the Lord and you have said, ‘With my countless chariots I have gone up the heights of the mountains to the remote parts of Lebanon; ⁸⁷⁵ I felled the loftiest cedars and the rare cypresses. I have reached the highest peaks and the densest forests. ²⁵ I have dug wells and drunk their water, and my soldiers have tramped the Nile River dry.”

²⁶ **The Lord:** {“Have you not heard [*and understood*] that it was I who planned this long ago? I planned it in⁸⁷⁶ the ancient past what is being fulfilled, that you should crush

⁸⁶⁹ The letter was not mentioned previously but no doubt had been read aloud. Hezekiah unrolled the letter in the temple.

⁸⁷⁰ In the holiest place of the temple there was a ‘mercy seat’ shaped in the form of Cherubim which was the symbolic seat of the presence of God. These Cherubim were representations of angels.

⁸⁷¹ Literally: “laid waste.” The Hebrew word is used concerning nations only here and in Isaiah 60:12.

⁸⁷² Some scholars rearrange the verses for a better read, using the order: 25, 37, 23, 22.

⁸⁷³ Some scholars feel verses 22 – 32 are a later interpolation.

⁸⁷⁴ King Hezekiah’s prayer is: 1. To a prayer answering God 21 – 22; 2. The Holy Sovereign 23 – 25; 3. The executive Sovereign 26 – 29; 4. The faithful Sovereign 30 – 32; 5. The promising God 33 – 35.

⁸⁷⁵ These are words attributed to Sennacherib.

⁸⁷⁶ LXX: “συνεταξα, νυν δε.”

fortified cities into a pile of rubble. ²⁷ Their inhabitants were terribly confused, experiencing panic and horror. They were like grass on the field and like the tender grass (*or, weeds*) that grow in the cracks of house tops, for these burn when the hot east wind blows. ⁸⁷⁷

²⁸ {“I know every action of yours: rising, sitting, going and coming, even your raging against me. ²⁹ Because you have raged against me and your arrogance ⁸⁷⁸ has received my attention. I will curb you by putting my hook in your nose and a bit in your mouth, and I will control your movements causing you to return to the place from which you came.”} ⁸⁷⁹

E. A Sign For the Remnant 37:30 – 32 ⁸⁸⁰

³⁰ “This will be a sign for you: in this year and the second year you are to eat what grows voluntarily, and in the third year you are to sow and reap; plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. ³¹ The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again have its roots grow downward and will bear fruit upward ³² for out of Jerusalem a remnant will develop and spread beyond Mount Zion as a land of survivors. The Zeal of the Lord of Hosts will accomplish this!”

F. A Metrical Oracle on the Departure of Sennacherib 37:33 – 35 ⁸⁸¹

³³ The Lord declares concerning the king of Assyria: {“He will not come into this city or even shoot an arrow into the city, nor will he come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. ³⁴ He will not come into the city but will depart from the region by the same route which he used when he came, says the Lord. ³⁵ I the Lord will defend this city, saving it for my own sake, and for the sake of my servant David.”}

G. Destruction of the Assyrians and the Death of Sennacherib 37:36 – 38

³⁶ [*During the night*] the angel of the Lord went out and killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians and when the survivors woke in the morning they discovered a huge number of corpses among those who had encamped there. ³⁷ It was then that Sennacherib departed, going back to live in [*the capital*] Nineveh. ⁸⁸² ³⁸ As he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch, his god, Adram-melech

⁸⁷⁷ The Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa adds “by the east wind” which is omitted in the MT which has “tender young grass growing on a flat roof and scorched by the heat.” Isaiah is reminding the Assyrians how they treated their prisoners. Now they will experience the same treatment.

⁸⁷⁸ Literally: “complacency.” LXX: “καὶ ἡ πικρία σου.”

⁸⁷⁹ Some scholars feel this is possibly a reference to the treatment of Sennacherib’s assassins. Esarhaddon became the ruler, reigning from 681 – 669 BCE. Isaiah pictures the retreat by Sennacherib to be like a roaring, raging bull being pulled back against his will.

⁸⁸⁰ Some scholars feel these verses are out of place.

⁸⁸¹ Some scholars feel verse 31 would improve the read if inserted here.

⁸⁸² According to Herodotus who says he witnessed it on an earlier occasion when Sennacherib intended to invade Egypt, at Pelusium at the border of Egypt, the god Sethus of the Egyptians sent field mice into the camp of the Assyrians and they ate the bow strings and the thongs used to hold the shields, thus bringing fear to the Assyrians who promptly halted their attempted invasion of Egypt. In the situation here in 37:36 – 37 many scholars feel it was Bubonic Plague also known as Black Death. Cf. II Kings 19:35 – 37.

and Sharezer, his sons killed him with a sword and escaped to the land of Arrarat. Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.⁸⁸³

<CHAPTER 38>⁸⁸⁴

H. Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery 38:1 – 22

¹ In those days Hezekiah became seriously ill and was on the verge of death.⁸⁸⁵ Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz came to him, saying, "This is the word of the Lord: Set your house in order for you will die, you will not survive."⁸⁸⁶ ² Thereupon Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall and prayed to the Lord, ³ saying, "Please remember, O Lord, I plead with you for I have lived faithfully in your presence and have been completely devoted to you, having done what was good in your sight." Hezekiah shed many tears.⁸⁸⁷ ⁴ Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah: ⁵ "Go to Hezekiah and say: The Lord, the God of David your father, declares: I have heard your prayer and I have seen your tears. Be reassured! I will hereby add fifteen years to your life.⁸⁸⁸ ⁶ [Additionally] I will deliver you and this city from the hands of the king of Assyria and defend this city."⁸⁸⁹

⁷ "This is the sign the Lord is giving to you to reassure you that the Lord will do as has been promised: ⁸ I will make the shadow that is cast on the steps of Ahaz recede ten steps. Thus the sun will be turned back for the shadow on the dial will have declined."⁸⁹⁰

⁹ A canticle was written by King Hezekiah of Judah after his recovery from his illness.⁸⁹¹ ¹⁰ {"I said, In the noontide of my days I must depart; I am consigned to the gates of death (*or, Sheol*) for the rest of my days.⁸⁹² ¹¹ I said I will not see the Lord in the

⁸⁸³ The assassination took place in 681 BCE. Interestingly Sennacherib escaped the pestilence that killed many of his army but he could not escape his sons. One ancient authority says Sennacherib was killed because he chose Esarhaddon as his successor, since he was not the oldest of Sennacherib's children.

⁸⁸⁴ Some scholars place this chapter after 35:10. Cf.: II Kings 20:1 – 11.

⁸⁸⁵ Literally: "sick to the point of death." Hezekiah was uneasy about his early death because he had no son to be his heir to the throne. This seemed to be intolerable to Hezekiah.

⁸⁸⁶ NEB: "Give your last instructions to your household for you are a dying man and will not recover."

⁸⁸⁷ Literally: "great weeping."

⁸⁸⁸ The ground of answered prayer is not human faithfulness but divine faithfulness.

⁸⁸⁹ Some scholars place verses 21 – 22 following verse 6.

⁸⁹⁰ The text is uncertain. Archaeologists report that they have found a similar set of steps in Egypt which could be used to tell time. These steps were possibly made in this way deliberately – or – it was happenstance. LXX: "This will be a sign to you from the Lord, that he will do this. I will turn back the shadow of the degrees [*or, the dial*] by ten degrees on the house of your father. The sun has gone down. It will turn back the sun the ten degrees, so the sun went back ten degrees by which the shadow had gone down as it had declared." An additional sign is found in II Kings 20:6. The king would go into the Lord's house on the third day. Since the Hebrew people counted a portion of a day as an entire day we would call that 'the day after tomorrow.'

⁸⁹¹ The text of 9 – 20 is felt by some scholars to be controversial. Some scholars emend the text to have the form of a Hebrew Psalm style called a Mikdam. LXX: "The prayer of Hezekiah, king of Judah when he had been sick, and had recovered from his illness." Isaiah apparently had access to some of Hezekiah's papers. Cf.: II Chronicles 32:32.

⁸⁹² NIV: "In the prime of my life must I go through the gates, death will be robbed of the rest of my years."

land of the living. I will no longer see people as the inhabitants of this world.⁸⁹³ 12 My life span⁸⁹⁴ is plucked up and removed from me like a shepherd's tent, like a weaver who rolls up the web, cutting it from the thrum (*or, severing it from the web*). From day to night you bring me to my end.⁸⁹⁵ 13 I cry for help⁸⁹⁶ in the morning; like a lion he crushes my bones; from day to night there is no relief.⁸⁹⁷ 14 I am like an unhappy swallow, and twitter like a plaintive swift,⁸⁹⁸ or am as noisy as a crane. I moan like a dove. I look upward in my weariness, O Lord, I am oppressed. Be my safeguard! 15 How can I complain? What can I say to the Lord for he⁸⁹⁹ has spoken to me and he himself has done this. All my sleep has fled from me.⁹⁰⁰

15 {“O Lord, the days of my life with you give life to my spirit.⁹⁰¹ Cure me and give me life, make me live!⁹⁰² 17 Surely it was to my benefit that I suffered such anguish,⁹⁰³ but you held back⁹⁰⁴ my life from the pit of destruction,⁹⁰⁵ for you had forgiven all my sins.⁹⁰⁶ 18 Sheol can not thank you, death cannot praise you, those who go down to the abyss cannot hope for your faithfulness.⁹⁰⁷ 19 Truly the living thank you, as I do today. The parent teaches the children of your faithfulness. 20 [The Lord has become my savior,⁹⁰⁸ and we (*the living*) will sing your praise with stringed instruments.]⁹⁰⁹

21 [Now Isaiah had said, “Take a poultice of figs⁹¹⁰ and apply⁹¹¹ it on the ulcer (*or, boil*) that he may recover. 22 Hezekiah also had said, “What is a sign that I will go up to the house of the Lord?”]⁹¹²

⁸⁹³ MFT: “Me-thought I must depart when life was at its noon, and pass within death’s portals for my remaining years. Me-thought I was no more to see the Eternal, and never to belong as man again within this world.”

⁸⁹⁴ Literally: “encampment.”

⁸⁹⁵ Hebrew uncertain. LXX: “[*My life*] has failed from among my relatives. I have parted with the remainder of my life. It has gone, has departed from me like having one’s pitched tent taken down again. My breath was with me as a weaver’s web which she who weaves draws near and cuts the thread.”

⁸⁹⁶ So: versions. The Hebrew is obscure.

⁸⁹⁷ The Hebrew is unclear. TAN: “Only from daybreak to nightfall was I kept whole.”

⁸⁹⁸ The exact species is uncertain. LXX: “Like a swallow I will cry, like a dove I will moan.”

⁸⁹⁹ The Hebrew is uncertain. The Targums and 1QIsa have: “And what shall I say for he...” TAN: “What can I say? He has spoken to me and I will walk humbly all my years because of the bitterness of my soul.” CB: “But what can I speak or say to him, since he has done it? I must go softly all my years because of the bitterness of my heart.”

⁹⁰⁰ Literally: “I will watch slowly all my years.” JB: “I will give glory to you all the years of my life for my sufferings.”

⁹⁰¹ Hebrew uncertain. Literally: “on account of them I live.”

⁹⁰² Literally: “you will restore.” TAN: “my breath is revived.”

⁹⁰³ The writer believes suffering is also a part of the same experience as is God’s saving power.

⁹⁰⁴ LXX: “την ελεημοσυνην.” Hebrew: “bound.”

⁹⁰⁵ JB: “nothingness.”

⁹⁰⁶ Literally: “cast all my sins behind your back.”

⁹⁰⁷ MFT: “For death—land cannot thank thee, death cannot sing thy praise, and those who pass down to the pit have no hope of thy love.”

⁹⁰⁸ Literally: “was for saving.”

⁹⁰⁹ Literally: “my stringed instrument.” LXX: “ψαλμοις ημων.” LXX: “I will not cease blessing you with the Psaltery all the days of my life before the house of God.” Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁹¹⁰ Literally: “take a cake of figs.”

j. The Embassy from Merodach-Baladan 39:1 – 8

¹ At that time Merodach-Baladan ⁹¹⁴ the son of Baladan, king of Babylon sent envoys with letters and presents ⁹¹⁵ to Hezekiah, for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick and had recovered. ⁹¹⁶ ² Hezekiah welcomed them ⁹¹⁷ and showed them his treasure house: the silver, gold, spices, fragrant oils, all of his military equipment, --- everything that was to be found in his storehouses. ⁹¹⁸ There was nothing in his treasure houses or his entire realm that King Hezekiah had not shown. ⁹¹⁹ ³ Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and demanded of him: “What did these men say? Why did they come to you?” Hezekiah replied, “They have come to me from a distant country, from Babylon. ⁴ Isaiah said, “What have they seen in your house?” Hezekiah answered, “They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them.”

⁵ Then Isaiah spoke to Hezekiah, saying: “Hear the word of the Lord of hosts! ⁶ Be assured that the days are coming, when all that is in your house and all that which your ancestors have stored up to this day will be will be carried to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the Lord. ⁷ Some of your own sons, who are born to you, ⁹²⁰ will be taken into exile and they will be eunuchs ⁹²¹ ⁸ Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah: “The word of the Lord which you have spoken is good.” ⁹²² Hezekiah, thinking to him-self said: ‘Then there will be peace and security in my lifetime.’

⁹¹¹ Literally: “rub it on.” Whether figs have healing properties is unknown. No healing occurs apart from the Lord. The figs became the ‘acted out oracle.’

⁹¹² Some people feel this is a later interpolation.

⁹¹³ It is virtually impossible to set an exact date for this chapter of Isaiah. Some scholars place chapter 39 after 38:20 and follow it with 36:1.

⁹¹⁴ Merodach-Baladin also goes by the name Marduke-abal-iddina. The Hebrew people deliberately changed the vowels to avoid pronouncing it. He revolted against the Assyrians in 721, 710 and 704.

⁹¹⁵ The MT omits ‘envoys.’

⁹¹⁶ LXX: “καὶ προσβείς.” It is very possible that Merodach-Baladin’s real reason for the contact was to establish a military link since the Assyrians had not captured Jerusalem.

⁹¹⁷ This can be re-vocalized using different vowels and it will read: “listened to them.” Literally in the MT: “rejoiced over them.”

⁹¹⁸ King Hezekiah’s vanity was being flattered by the flattering terms of Merodach=Baladin’s letter and the manner of the people in the embassy. Previously Hezekiah had paid tribute to Sennacherib (II Kings 18:14 – 16). The treasury was not as full as it might have been. LXX: “spices, silver, gold, myrrh, incense, and ointment.”

⁹¹⁹ Merodach-Baladan must have wanted Hezekiah to join him in rebellion. Hezekiah fell for it. Hezekiah forgot the promise of God and looked to this promising man. Forgetfulness of God is a prime enemy of faith.

⁹²⁰ LXX: “who will be born to you.”

⁹²¹ CEV: “they will be disgraced and made to serve in the king’s palace.” NEB: “Some of your sons who shall issue from you, whom you shall beget, shall be taken away and they shall become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.” OTL Isa.: “Some of your descendants, our own flesh and blood, born to you will be taken away, to serve as eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

⁹²² “Good” in this instance gives the thought of being “acceptable.” JB: “reassuring.”

Chapter 39:8 marks the end of section one of Isaiah as scholars think of it in the 21st Century. This was not the case more than a century ago. Since about 1890 scholars felt that chapters 40 – 66 were written by other prophets and considered to be written by Second Isaiah, or perhaps also Third Isaiah depending on their view of the later chapters of Isaiah and their subject and linguistic differences.

In about 1990 a new approach was suggested by some scholars. An Isaianic School of Prophets produced the entire work over a longer time period under the leadership and teachings of the Prophet Isaiah. With the prophet's guidance there was a wider approach to the prophetic message, involving a much greater view of God and the work and concern of God on behalf of his people. This approach simplifies the understanding of the subject and linguistic differences.

The oldest manuscript, 1QIsa has chapter 40 beginning two lines from the bottom of the page with no suggestion of a break or a new beginning. The last word in Hebrew of chapter 39 is “doom” and the first word of chapter 40 is “comfort.” Chapter and verse divisions came centuries later as an innovation by printers.

<CHAPTER 40>

J. The Imminent Coming of God 40:1 – 48:22

1. The Coming of the Lord 40:1 – 11 ⁹²³

a. Proem 40:1 - 2

¹ Comfort, O Comfort ⁹²⁴ my people, says your God. ⁹²⁵ ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem. ⁹²⁶ Declare to her that her time of service ⁹²⁷ (*or, warfare*) is ended, her sins are now forgiven (*or, and they have paid for what they did*), and she has received from the Lord double for all her sins. ⁹²⁸ ³ Listen for someone proclaims: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord! ⁹²⁹ Make straight the highway in the desert for our God! ⁴ Every valley will be raised and every mountain will be leveled; and the rugged ground

⁹²³ The divisions within the next chapters are based on the poetic strophes found in the Hebrew text.

⁹²⁴ The word form is a repeated imperative for emphasis

⁹²⁵ The LXX is translated in such a way the speaker is “the priest.” The priests are mentioned in v. 2 of the LXX as the speakers. MFT: “console my people.”

⁹²⁶ Literally: “to the heart of Jerusalem.”

⁹²⁷ LXX: “humiliation.” OTL Isaiah: “her term of service is over.” NIV: “hard service.” NRSV: “she has served her term.” NEB: “that she has fulfilled her term of bondage.” TEV: “I have punished them in full for all their sins.”

⁹²⁸ Amazingly the God of judgment becomes the God of pardon.

⁹²⁹ This can be translated in two ways: 1. “A voice in the wilderness cries: ‘Prepare.’” or 2. “A voice cries, ‘In the wilderness prepare.’”

will become a level plain! ⁵ [The glory ⁹³⁰ of the Lord will be manifest and all of humanity together will see it, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.] ⁹³¹

3. *The Word of Our God 40:6 – 8*

⁶ A voice says: “Cry!” (*or, Listen to one crying!*) I said, ⁹³² “What should I ask (*or, proclaim*).?” “All people are transitory. ⁹³³ Their constancy is like a flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers and the flower fades when the wind (*or, breath*) of the Lord blows over them. [Surely the people are grass.] ⁹³⁴ ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever (*or, will always be fulfilled.*) ⁹³⁵

4. *Behold Your God 40:9 -10*

⁹ Ascend to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings, (*or, herald of good tidings to Zion*). Call out strongly and loudly, O Jerusalem, herald good tidings (*or, herald of good tidings to Jerusalem*)! Shout! Do not be afraid! Tell the cities of Judah “Behold your God!” ¹⁰ Be assured the Lord God comes with might and his strength will triumph! ⁹³⁶ Note that his reward accompanies him and he will repay. ⁹³⁷

5. *The Conqueror as the Shepherd 40:11*

¹¹ Like a shepherd he will feed his flock. He will gather the lambs in his arms, carrying them against his bosom, and gently lead the ewes that are pregnant. ⁹³⁸

B. *Creation of the Ends of the Earth 40:12 – 31*

1/ Who Created the Universe? 40:12

¹² Who can measure the waters ⁹³⁹ of the earth in the hollow of his hand? Who can measure the skies with a span? ⁹⁴⁰ Who can measure the dust of the earth in a two gallon pail? ⁹⁴¹ Who can weigh the mountains using a scale? Who can measure the hills using a pharmacist’s balance scale?

⁹³⁰ LXX: “δοξα.”

⁹³¹ Some scholars feel verse 5 is a later interpolation. Some scholars place verses 9 – 11 after verse 5.

⁹³² So: MT & Targums. LXX and 1QIsa: “and I asked.”

⁹³³ Literally: “are grass.” LXX: “and the glory of humanity is in the flowers of grass.” NEB: “they last no longer than the flowers of the field.”

⁹³⁴ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁹³⁵ Some scholars place verses 12 ff. after verse 8.

⁹³⁶ Literally: “his arm rules for him.”

⁹³⁷ An alternate translation could be: “Go upon a mountain and proclaim the good news to Jerusalem: call out with a loud voice and announce the good news to Zion.” Or: “Go up on a high mountain and proclaim the good news. Call out with a loud voice to Zion. Announce the good news.” MFT: “he is bringing what he has won, bringing what he has gained.”

⁹³⁸ Cf.: ANET p. 445 b.

⁹³⁹ 1QIsa: “waters of the sea.”

⁹⁴⁰ The omnipresence of God must be admitted by any rational creature.

⁹⁴¹ The Hebrew word is a hapax legomenon. The word “**XyilX**” means “one third.” This would be one third of a measure and the common measure used in a Hebrew household was the “ephah.” One third of an ephah would be a bit less than two gallons.

2. Who was God's Helper at Creation? 40:13 – 14

¹³ Who has advised the spirit of the Lord or who can tell God his own plan? ¹⁴ Did God consult you that you might teach him (*or, consult you for enlightenment*)? Who taught him how to live by a just path? Who guided him in knowledge ⁹⁴² and who showed him the path of understanding?

3. The Nations are as Nothing Before Him 40:15 - 17

¹⁵ The nations assuredly are like a drop in a bucket and are considered as nothing more than dust on a scale. He is able to pick up the islands as one would pick up fine dust. ⁹⁴³ ¹⁶ Lebanon would have an insufficient amount of fuel, nor would there be enough animals to make a suitable sacrifice to God! ¹⁷ All the nations are as nothing before God. To him as they are considered to be empty and inane. ⁹⁴⁴

4. Idols do not move 40:18 – 20

¹⁸ To whom will you compare God, who what likeness compares with him? ¹⁹ The idol: The wood worker shapes it and the goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts silver chains for it (*or, makes a silver base*). ⁹⁴⁵ ²⁰ The impoverished person who is not even able to afford to make an offering will select a piece of mulberry ⁹⁴⁶ wood which does not rot, finds someone who is sufficiently skilled to carve an image that hopefully will not topple. ⁹⁴⁷

5. Lord of Nature and History 40:21 – 24

²¹ Haven't you known? Haven't you heard? Hasn't it been told you from the beginning: Haven't you understood from the foundation of the earth? ⁹⁴⁸ ²² It is he who sits above the vault over the earth (*i.e. heaven*) who sees the earth's inhabitants like locusts (*or, grasshoppers*). He stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent in which to live. ²³ He abases potentates and makes the rulers of the earth to be as nothing. ²⁴ They are hardly planted or sown, their stems have hardly taken root in the earth when he blows on them and they wither and the tempest carried them away like straw.

6. The Lord is Incomparable 40:25 – 27

²⁵ To whom will you compare me that I should be like him? says the Holy One. ²⁶ Raise your eyes high and see: who created the stars? He leads them out [*at night*] like an army. He knows them all by name. By his greatness and might through his strong power they all shine and not one of them fails to appear. ²⁷ Why do you complain, O Jacob, and speak ⁹⁴⁹ O Israel, saying: 'The Lord does it. Why does the justice due me escape the notice of my God?'

⁹⁴² This phrase is omitted in the LXX.

⁹⁴³ LXX: "they will be counted as spittle." TAN: "the very coastline he lifts up like motes."

⁹⁴⁴ CB: "all the nations are as nothing before him, blank ciphers he counts them."

⁹⁴⁵ Some scholars insert 41:6 – 7 at this point in the text. The Hebrew text of a part of verse 19 and verse 20 is uncertain.

⁹⁴⁶ JB: "palm."

⁹⁴⁷ An alternate reading might be: "He who carves an idol finds a tree that is not rotten..."

⁹⁴⁸ The Hebrew is uncertain.

⁹⁴⁹ LXX: "και τε ελαλησας."

7. *The Everlasting God 40:28 – 31*

²⁸ Have you not ⁹⁵⁰ known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the Everlasting God. God as the Creator of the entire earth does not grow weary, he is unchangeable and unfathomable. ²⁹ He gives power to the weary and fresh vigor to those who have no more strength. ⁹⁵¹ ³⁰ Even youths will become faint and weary, and young men will drop in exhaustion; ³¹ but those who trust in the Lord will receive strength like that of the eagle that receives new plumage, for they will be able to renew their like eagles. They will run and not be weary, they will walk and not become faint. ⁹⁵²

<CHAPTER 41>

C. *The Trial of the Nations 41:1 – 42:4*

1. *The Summons to Israel 51:1*

¹ Listen silently, O distant lands while I speak! Nations will renew their strength. ⁹⁵³ Let them come forward to state their case! Let us come together for a just decision (*or, for judgment*). ⁹⁵⁴

2. *Appeal to History 41:2 – 4*

² Who aroused someone from the east whom victory meets at every step? ⁹⁵⁵ He takes over ⁹⁵⁶ nations before him. He tramples on royalty, ⁹⁵⁷ scattering them like dust with his sword, and making their bows as helpful as straw. ⁹⁵⁸ ³ He pursues them and he himself is unscathed ⁹⁵⁹ by moving so rapidly that it seems the armies' feet hardly touch the ground. ⁴ Who has performed and accomplished this? Was it the one who created generations in the beginning? ⁹⁶⁰ I am the Lord who was the first. ⁹⁶¹ I am he!

3. *The Nations Resort to Idols 41:5 – 7* ⁹⁶²

⁵ The distant nations have cowered in fear; ⁹⁶³ the ends of the earth tremble! Daily they have drawn near and come. ⁹⁶⁴ ⁶ Everyone helps his neighbor, saying, 'Take

⁹⁵⁰ LXX: "καὶ νῦν."

⁹⁵¹ Cf.: ANET p. 388 a

⁹⁵² There was a popular belief that eagles regain their youth when they molt. Cf. Psalm 103:5

⁹⁵³ Some scholars feel this is dittography from 40:31. The Hebrew is uncertain. It could be translated: "Await my argument" or "Wait before me." The entire summons for a trial is very emphatic and judicial.

⁹⁵⁴ NEB: "Let the peoples come to meet. We will meet at the place of judgment." God is the judge who summons the word before him. He is also one of the litigants who will argue his cause.

⁹⁵⁵ Some scholars, mainly in the past, thought the reference was to Assyria. More recently some scholars tend to feel the reference is to Babylon / Chaldea. TEV: "Who was it that brought the conqueror from the east and made him triumphant wherever he goes? (i.e. Cyrus the emperor of Persia.)"

⁹⁵⁶ LXX: "ἐκατησει."

⁹⁵⁷ IQIsa "who lays prostrate."

⁹⁵⁸ The Hebrew is unclear. Another translation would be: "his bow scatters them like straw."

⁹⁵⁹ NASB: "passing in safety." Cf.: ANET p. 428d. The Hebrew is unclear. Possibly the wording is Old Aramaic which would read "shackles."

⁹⁶⁰ An emendation would read: "Proclaiming from the beginning of things to come."

⁹⁶¹ Literally: "I the Lord, the first and with the last I am he." LXX: "I am (*omitting, the Lord*) I am he."

MFT: "I who am the first and the last the same."

⁹⁶² Some scholars insert 41:5 -7 following 40:6.

⁹⁶³ IQIsa reads: "and together tremble together."

courage.’ ⁷ [*In making an idol*] the craftsman in wood encourages the goldsmith, and he who flattens with a hammer encourages the one who strikes the anvil, ⁹⁶⁵ saying “It is good!” They attach it with nails so it will not topple. ⁹⁶⁶

4. *Israel, My Servant 41:8 – 10*

⁸ Israel, you who are my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, a descendant of Abraham, my friend, ⁹⁶⁷ ⁹ You whom I took from afar, calling from the earth’s farthest corner, I said to you, ‘You are my servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you. ¹⁰ Do not be frightened for I am with you. Do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and I will support you with my victorious power.’ ⁹⁶⁸

5. *Judgment of the Nations 41:11 – 13*

¹¹ Do not fear for all who rage against you will be put to shame and confounded; those who fought against you will be nothing and will perish. ⁹⁶⁹ ¹² Even though you look for those enemies who contend with you, you will not find them. Those who war against you will be destroyed and be as nonexistent. ¹³ I the Lord your God am holding your right hand, it is I who says to you ‘Do not be afraid. I will help you.’

6. *Israel a Threshing Sledge 41:14 – 15*

¹⁴ Do not be afraid, you worm ⁹⁷⁰ Jacob, you men of Israel: I will help you, says the Lord your redeemer (*or, ransom*): the Holy One of Israel. ¹⁵ Be assured. I will make of you a threshing sledge ⁹⁷¹ having new sharp spikes. You will thresh the mountains with this, and you will make the hills to be like chaff; ⁹⁷² ¹⁶ you will winnow them and the wind will carry them away and the whirlwind will scatter them. However, you will rejoice in the Lord and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

7. *Lyrical Interlude 41:17 – 20*

¹⁷ When the poor (*or, downtrodden*) seek water and there is none; and their tongues are parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. ⁹⁷³ ¹⁸ I will open rivers on the bare heights and flowing springs ⁹⁷⁴ in the midst of

⁹⁶⁴ Verses 5 – 7 seem to be less suitable for a trial than for use as a taunt (Spottlied). Some scholars feel this verse is a gloss.

⁹⁶⁵ “Club” might be a more accurate translation of **m[p** which might be an Ugaritic loan word with the idea of the use with an anvil.

⁹⁶⁶ NASB: “he who smooths [*metal*] with a hammer encourages him who beats the anvil.”

⁹⁶⁷ LXX: “α αλαπητου μοι.” Cf.: ANET: p. 143.

⁹⁶⁸ Literally: “right hand.” The Lord’s presence and commitment are the antidote to fear.

⁹⁶⁹ CEV: “will vanish into thin air.”

⁹⁷⁰ “Worm” is a term of endearment. The word is thought to be from Akkadian where it means “louse.” Apparently the prophet was signifying human incapacity in the face of daunting obstructions. The word “men” in the next phrase might originally have been “maggot.” That Hebrew word would suit the meter of the poetry and would again be a term of endearment.

⁹⁷¹ A heavy board or drag studded underneath with sharp stones or iron points.

⁹⁷² LXX: “Behold I have made you as new saw shaped threshing wheels of a wagon; and you will thresh the mountains and beat the hills into powder, making them to be like chaff.” Verses 14 – 16 are an example of an Oracle of Salvation, (*Heilsorakel*). CEV footnote: “mountains and hills stand for the power and pride of Israel’s enemies.”

⁹⁷³ This is a reference to the homeward march through the desert.

⁹⁷⁴ The Hebrew word is an Assyrian loan word meaning “running water.”

the valleys. I will turn the wilderness into a pool of water⁹⁷⁵ and change the arid land into a wet land. ¹⁹ I will plant cedar, acacia, myrtle, and olive⁹⁷⁶ I will set out cypress, plane, and larch⁹⁷⁷ in groves. ²⁰ This will take place so that people may see, know and comprehend that the hand of the Lord has done this, he who is the Holy One of Israel for he has created it.⁹⁷⁸

8. *Renewed Appeal to History 41:21 - 24*

²¹ Approach and present your case, says the Lord. Bring strong reasons⁹⁷⁹ as proof, says the king of Jacob. Let them approach⁹⁸⁰ and come near,⁹⁸¹ telling what is to happen. Tell us of the past events carried out by your idols.⁹⁸² Tell us what these were that we may consider them and learn their outcome. Also, tell us the things that are to come. ²³ Prove what is to be in the future that we may know that you are god. Do anything that is good or what is bad! It is in that way that we will become awed and terrified. ²⁴ Be attentive! You are less than nothing; your work is worthless; whatever you choose to do is an abomination.⁹⁸³

9. *Renewed Judgment in the Nations 41:25 – 29*

²⁵ I roused one from the north, and he has come from the rising of the sun, and he will summon (*or, call out*) my name⁹⁸⁴ He will trample⁹⁸⁵ on rulers as if they were mud, trampling the way the potter tramples the clay.⁹⁸⁶ ²⁶ Who announced it from the beginning, that we might know, and beforehand, that we might say, ‘Right’? There is no one to declare it, no one proclaimed it. No one has heard any word from you. ²⁷ I was the first to tell it to Zion,⁹⁸⁷ and I will send a herald to Jerusalem as a messenger of good tidings.⁹⁸⁸ ²⁸ When I looked there was no one among them to give any counsel, no one to give me an kind of response. ²⁹ Be assured, they are all delusions! Their deeds amount to nothing; their molten images are empty wind.⁹⁸⁹

⁹⁷⁵ LXX: “εις ελη.”

⁹⁷⁶ TAN: “oleasters.” (Wild olive.)

⁹⁷⁷ The species are not clear in Hebrew. Other possibilities are: box trees, elm, and pine to name a few.

⁹⁷⁸ This will cause the people of Israel to finally understand the true dimension of the redemptive action of God, the Holy One of Israel, on their behalf.

⁹⁷⁹ Some scholars emend the word to read “your idols.”

⁹⁸⁰ LXX: “εγγισατωσαν.”

⁹⁸¹ The Hebrew word can also mean “foretell.” To worship man-made gods is truly a spiritual plight.

⁹⁸² Literally: “bring near your idols and let them tell us.” A real God will reveal himself in word and deed.

⁹⁸³ The word translated as “worthless” is omitted in the Dead Sea Scroll. The Hebrew word in the MT is uncertain. The translation is based on the BHS. Some scholars feel the last line is a gloss. Others emend the line to say: “He who chooses you goes astray.” Ginsberg translates this as: “Behold you are nothing, and your word is naught, chaos and wind are your image.”

⁹⁸⁴ So: Versions and Dead Sea Scroll. MT: “and he will call on my name.” “There are two possible translations: “Summon him in my name” or “He will summon (*or, call on*) my name.”

⁹⁸⁵ So: Versions. Hebrew: “come.”

⁹⁸⁶ NEB: “he marches over viceroys as if they were mud, like a potter treading his clay.” Potters often trampled their moist clay to make it more workable.

⁹⁸⁷ So: Versions. Hebrew obscure. Literally: “First to Zion. Behold, behold this.” LXX: “I will give to Zion a beginning and I will comfort Jerusalem in the road.”

⁹⁸⁸ The text of v. 27 is difficult and presumed to possibly be corrupt.

⁹⁸⁹ NIV: “wind and confusion.”

[LXX verses 1 – 7]

A different recension appears to have been used in the preparation of LXX 51:1 - 7

[¹ Hold fast to me, you islands, for the princes will renew their strength. Let them draw near and communicate with one another. They let them declare their decision. ² Who raised up righteousness from east, and who called it to its feet, so that it should go? Who appointed it as an adversary to the Gentiles, and a destruction of kings, resulting in burying their swords in the earth and throw away their bows as one would throw sticks. ³ He will pursue them, for the way of his feet will proceed in peace. ⁴ Who has accomplished all these things? Who called this into being? The same one who called it generations ago: I God, the first and I am he in the future, I AM.

⁵ The nations witnessed this and became fearful. The ends of the earth drew near and called together ⁶ all who are judgmental ⁹⁹⁰ concerning their neighbor and joined their brother in such attitudes. One will say: ⁷ The craftsman has become strong. So also the coppersmith and the one who forges and strikes with the hammer. Some times he will say, ‘The piece is soldered well.’ They have fastened them with nails, they will mend them so that they can not be moved.]

<CHAPTER 42>

10. The Mission of the Servant 42:1 – 4 ⁹⁹¹

¹ Behold, my servant ⁹⁹² whom I uphold, ⁹⁹³ my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have placed my spirit upon him. ⁹⁹⁴ He will establish justice within the nations. ⁹⁹⁵ ² He will not raise his voice, or make it heard in the street. ⁹⁹⁶ ³ He will not even break a bruised (*or, bent*) reed or snuff out a dimly burning flax wick. ⁹⁹⁷ He will faithfully bring justice (*or, the true way*). ⁴ He will not fail (*or, burn dimly*) or be discouraged (*or, be bruised*) ⁹⁹⁸ for he has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands await his teaching. ⁹⁹⁹

⁹⁹⁰ LXX literally: “transgress by wine against.”

⁹⁹¹ In Hebrew this strophe can be considered to be a prime example of Hebrew poetry. There are three other “servant” passages: 49:1 – 7; 50:1 – 14; 52:13 – 53:12.

⁹⁹² LXX: “Jacob I my servant. I will help him. Israel is my chosen one, my soul has accepted him.”

⁹⁹³ Literally: “grip fast.” CEV: “strengthen.”

⁹⁹⁴ JB: “endowed him with my spirit.”

⁹⁹⁵ TAN: “He will teach the true way to the nations.” NEB: “He will make justice shine on the nations.”

MFT: “true religion:” is MFT’s translation of the Hebrew word for “justice.”

⁹⁹⁶ The servant works silently and unobtrusively.

⁹⁹⁷ The servant is competent to deal with both caring and suffering.

⁹⁹⁸ Literally: “flicker” or “bend.”

⁹⁹⁹ The servant comes directly into the human situation. CEV: “He won’t quit or give up until he brings justice everywhere on earth, and people in foreign nations long for his teaching.” NEB: “He will make justice shine on every race, never failing, never breaking down. He will plant justice on earth, while coasts and islands wait for his teaching.” The final issue of history lies with the one whom God has chosen for this purpose.

*D. The New Event of the Divine Intervention 42:5 – 17*¹⁰⁰⁰

1. Oracular Introduction 12:5

⁵ He created the heavens and stretched out the heavens, spreading it out over the earth along with all that it brings forth. He gives breath to the people on the earth and life to those who walk on it.

2. Light to the Nations 42:6 – 9

⁶ “I am the Lord! I have called you in righteousness.¹⁰⁰¹ I have taken you by your hand and kept you, I have given you the covenant (*or, light*) of the people,¹⁰⁰² a light for the nations. ⁷ This covenant is: to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out the prisoners from dungeons and prisons where they are sitting in darkness. ⁸ I am the Lord! That is my name!¹⁰⁰³ I do not give my glory to any one else, nor do I give my praise [*that it might be shared with*] any man made idols. ⁹ Be assured that historical events have taken place¹⁰⁰⁴ but now is a time for new things. Therefore I now decree: before they occur I will inform you that you might be assured.

3. New Song of Redemption 42:10 – 13

¹⁰ “Sing to the Lord a new song, Sing his praise to the ends of the earth. You who go down to the sea, hearing it roar, sailing the waters, go to the distant coastlands and to their inhabitants. ¹¹ Let the desert and its cities raise their voices in song. Let Kedar’s inhabitants¹⁰⁰⁵ and let the inhabitants of Sela¹⁰⁰⁶ shout from the top of the mountains. ¹² Let them give glory to the Lord and declare his praise to the coastlines.¹⁰⁰⁷ ¹³ The Lord goes forth like a mighty warrior. Like a fighter, he whips up his rage; he cries out and shouts loudly, he shows himself and his might against his foes.¹⁰⁰⁸

*4. Intervention of the Lord 41:14 – 17*¹⁰⁰⁹

¹⁴ I have been silent for a long time. I have kept quiet. I have held myself back. Now I will cry out as loudly as a woman in labor. I will gasp and pant! ¹⁵ I will cause desolation on the mountains and hills, causing all the greenery to wither. I will turn the rivers into stagnant pools,¹⁰¹⁰ and dry up the marshes. ¹⁶ I will lead my blind people along a way they do not know: in paths that they have never walked. I will guide them through unfamiliar paths and will turn their darkness into light, and make the rough places level ground. These are the things I will do and I will never forsake them. ¹⁷ They will be drawn back and those who trusted in man made images will be put to utter shame

¹⁰⁰⁰ Each of the servant passages (*or, strophes*) has a tail-piece. In this instance: vss: 5 – 9. This tail-piece is; 1. Confirmation is the universal task of the servant. 2. Pledge the Lord’s aid to this servant and declare the servant’s success.

¹⁰⁰¹ MFT: “set purpose.”

¹⁰⁰² The Hebrew is uncertain. Some translators feel the root word is not Hebrew but Akkadian and the meaning of the root word is “to shine.” “The splendor of the people.”

¹⁰⁰³ God is not incognito.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Literally: “the former things they have come.” LXX: “ancient things.”

¹⁰⁰⁵ Kedar was located in the northern Syrian desert.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Sela was located in Moab (now Jordan) and is thought to be “Petra.”

¹⁰⁰⁷ LXX: “islands.”

¹⁰⁰⁸ MFT: “The Eternal sallies out like a hero, stirring his fury like a man of war. He lists aloud his battle cry, he proves his powers on his foes.” CEV: “The Lord is marching out like an angry soldier, shouting with his might while attacking his enemies.”

¹⁰⁰⁹ It is no secret that God has enemies and that a day of defeat for these enemies will come.

¹⁰¹⁰ Many translate the Hebrew word as “islands” though “stagnant pools” seems to cover the thought more clearly.

for having trusted in such images and for having said to these images “You are our gods!”¹⁰¹¹

E. The Blind and Deaf Servant Revealed 42:18 – 43:4

1. Proem or Appeal 42:18

¹⁸ Listen, you who are deaf; and look, you who are blind, that you may see!¹⁰¹²

2. The Blind Servant 42:19 – 21

¹⁹ [*Is anyone more blind*] [than my servant, and more deaf than my messenger whom I sent? Who is as blind as my devoted one, or as blind as the servant of the Lord?]
¹⁰¹³ ²⁰ He has seen (*or, he lets you see*) many things, but you have not paid attention to them; his ears are open, but he does not hear.¹⁰¹⁴ ²¹ [The Lord was pleased, for his righteousness sake, to magnify his name and make it glorious.]¹⁰¹⁵

3. A People Plundered and Preyed Upon 42:22

²² Yet now there is a people who have been robbed and plundered. They are all trapped in holes and hidden in prisons.¹⁰¹⁶ They have been preyed upon with no one to rescue them. They have been a source of spoils with no one to say “Give it back!”

4. Israel Sent into Exile 42:23 – 24

²³ Who among you will listen to this and pay attention: listening for the time to come: ²⁴ Who¹⁰¹⁷ gave Jacob to the plunderers and who gave Israel as spoil (*or, to the looters*)? Wasn’t it the Lord whom they sinned against and whose ways they would not walk and whose law they would not obey?

5. The Fire of Judgment 42:25

²⁵ So he unleashed on them the heat of his anger and the might of warfare; setting a fire around them but they did not understand; it burned them but they did not recognize God’s intention.

<CHAPTER 43>¹⁰¹⁸

6. Grace Beyond Justice 43:1 – 3b

¹ Now then: the Lord your creator, O Jacob, he who fashioned you, O Israel declares “Do not be fearful for I will redeem you. I have called¹⁰¹⁹ you by name. ² When you¹⁰²⁰ pass through¹⁰²¹ the water I will be with you, and through the river you will not be swept away. When you walk through fire you will not be scorched and the flames will not consume you. ³ I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your savior.”

¹⁰¹¹ Some scholars insert 42:8 here.

¹⁰¹² The people are being rebuked because of their unbelief. The people are in a double plight. 1. Captivity because of sin. 2. Abandonment of the way of faith by rejecting God’s promises and turning to idols. A double cure is promised: 1 Comfort from God. 2. Iniquity will be pardoned. The prophet thinks of this as “planned development.”

¹⁰¹³ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. The Hebrew is uncertain.

¹⁰¹⁴ Hebrew uncertain.

¹⁰¹⁵ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

¹⁰¹⁶ LXX: “a snare in the secret chambers.” This is surely a reference to the people who live in exile.

¹⁰¹⁷ LXX: “For what did he give Jacob?”

¹⁰¹⁸ This is part 2 of the prophesy that began with 41:1. Part 1 is predominantly judgment, while part 2 is predominantly redemption. A new confidence is presented to the people of Israel by the prophet, based on God’s continual caring in the past. This passage becomes a classic promise of salvation.

¹⁰¹⁹ TAN: “singled you out by name.”

¹⁰²⁰ JB: “should you” here and again later in this verse.

¹⁰²¹ Omitted in the LXX and Syriac.

7. *The Lord's Passion for Israel 43:3c – 5a*

“I gave up ¹⁰²² Ethiopia and Seba ¹⁰²³ as a ransom in exchange for you, ¹⁰²⁴ 4 because you are precious and honored in my eyes and I love you. I have given men ¹⁰²⁵ and nations in exchange for you: people in exchange for your life. 5 Do not be afraid.”

8. *Return of the Diaspora 43:5b – 7*

“I will bring your descendants from the east and from the west. They will be gathered! 6 I will say to the north: ‘Give up,’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold back.’ And I will bring back my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth. 7 I will bring back all who are called by my name, called for my glory, ¹⁰²⁶ whom I found and made.”

F. *The Lord and Israel 43:8 – 13* ¹⁰²⁷

1. *Proem or Summons 43:8*

8 “Bring forward those people who are blind, yet have eyes, and those who are deaf, yet have ears.” ¹⁰²⁸

1. *The Historical Issue 43:9*

9 “Let all the nations assemble and let the people witness, making a common declaration of belief. Let them declare their beliefs and events of the future, thereby showing that they deserve vindication and let them hear and say, ‘It is true!’” ¹⁰²⁹

3. *The Lord's Witness and Servant 43:10*

¹⁰ “You are my witnesses” says the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you might know and believe in me, thus receiving the understanding that I am he. No god was formed before me and no god will be formed after me!”

4. *I Alone am God and You are My Witnesses 43:11 – 14*

¹¹ “I, I alone am the Lord and there is no other savior beside me. ¹³ It is I who declared and saved and proclaimed when there was no alien god among us and you are my witnesses, says the Lord. ¹³ “I am the Lord, and from the beginning I am he. There is no one who can deliver from my hand; I work and who can hinder me?”

G. *Redemption by Grace 43:14 – 44:5*

1. *Liberation from Bondage 43:14 – 15*

¹⁴ The Lord, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel declares: “For your sake ¹⁰³⁰ I will send Babylon and break down the bars ¹⁰³¹ and the shouting of the Chaldeans will be

¹⁰²² MFT: “sacrificed.”

¹⁰²³ These were the extreme north and south regions of Egypt..

¹⁰²⁴ The prophet says that these countries were conquered by the Persians in return for having given Israel its freedom.

¹⁰²⁵ Dead Sea Scroll: “man.”

¹⁰²⁶ This phrase is omitted by the LXX & Vulgate.

¹⁰²⁷ This is descriptive of a court room session.

¹⁰²⁸ LXX: “I have brought forth the blind people.” TAN: “Set free.” Past, present and future are all included in the redemptive process. Some scholars insert this verse between 42:17 and 18.

¹⁰²⁹ Only God can know and predict future events. MFT: “Muster all the nations, assemble every race: who of these can offer such a promise, such prediction? Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, that we may hear and answer “It is true.”

¹⁰³⁰ The Hebrew is uncertain.

¹⁰³¹ An explanation can be found in the text that follows.

turned into lamentation.¹⁰³² 15 I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your king!”

2. Deliverance at the Sea 43:16 – 17

16 Thus says the Lord who makes a way in the sea, a path in the swirling waters, 17 who threw out an entire army of chariots, horses and warriors. (“They have been unable to rise for they are extinguished, quenched like a wick.”)¹⁰³³

3. “Behold I Do a New Thing” 43:18 – 19

18 “Do not hold fast to the things of the past, and do not continually think of the events of old!”¹⁰³⁴ 19 Be assured that I am doing a new thing, it is springing to light now, don’t you perceive it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and a river¹⁰³⁵ in the desert.”

4. Streams in the Desert 43:20 – 21

20 “The wild animals will honor me: the jackals and ostriches (*or, owls*)¹⁰³⁶ [for I will provide water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to provide drink for my chosen people, 21 the people who I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.”]¹⁰³⁷

5. The Lord’s Indictment 43:22- 23

22 “Yet you did not turn to me, O Jacob, for you became tired, you wearied yourself of me, O Israel.¹⁰³⁸ 23 You have not brought me your sheep as burnt offerings; or honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you by demanding burnt offerings,¹⁰³⁹ or made you weary by asking you to provide frankincense. 24 You have not purchased sweet cane (*or, calamus*)¹⁰⁴⁰ for me with your money nor sated me with the fat of your sacrifices,¹⁰⁴¹ but you have burdened me with your sins – you have wearied me with your iniquities.”

6. Grace and Judgment 43:25 – 28¹⁰⁴²

25 [“I am he¹⁰⁴³ who for my own sake blots out your transgressions.¹⁰⁴⁴ I will not remember your sins. 26 Remember your past! Let us argue together! Present your case,

¹⁰³² Hebrew obscure. LXX: “and the Chaldeans will be bound in strips.” “εν πλοιοις δεθησενατι.” There are two possible translations of the Hebrew: 1. Even the Chaldeans, into the ships in which they rejoice. 2. As for the Chaldeans, their rejoicing is turned into lamentation. NEB: “and their cry of triumph will turn to groaning.”

¹⁰³³ The Hebrew is unclear. The image is military and suddenly changes to extinguishing a lamp. NAB: “Till they be prostrate together, never to rise, snuffed out and quenched like a wick.” NEB: “they were crushed, snuffed out like a wick.”

¹⁰³⁴ TEV: “cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new things I am going to do. It is happening already. You can see it now.”

¹⁰³⁵ The Hebrew word is uncertain.

¹⁰³⁶ The Hebrew word is uncertain in its meaning.

¹⁰³⁷ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

¹⁰³⁸ God’s liberation of Israel lies not in Israel’s fidelity but in God’s mercy.

¹⁰³⁹ Literally: “I did not make slaves of you with grain offerings.”

¹⁰⁴⁰ This was used in the making of incense.

¹⁰⁴¹ An alternate translation could be: “neither have I desired the fat of sacrifice but you stood before me in your sins and your iniquities.” Another possible translation might be: “I did not make you weary --- you made me weary.” The sacrifices became an end in themselves but the people remained in their sin and became wearisome to God, the Holy One.

¹⁰⁴² The ‘sitz im leben’ was diagnosed in 22 – 24. Now the prophet presents a prescription for the remedy.

¹⁰⁴³ LXX: “I am, I am.”

¹⁰⁴⁴ I.e. to put an end to the profanation of my holy name.

that you may be vindicated.] ¹⁰⁴⁵ 27 Your earliest ancestor ¹⁰⁴⁶ sinned, and your mediators have transgressed against me. 28 Therefore I will pollute ¹⁰⁴⁷ the dignitaries of the temple. ¹⁰⁴⁸ I delivered ¹⁰⁴⁹ Jacob to utter destruction and Israel to mockery.” ¹⁰⁵⁰

<CHAPTER 44>

7. “Fear Not, O Israel 44:1 – 2

¹ “Hear, my servant Jacob, Israel whom I have chosen: ² The Lord who made you, who formed you in the womb, and will help you declares: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant; Jeshurum whom I have chosen. ¹⁰⁵¹

8. *Water and the Spirit* 4:3 - 4

³ Be assured that I will pour ¹⁰⁵² water on the thirsty land and streams of water on the dry ground. So too I will pour out my spirit on your descendants. ¹⁰⁵³ ⁴ They will sprout up like grass among the willows along a flowing stream. ¹⁰⁵⁴

9. *New Adherents to the Covenant People* 44:5

⁵ This one will say: “I am the Lord’s,” ¹⁰⁵⁵ another will call himself ¹⁰⁵⁶ by the name Judah, and another will write “The Lord’s” on his hand ¹⁰⁵⁷ and surname himself with the name: “Israel.”

H. The Lord Glorifies Himself in Israel (Part 1) 44: 6 – 8

1. King, Redeemer, Lord of Hosts and Lord of Time 44:6

⁶ Thus says the Lord, the king of Israel and the redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: ¹⁰⁵⁸ “I am the first and the last, beside me there is no god!

2. God of History and Prophecy 44:7

⁷ Who is like me? ¹⁰⁵⁹ Let him proclaim it! Let him declare and testify before me! Who has announced the events of the past and those that are to come?

¹⁰⁴⁵ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Scholars question who this was: Adam, Abraham, Jacob. Who the early ancestor that is referred to here might be is immaterial.

¹⁰⁴⁷ There are two possible translations: 1. I will pollute. 2. I will pierce through. LXX: “και εμναναν.”

¹⁰⁴⁸ LXX: “οι αρχοντες.”

¹⁰⁴⁹ LXX: “και εδοκα.”

¹⁰⁵⁰ An alternative translation could be: “The princes have defiled my sanctuary; so I gave Jacob to destruction and Israel to reproach.”

¹⁰⁵¹ Salvation and help are close together. The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable. The promises of God cancel out the sin. TAN: “your creator who has helped you since birth, fear not, my servant Jacob, Jeshurum whom I have chosen.” The name Jeshurum is a name for Israel. Cf. Numbers 23:10.

¹⁰⁵² LXX: “give.”

¹⁰⁵³ Hebrew literally: “upon the thirsty.” LXX: “I will give water to the thirsty, who walk in the dry land. ...on your seed will be my blessing.” JB adds: “my blessing on your children also.”

¹⁰⁵⁴ Literally: “they will spring up among the grass.” Some scholars emend to read: “as the green trees/”

¹⁰⁵⁵ An alternative reading would be: “I belong to the Lord.”

¹⁰⁵⁶ LXX: “σ κληθησεται.”

¹⁰⁵⁷ LXX: “χειρι αυτον.” It was customary to mark a slave with the owner’s name. TAN: “and adopt the name of Israel.” The marking of the hand thus branded the person, claiming that he deserved to be recognized as a proselyte to Israel’s faith.

¹⁰⁵⁸ The Lord has been the redeemer in the past and will be the redeemer in the imminent future.

¹⁰⁵⁹ The Hebrew uses legal terminology as in a court of law. LXX: “Who is like me? Let him stand forth (στητω), Let him proclaim.” A possible translation might be: “From the bringing forth of an ancient people

3. *Fear Not. I Alone am the God of History 44:8*

⁸ Fear not! Do not be afraid! ¹⁰⁶⁰ I have told you long ago and now declare to you as my witnesses that there is no God other than myself! There is no rock! I know there is none! ¹⁰⁶¹

J. A Satire on the Making of Idols 44:9 – 20

(An Excursus Concerning Idols)

1. *The Futility of Idol Making 44:9*

(Prose: vss. 9 – 20) ¹⁰⁶² ⁹ [All who make idols are nothing ¹⁰⁶³ and the things that delight them are not beneficial. Those who testify to their benefit neither see nor know, and therefore they will be put to shame. ¹⁰⁶⁴

2. *Judgment upon the Idol Makers 44:10 – 11*

¹⁰ Whoever shapes a god or casts idols is doing what is not profitable to anyone. ¹⁰⁶⁵
¹¹ Watch how all his fellow workers will be put to shame and the craftsmen are merely men. ¹⁰⁶⁶ Let them assemble, let them stand boldly! They will be terrified, they will unitedly be put to shame! ¹⁰⁶⁷

3. *The Ironsmith's Life 44:12*

¹² The ironsmith sharpens his tools ¹⁰⁶⁸ and works over the hot coals. He shapes with hammers and forges with his brawny arm. He becomes hungry and his strength fails. If he does not drink any water he will become exhausted. ¹⁰⁶⁹

4. *The Carpenter 44:13*

¹³ The carpenter stretches out a measuring line, marking it out with a bit of chalk; fashioning it with planes and compass marks, making it to be like a handsome man, ¹⁰⁷⁰ making it suitable to dwell in a house.

5 *Wood for Fuel and a God 44:14 – 15*

¹⁴ He cuts down a cedar, or he chooses a holly or an oak ¹⁰⁷¹ or plants a tree and lets it grow strong in the forest for that purpose: a cedar ¹⁰⁷² perhaps, and the rain nourishes it.

to the events of the future let him declare this.” NEB: “let him announce before hand things to come.”

The Hebrew MT is different from the emendation found in the BHS on which this translation is based.

¹⁰⁶⁰ LXX: “Do not hide yourself.”

¹⁰⁶¹ Some scholars emend the line to read: “There is no god apart from me.” Some scholars insert 21- 23 between verses 7 & 8.

¹⁰⁶² The BHK prints this passage as prose. BHS has it as poetry. Some scholars feel this passage is a later interpolation. Much of this passage is written as satire.

¹⁰⁶³ Hebrew literally: “chaos.” TAN: “all the idol makers work to no purpose.”

¹⁰⁶⁴ NAB: “To their shame they neither see nor know any thing; they are more deaf than men are.”

¹⁰⁶⁵ The idol maker intends to make a god, but produces an ineffectual image instead.

¹⁰⁶⁶ It seems that the Hebrew text possibly is corrupt. LXX: “and let all the deaf be gathered together.” Some emend: “And as to those who fashion them, confusion is all they can accomplish.”

¹⁰⁶⁷ MFT: “The spells put on it make a sorry show, and its magic claims are only man-made; let his adherents gather, let them come forward and they shall quake. They shall be disconcerted.”

¹⁰⁶⁸ The Hebrew is rather obscure. “he sharpens his axe.” LXX: “The workman sharpens the iron.” Some emend: “The worker in iron cuts out.” The MT in v. 12 is possibly corrupt due to the lack of a verb. This translation is based on the LXX. Portions of verses 12 and 13 are uncertain.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Literally: “there is no strength.”

¹⁰⁷⁰ LXX adds: “fitting it with glue.” The word “house” could mean a temple or a domestic shrine.

¹⁰⁷¹ It is as if the prophet is saying, “Look where the god comes from.” The name of the variety of trees is uncertain. The selection of different kinds of wood, at least in Babylon, was considered important. Certain gods were to be made of one specific kind of wood. Other gods also had their specific woods which were considered most suitable.

¹⁵ Then it becomes fuel for a man; he takes a portion with which he warms himself. He lights a fire and bakes his bread, and with the remainder he makes himself a god whom he adores, having made a graven image, falls down before it to worship it. ¹⁰⁷³

6. Out of the Residue a God 44:16- 17

¹⁶ Half of the wood he burns in the fire, keeping warm as he eats the meat that was roasted in the fire and is satisfied. ¹⁰⁷⁴ In addition he says: ‘I am warm, I have seen the fire.’ ¹⁰⁷⁵ ¹⁷ The rest of the wood he makes into a god, his idol, ¹⁰⁷⁶ and he falls down and worships it. He prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are my god.”

7. Blindness of the Idol Worshipper 44:18 – 20

¹⁸ They do not know nor do they understand anything for they have closed their eyes, so they are unable to see, and their minds, so they are unable to understand. ¹⁰⁷⁷ ¹⁹ No one thinks about this. ¹⁰⁷⁸ No one uses knowledge. Judgment is not considered. No one says, “I burned half in the fire and baked my bread and roasted the meat I ate. Should I make what remains of the wood into an abomination? Should I fall down before a block of wood?” ²⁰ He feeds on the ashes for this is a deluded mind which has been led astray. ¹⁰⁷⁹ He is unable to move himself to say “This is not the living God in my hand.”] (**End of Prose.**)

K. The Lord Glorifies Himself in Israel Part 2

1. Remember These Things, My Servant Israel 22:21

²¹ Remember these things, O Jacob and Israel, for you are my servant. I formed you. You are my servant, O Israel. You will not forget me. ¹⁰⁸⁰

2. Forgiveness and Repentance 44:22

²² I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like mist. Return to me for I have redeemed you! ¹⁰⁸¹

L. The Lord has Redeemed Israel 44:23

²³ Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it! Shout, O hidden caverns of the earth. Be awakened to sing and join in the universal chorus. Sing, O mountains! O forests and every tree in it, sing! The Lord has redeemed Jacob and will be glorified in Israel.

¹⁰⁷² The Hebrew word is a hapax legomenon. It may be a lesser known tree or a corruption of a word. Some scholars translate it as “laurel.”

¹⁰⁷³ It is possible that this verse is influenced by Homer: *Satire I, 8 1ff.* “Once I was a trunk of a tree, a worthless log, when a carpenter, doubtful what to make, a stool or a god, Priapus (the god of the gardens) chose that I should be a god.”

¹⁰⁷⁴ Codex B reads: “Upon half of it he bakes loaves on the coals.” IQIsa: “He sits by the coals and warms himself.”

¹⁰⁷⁵ Dead Sea Scroll: “I am warm before the fire.”

¹⁰⁷⁶ LXX: “γλοπτον.”

¹⁰⁷⁷ An alternate translation might be: “Their eyes are covered over so they cannot see. Their minds are closed so they cannot comprehend.” NIV: “their eyes are plastered over.” This is a more literal translation of the Hebrew words.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Literally: “return to the heart.”

¹⁰⁷⁹ CB: “Feeds on ashes. A deluded mind has let him astray, so he cannot save himself or confess, ‘Am not I holding to a delusion?’” Instead of the idol giving vitality and substance it offers nothing. TEV: “It makes as much sense as eating ashes. His foolish ideas have so misled him that he is beyond help. He won’t admit to himself that the idol he holds in his hand is not a god at all.”

¹⁰⁸⁰ Literally: “You will not be forgotten by me.”

¹⁰⁸¹ JB: “I have dispelled your faults like a cloud, your sins like a mist. Come back to me for I have redeemed you.” In idolatry everything depends on the devotee. The prophet says everything depends on the living God.

M. The Anointing of Cyrus 44:24 -45:13
1. The Lord Declares His Authority 44:24 - 28

²⁴ The Lord your redeemer who found you from the time you were in the womb ¹⁰⁸² declares: “I am the Lord who made all things ¹⁰⁸³ who unaided stretched out the heavens, ¹⁰⁸⁴ who alone spread out the earth. Who was with me? ²⁵ Who foils the omens of the babblers (*or, liars*) ¹⁰⁸⁵ and makes fools of diviners, turns wise men back and turns knowledge into foolishness. ¹⁰⁸⁶ ²⁶ Who confirms the word of his servant, ¹⁰⁸⁷ performs the counsel of his messengers, who informs Jerusalem that she will again be inhabited and that the cities of Judah ¹⁰⁸⁸ that they will be rebuilt: raised from their own ruins. ²⁷ Who says to the depths, “Be dry! I will dry up your rivers. ²⁸ I am the one who says to Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, ¹⁰⁸⁹ he will fulfill my purpose.’ I say to Jerusalem, ‘She will be built’, and to the temple, ‘Your foundations will be laid!’ ¹⁰⁹⁰

<CHAPTER 45>

2. Communion with Cyrus 45:1 – 7

¹ The Lord says to his anointed: ¹⁰⁹¹ “Yours is the hand I have grasped, to subdue nations that are before you, to remove the belts from the garments ¹⁰⁹² of the kings, to open doors and that gates might not be closed. ² I will go before you, leveling the mountains, ¹⁰⁹³ shattering the bronze doors ¹⁰⁹⁴ and bursting the iron bars. ³ I will give you the treasures of darkness and the treasures that had been carefully hidden ¹⁰⁹⁵ that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who has called you by your name. ⁴ I have called you by name for the sake of my servants Jacob and Israel, my chosen ones. I will give you a surname ¹⁰⁹⁶ even though you do not know me (*or, even though you were not aware that you were the Lord’s agent*). ⁵ I am the Lord, and there is no other being like me. There is no other God; I provide for you ¹⁰⁹⁷ but you do not know me. ⁶ In order

¹⁰⁸² Redemption precedes creation. This is a living relationship between God and humanity.

¹⁰⁸³ Literally: “master of all.”

¹⁰⁸⁴ So: Qere. Ketib: “who was with me.”

¹⁰⁸⁵ LXX: “ventriloquists.”

¹⁰⁸⁶ TEV: “I make fools of fortune tellers and frustrate the predictions of astrologers. The words of the wise I refute and show that their wisdom is foolishness.” BV: “who confounds the omens of the soothsayers, makes diviners mad, refutes the sages, showing that their weapon is folly.”

¹⁰⁸⁷ Many scholars read this as a plural to better fit the poetry of the strophe.

¹⁰⁸⁸ LXX: “Idumea.”

¹⁰⁸⁹ I.e. the king whom I have designated.

¹⁰⁹⁰ The LXX has some repetition that makes the words in the LXX an anti-climax.

¹⁰⁹¹ LXX: “τῷ χριστῷ μου” Vulgate: “Christo mea” “My messiah.”

¹⁰⁹² When people waned to move about freely and work with less hindrance they would use their belt to lift up the lengthy garment, thus giving more freedom to move about. Additionally weapons were sometimes held by the belt of the garment. Thus a person would not be as free to move about and the opponent would be certain that no weapon was on the person of the enemy. Isaiah says that only the Lord should be credited for giving Cyrus the power and victory that was his. On the Cyrus Cylinder Cyrus gives praise to Marduk. Cf. Appendix B. Cf. AMET” p. 315.

¹⁰⁹³ So: 1 Hebrew mss, 1QIsa & LXX. Hebrew: “swellings.” Vulgate: “gloriosos turae.”

¹⁰⁹⁴ These were presumably in Babylon.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Pliny estimated that the booty was 24,000 pounds of gold. Babylon was the richest city in Asia and that time. Xenophon records a conversation between Cyrus, Gobryas and Croesus about Babylon’s wealth.

¹⁰⁹⁶ TAN: “I hail you by title, though you have not known me.” Or: “Cyrus, you don’t know me but I have called you by name and honored you because of Israel, my chosen servant.”

¹⁰⁹⁷ Literally: “I gird you.”

that all the people will know --- from the rising sun in the east to the west,¹⁰⁹⁸ --- there is no one beside me. I am the Lord and there is no other. ⁷ I form light and create darkness. I bring about prosperity and I create woe. ¹⁰⁹⁹ I, the Lord, am the one who does these things.”

3. Let the Heavens and Earth Bring Forth Salvation 45:8

⁸ “Rain down righteousness, O heaven, let it pour down from the skies to the earth which is ready to receive it and bear the fruit of salvation, and let righteousness thrive. I the Lord have created it!” declares the Lord. ¹¹⁰⁰

4 Divine Sovereignty Over Nature and History 45:9 - 13

⁹ “Shame on him who argues with his maker. Though only being as a potsherd among potsherds will a potsherd contend with its potter? ¹¹⁰¹ Dare it say, ‘Woe to you who are fashioning me!’ Dare the clay say to the potter: ‘What are you making?’ ¹¹⁰² ¹⁰ [Woe to the child who says to its father, ‘What are you begetting?’ Or: to a woman who is giving birth ‘To what are you giving birth?’] ¹¹⁰³ ¹¹ The Lord, the holy one of Israel and his maker declares: ‘Will you question me ¹¹⁰⁴ about my children or give me orders concerning the work of my hands? ¹² I made the earth and created humanity to live on it. It was my hand that was stretched out to fashion the heavens and I have maintained all my creation. ¹³ I have aroused [Cyrus] in righteousness and I will make straight all his ways. He will build my city and he will free my exiles ¹¹⁰⁵ without expectation of praise or reward’.” ¹¹⁰⁶

N. The Conversion of the Nations 45:14 – 25 ¹¹⁰⁷

1. The Confession of the Nations 45:14 – 15

¹⁴ Thus says the Lord: “The wealth of Egypt ¹¹⁰⁸ and the traders of Ethiopia and the Sabeans, ¹¹⁰⁹ men of stature, will come in chariots, bowing down before you, pleading with you, saying, ‘God is surely with you, as there is no other God, there is none like him.’ ¹⁵ You truly are a God who hides yourself, O God of Israel, the savior’.”

2. Confounding of Idol Makers and Salvation of Israel 45:15 – 17

¹⁰⁹⁸ The versions and Targums give the same message but with different descriptive phrases.

¹⁰⁹⁹ NASB: “causing well being and creating calamity.” IQIsa has “good.” Does God create evil? NIV: “I form the light and create darkness. I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things.”

¹¹⁰⁰ LXX: “Shower down victory, O heaven. Let it rain down from above, O skies! Let earth’s womb open for the birth of peace and let her also bear victory. The Lord has created.” The gifts of salvation are universal.

¹¹⁰¹ The LXX inserts: “will the plowman plow the earth all day?”

¹¹⁰² TEV: “Does the clay pot dare argue with its maker, a potsherd that is like all the others. Does the clay ask the potter what he is doing? Does the pot complain that its maker has no skills?” CB: “or a man’s work say to him, ‘You have no hands?’” LXX emended: “you have no hands.” Syriac: “I am not the work of your hands.” Modern translators often say something similar to: “Your work does not show skill.” Verses 9 – 10 are the only invective in chapters 49 – 55.

¹¹⁰³ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

¹¹⁰⁴ So: versions. Hebrew: “Ask me of things to come.”

¹¹⁰⁵ LXX: “και την αιχμελωσιαν του λαου.”

¹¹⁰⁶ LXX: “I have raised him to be a king with righteousness and all his ways are right; he will build my city and will bring the captivity of my people to an end, not for ransom, nor for reward says the Lord of hosts.”

¹¹⁰⁷ Many scholars feel verses 14 – 25 are a continuation of 44:28. Is Cyrus addressed here?

¹¹⁰⁸ LXX: “Egypt has labored for you.” JB: “The peasants of Egypt and the traders of Cush.”

¹¹⁰⁹ These came into Israel’s possession as slaves possibly given as tribute to Israel in lieu of treasure.

16 "All of them are put to shame and confounded. The makers of idols ¹¹¹⁰ unitedly become confused. 17 Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation. You will not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity.

3. *The Lord's Revelation to Israel 45:18 – 19*

18 The Lord declares: "I am the Lord who created the heavens." ("He is God. He is the one who formed the earth and made it: He established it! He did not create it as a chaos but formed it to be inhabited.") "I am the Lord and there is no other. 19 I did not speak secretly; in some dark and distant land, I did not say to the descendants of Jacob, 'Seek me in chaos.' I the Lord speak the truth. ¹¹¹¹ I declare what is right!" ¹¹¹²

4. *The Gods Cannot Save 45: 20 – 21*

20 "Assemble your selves and come ¹¹¹³ draw near, you who are survivors of the nations! Those who carry about wooden idols and keep praying to them as a god who cannot save are senseless. 21 Declare the facts! Present your case! Let them take counsel together! Who told you this long ago (*or, Who announced this from the beginning? Was it I?*) Who told this long ago? Who declared this in ancient times? Was it not I, the Lord? There is no other god in addition to me for I am a righteous God, a Savior! There is no one else!"

5. *The Lord is God 45:22 – 23*

22 "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! I am God, and there is no other! 23 I myself have sworn. From my mouth I have spoken righteousness, my words will not fail, for 'To me every knee will bow and every tongue will swear'."

6. *The Universal Confession 45:24 – 25*

24 "Only of the Lord will it be said that his righteousness and strength are his and he will come (*or, Only in the Lord are there victory and might for humanity*) and to him people will come, ashamed, having been opposed by (*or incensed against*) him. 25 In the Lord all the descendants of Israel will receive triumph and glory." ¹¹¹⁴

<CHAPTER 46>

o. The Collapse of the Gods and the Lord's Salvation 46: 1 – 13

1. Impotence of Babylon's Gods 46:1 – 2

1 "Bel ¹¹¹⁵ bows down, Nebo ¹¹¹⁶ stoops. Their idols are a burden that is being carried on beasts and cattle. These idols have been loaded on the animals as burdens for

¹¹¹⁰ The Hebrew word used here is unusual, possibly late Hebrew, meaning "form, figure or picture." Another possible meaning would be "pangs or pains" which would become a Masoretic play on words.

¹¹¹¹ LXX: "I am the Lord."

¹¹¹² God does not reveal secret mysteries in cryptic symbolism or strange meetings, etc. His word is clear.

¹¹¹³ IQIsa "Come together."

¹¹¹⁴ LXX: "They will be justified by the Lord and in God they will all be descendants of Israel and be glorified."

¹¹¹⁵ The god Bel is virtually the same as Israel's Ba-al. He was originally considered to be the father of the gods at Nippur and called the Son of Heaven. Later he came to be called Marduk the great god of Babylon.

¹¹¹⁶ Nebo was the god of learning and resided in Borsippa near Babylon. He was considered to be the son of Marduk, One could say he was the Mesopotamian Mercury. These gods were carried through the streets in New Year processions. Cf. ANET pp. 130 – 131.

the weary beasts. ² They stoop, they bow down together ¹¹¹⁷ but they cannot save the burden ¹¹¹⁸ as they themselves go into captivity.” ¹¹¹⁹

2. The Lord Bears Up His People 46:3 – 4

³ “Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been cared for by me from birth and carried from the womb: ⁴ even through old age. I am he! I have born you when your hair has become white and I will carry you. I have made and I will bear! I will support you and I will save.” ¹¹²⁰

3. The Lord is not Like Other Gods 46:5 – 7

⁵ “To whom will you compare me? Who will you declare to be similar to me? Who is my equal? Who is so similar and comparable to me? ⁶ [Those who lavish gold from their store and weigh out silver ¹¹²¹ using a balance beam (*scale*) employ a goldsmith to make these into a god. ¹¹²² Then they prostrate themselves before it and worship. ⁷ They raise their idol on their shoulders and carry it. They set it in the place where it is intended to stand, and it does not budge from the spot. If any one calls out [*in prayer*] it does not answer or save anyone from distress.”

4. The One Lord of History 46:8 – 11

⁸ “Remember this and stand firm! ¹¹²³ Give serious thought concerning your transgressions.] ⁹ Remember the past history! I am God! There is no other! I am God and there is no one who is comparable! ¹⁰ I have declared (*or, determined*) the end from the beginning and from ancient times to those times that have not yet come, saying: ‘My counsel will stand! I will accomplish my purpose.’ ¹¹²⁴ ¹¹ I will call a bird of prey ¹¹²⁵ from the east, a man of my own choosing, from a distant country. I have spoken and I will see that it happens! I have proposed and I will do it!” ¹¹²⁶

5. My Salvation is near 46:12 – 13

¹² “Listen to me, you who are determined not to obey, ¹¹²⁷ you who are far from deliverance. ¹¹²⁸ ¹³ My deliverance ¹¹²⁹ will not be postponed (*or, delayed*). It is not far off

¹¹¹⁷ The Hebrew word might give the thought of additional but unmentioned gods.

¹¹¹⁸ In Akkadian men were created as servants for the gods, including carrying them.

¹¹¹⁹ The purpose of this Isaianic message is to expose the inability of the gods to save them-selves. OTLIsa. “the things that you would carry are loaded as a burden on weary beasts.” LXX: Verses 1 & 2 are rather different. “Bel has fallen. Nebo is shattered. Their images are given to the wild beasts and the cattle. You take them, packed up, as a burden to the weary, exhausted and hungry, but helpless man will not be able to save them from war, and they themselves are led away as captives.”

¹¹²⁰ JB: “I will support and deliver you.” This verse has five important messages. 1. I am the Lord, listen to me. 2. I have made. 3. I will bear. 4. I will support. 5. I will save.

¹¹²¹ MFT: “Those who empty bags of gold and weigh out silver.” Some scholars feel verses 6 – 8 are a later interpolation.

¹¹²² LXX: “make things made with hands.”

¹¹²³ In the past the Hebrew word translated “stand firm” was thought to be a hapax legomenon. Recent scholarship has leaned that the above is a suitable translation. LXX: “στεναξατε.”

¹¹²⁴ This is the only and unique God!

¹¹²⁵ Some scholars emend the Hebrew word to read “my servant” which should be understood to be a massive army.

¹¹²⁶ The Lord does not conceal or alter the Cyrus plan.

¹¹²⁷ LXX: “mighty in heart.” “οι απολωλεκοτες.” These were those who refused to align themselves with God’s purposes.

¹¹²⁸ MFT: “triumph” here and in v. 13.

¹¹²⁹ IQIsa “my triumph is near.”

and my salvation will not tarry; I will put salvation in Zion for Israel is my glory (*or give my glory to Israel*).”¹¹³⁰

<CHAPTER 47>

N. A Mourning Son on the Virgin of Babylon 47:1 – 15

1. Babyloe, Throneless, Enslaved and Judged 47:1 – 4^{1131 1132}

¹ “Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon: ¹¹³³ sit on the ground, ¹¹³⁴ dethroned, ¹¹³⁵ O daughter of the Chaldeans! You will never again be called tender and delicate. ¹¹³⁶ ² Grasp the hand millstone and grind meal (*or, flour*)! ¹¹³⁷ Remove your veil! ¹¹³⁸ Strip off your robe! ¹¹³⁹ Bare your legs! Pass through the rivers! ¹¹⁴⁰ ³ Your nakedness ¹¹⁴¹ will be revealed, your shame will be exposed. ¹¹⁴² I will carry out vengeance and I will not let anyone intercede. ¹¹⁴³ ⁴ This is what our ¹¹⁴⁴ redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel says!”¹¹⁴⁵:

2. Divine Judgment on Babylon is Predicted 47:5 - 7

⁵ ”Sit silently and go into darkness (*or, the dungeon*) O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you will no longer be called the Mistress of Kingdoms. ¹¹⁴⁶ ⁶ I was angry with my people. I defiled my heritage. I gave them into your hand, you showed them no mercy. You made your yoke exceedingly heavy for those who were old. ⁷ You said, ‘I will be the mistress (*or, princess*) forever!’ You did not consider these things carefully (*or, lay them to heart*) nor did you remember their end.”¹¹⁴⁷

¹¹³⁰ The idolater makes a god in his own image. The Lord intends to make his people in his image.

¹¹³¹ Verses 1 – 7 are a taunt song (Spottlied).

¹¹³² Cyrus’ armies advanced toward Babylon in October 539 BCE. He took lower Mesopotamia and then attacked Babylon, waiting until the surrounding territory was occupied by his army. The ruler of Babylon, (Nabonidat). fled, leaving his son Belshazzar as king. Since Cyrus was faithful to the god Marduk it is possible that the priests of Marduk who were in Babylon helped with the occupation of the city by Cyrus and his army.

¹¹³³ Babylon is the “Virgin Daughter” since it had not been ravished and was unconquered.

¹¹³⁴ OTL Isaiah: “Get down and squat in the dust.” Some MSS have: “enter the darkness.”

¹¹³⁵ The word “dethroned” is omitted in the LXX.

¹¹³⁶ LXX: “luxurious.” TAN: “dainty one.” NEB: “soft skinned and delicate.”

¹¹³⁷ This was considered to be the work of female servants.

¹¹³⁸ This was worn by women of privilege.

¹¹³⁹ Literally: “strip off.” An alternate translation could be “train.” LXX & Peshitta: “grey hair.” Vulgate: “humerom.”

¹¹⁴⁰ The Hebrew is unclear. TEV: “lift your skirts to cross the streams.” A footnote is added: “This probably refers to going into exile.”

¹¹⁴¹ LXX: “shame.”

¹¹⁴² LXX: “your reproaches will be brought to light.” Babylon will be stripped like an adulteress and vengeance will befall it.” A possible emendation is: “and not be apparent.” The Hebrew is uncertain.

¹¹⁴³ LXX: “ἀντιστησεται.” “I will no longer deliver you to men.” TAN: “And no one will intercede.” Several scholars have suggested emendations but none has been generally accepted as probable.

¹¹⁴⁴ LXX: “Your.” BHS suggests the word “says” should be included.

¹¹⁴⁵ What happens to Babylon is considered by the Isaianic prophet to be its just due. Babylon will be treated as it had treated the exiles that were brought there previously.

¹¹⁴⁶ LXX: “Sit down, proceed with war, go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; you will no longer be called a strong kingdom (*or have, the strength of a kingdom.*)” Vulgate: “vidomina regnoraram.” This is the climax of “sit on the ground.” Power, rule and command are lost. BHS suggests that the word “Says” should introduce this strophe.

¹¹⁴⁷ IQIsa: “or what was to follow.”

3. Collapse of Babylon's Securities 47:8 – 9 ¹¹⁴⁸

⁸ "Now listen to this! You are a lover ¹¹⁴⁹ of pleasure (*or, luxurious living*) and sit securely, saying in your heart (*or, to yourself*) 'I am! I alone am secure! There is no one beside me! I will not need to sit at the window in bereavement, having learned of the loss of my children.' ¹¹⁵⁰ ⁹ These two things will come to you in a single moment: in one day --- the loss of children and widowhood will overwhelm you. ¹¹⁵¹ This will happen in spite of your many sorceries and your powerful enchantments." ¹¹⁵²

4. From Security to Disaster 47:10 – 11

¹⁰ "You felt secure ¹¹⁵³ in your wickedness for you said, 'No one can see me.' Your wisdom and your knowledge caused you to feel secure but led you astray. You have said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one beside me.' ¹¹ Therefore evil (*or, wickedness*) will come upon you, and you will be unable to make atonement. Disaster will fall on you, which no ransom price will be able to pay. ¹¹⁵⁴ Ruin will come on you suddenly and will be a total surprise." ¹¹⁵⁵

5. Salvation by Magic 47:12 – 13

¹² "Stand fast in your enchantments and your many sacrifices ¹¹⁵⁶ with which you have labored since your youth: perhaps you might be able to succeed. Perhaps you might inspire terror (*or, possibly you will find strength*). ¹¹⁵⁷ ¹³ You are worn out by your many counsels (*or, counselors*). ¹¹⁵⁸ Let them stand forth and save you! Let the astrologers save you! Let them study the stars and see what prediction can be forthcoming in each new moon." ¹¹⁵⁹

¹¹⁴⁸ These verses are a song of judgment.

¹¹⁴⁹ TAN: "voluptuous one."

¹¹⁵⁰ Babylon prided itself in its security and its perfection. The entire city (nation) was under a sort of magic spell that it had national security which could never be challenged.

¹¹⁵¹ NAB: "Complete bereavement and widowhood shall come upon you for your many sorceries and great number of your spells." Babylon was noted for its sorcery and spells.

¹¹⁵² Magic is not religion and national security finds no basis in 'ex opere operato'.

¹¹⁵³ LXX: "The hope of your wickedness."

¹¹⁵⁴ A possible translation might be: "Continue your spells and your monstrous sorceries with which you have dealt during your entire life. Possibly you can obtain help, you will inspire awe. " The Hebrew is uncertain. TAN: "when you do not know how to charm away." Evil disaster was felt in Babylon as something that could be conjured away.

¹¹⁵⁵ JB: "A calamity shall fall on you which you will not be able to charm away, a disaster shall overtake you which you will not be able to avert, unforeseen ruin will suddenly descend on you."

¹¹⁵⁶ Portions of v. 12 are omitted in 1QIsa. This may be the original and the additions are a later gloss.

¹¹⁵⁷ The Hebrew is unclear.

¹¹⁵⁸ The latter seems the better translation. LXX: "ἐν ταῖς βουλαῖς σου."

¹¹⁵⁹ Cf.: ANET p. 317c. The Hebrew is uncertain. Much of the above translation is based on the LXX.

AB: "Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up and make known to you, and save you from the things that shall come upon you."

6. Judgment by Fire 47:14 – 15

¹⁴ "Behold, they are like stubble (*or, sticks*) which the fire consumes. They cannot save themselves from the power of the flame. There is no coal or brazier fire at which to warm oneself. ¹¹⁶⁰ ¹⁵ Thus it will be for those who labored, who have trafficked with you from youth on. They will stagger about, each in a different direction. There is no one to save you!"

<CHAPTER 48>

O. History and Prophecy 48:1 - 22

1. Address 48:1 - 2

¹ "Listen to this, O House of Jacob, [who are called by the name of Israel, and who issue from the descendants of Judah; who claim to believe in the Lord, and invoke the God of Israel, but not in truth and righteousness, ¹¹⁶¹ ² through whom we pride ourselves to be citizens of the holy city and rely on the God of Israel whose name is the Lord of Hosts."] ¹¹⁶²

2. Former Things 48:3 – 5

³ "Long ago ¹¹⁶³ I publicly declared a message of events that would take place but then suddenly I did them and they occurred. ⁴ [Because of my knowledge ¹¹⁶⁴ I realized that you are obstinate, for your neck is like an iron sinew and your forehead is like brass.] ¹¹⁶⁵ ⁵ In the past I declared what lay ahead before these things occurred. ¹¹⁶⁶ [This was done so that you would not be able to say, 'My idol and my god ¹¹⁶⁷ revealed this to me.'"] ¹¹⁶⁸

3. New Things 48:6 – 8

⁶ "You have heard and you have seen all this and yet you won't admit that my prediction was correct. From now on I will cause you to hear new things about which you know nothing. ⁷ These events are created now, not long ago. You have never heard of them. [Therefore you surely will say, 'Of course, I knew that.'] ¹¹⁶⁹ ⁸ You have never listened, you have never known --- even long ago, for your ears were never open. [I knew that you would be untrustworthy, even from the time of your birth, and realized that you would rebel."] ¹¹⁷⁰

¹¹⁶⁰ MFT: "They cannot save their own lives from the flames of war."

¹¹⁶¹ MFT: "insincerely and dishonestly."

¹¹⁶² Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. The claim of the people of citizenship and faith is a hollow claim.

¹¹⁶³ The Hebrew word can allow the concept of "recent" as well as "distant past."

¹¹⁶⁴ Literally: "from my knowing." 1QIsa "since I know."

¹¹⁶⁵ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

¹¹⁶⁶ LXX: Codex A: "The ancient things before they came."

¹¹⁶⁷ Literally: "my graven image and my molten image."

¹¹⁶⁸ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

¹¹⁶⁹ CEV: "You heard what I said, and you have seen it happen. Now admit that it is true. I will show you secrets you have never known. Today I am doing something new, something you cannot say you have heard before. You have never been willing to listen to what I say; from the moment of your birth I knew you would rebel."

¹¹⁷⁰ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

4. “For My Own Sons” 48:9 – 11

⁹ “For my name’s sake I was patient, ¹¹⁷¹ for the sake of my praise I restrained my wrath for you that my relationship with you might not be cut off. ¹¹⁷² ¹⁰ Be assured, I have refined you, ¹¹⁷³ though not like ¹¹⁷⁴ silver. I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. ¹¹⁷⁵ ¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how dare my name ¹¹⁷⁶ be profaned? ¹¹⁷⁷ I will not transfer my glory to any one else.” ¹¹⁷⁸

5. “The First and the Last” 48:12 – 13

¹² “Be attentive to me, Jacob and Israel, you whom I called. I am he! I am the first and the last. ¹¹⁷⁹ ¹³ My hand laid the foundation of the world, and my right hand stretched out the heavens. When I call they obey.” ¹¹⁸⁰

6. The Mission of Cyrus 48:14 – 15

¹⁴ “Everyone assemble! Listen! Who has declared these things? The Lord loves him, [Cyrus] (or, He’s the friend of Cyrus). He will carry out his intentions against Babylon, and his might will go against the Chaldeans ¹¹⁸¹ ¹⁵ I, Yes, I predicted this and called him. I have brought him and he will prosper ¹¹⁸² in his mission.”

7. The Leader in the Way 48:16 – 17

¹⁶ “Gather round, hear this from the beginning! I have not spoken in secret during my entire existence (and now the Lord God has sent me and has sent his spirit). ¹¹⁸³ ¹⁷ The Lord, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel declares: ‘I am the Lord your God, who teaches you for your benefit: who leads you in the way you should live.’”

8. Rewards of Obedience 48:18 – 19

¹⁸ “If only you had listened to my commandments your peace (or, well-being) would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea. ¹¹⁸⁴ ¹⁹ Your children would have become as numerous as the sand, and your descendants ¹¹⁸⁵ as abundant as grains [of sand.] ¹¹⁸⁶ Their name would never die out.”

¹¹⁷¹ Literally: “I deferred my anger.”

¹¹⁷² JB: “For the sake of my name I deferred my anger, for the sake of my honor I curbed it, I did not destroy you.”

¹¹⁷³ MT: “chose.” 1QIsa: “I tested (or, refined) you.”

¹¹⁷⁴ So: versions. Literally: “but not in silver.”

¹¹⁷⁵ TEV: “I have tested you in the fire of suffering as silver is refined in the furnace but have found that you are worthless.”

¹¹⁷⁶ “My name” is omitted in Hebrew but found in the versions.

¹¹⁷⁷ 1QIsa: “should I be profaned?” LXX adds: “το εμὸν ὄνομα.”

¹¹⁷⁸ In the NEB verses 9 & 11 are merged to make a better read.

¹¹⁷⁹ LXX: “Hear me, O Jacob and Israel whom I call: I am the first and I am heard forever.”

¹¹⁸⁰ Literally: “when I call they stand forth together.”

¹¹⁸¹ TAN: “Assemble all of you and listen! Who among you foretold these things? He whom the Lord loves shall work his will against Babylon and with his might against Chaldea.”

¹¹⁸² LXX: “καὶ εὐδοῦσα.”

¹¹⁸³ “And has sent his spirit” is omitted in the NEB but appears in a footnote. This phrase seems to be a “crux interpretation.” One scholar emended the phrase to read “and now I sent him (Cyrus) on his way.”

¹¹⁸⁴ JB: “If only you had been alert to my commandments your happiness would have been like a river.”

¹¹⁸⁵ Literally: “the offspring of your secret parts.”

¹¹⁸⁶ The word translated as “grains” is a hapax legomenon. LXX: “as the waves in the sea.”

9. A Lyrical Song 48:20 – 22

²⁰ "Leave Babylon, flee from Chaldea, loudly declaring it with a shout of joy! Cry out, ¹¹⁸⁷ proclaiming it to the ends of the earth, saying, 'The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob. ²¹ They did not thirst when he led them through the desert, he caused water to flow for them from a rock: he allowed the rock to fracture and water gushed out. ²² [There is no peace, says the Lord for the wicked'."] ¹¹⁸⁸

<CHAPTER 49>

II. The Redemption of Israel 49:1 – 55:3

A. The Servant of the Lord: Called, Commissioned and Comforted 49:1 – 25

1. Call, Mission and Destiny of the Servant 49:1 - 3

¹ "Listen to me, O coastlands (*or, islands*), ¹¹⁸⁹ and give heed, you people from distant nations. The Lord appointed me already before I was born, ¹¹⁹⁰ designating me. ² He caused my words to be like a sharp sword and hid me under the shadow of his hand. He made me a polished arrow and hid me in his quiver. ³ He said to me: 'You are my servant Israel, through whom I will be glorified (*or, my servant Israel in whom I glory*);'" ¹¹⁹¹

2. The Servant Recompensed and Honored as the Light of the Nations 49:4 – 6

⁴ I said, "I have labored in vain. I have spent my strength ¹¹⁹² for nothing that is of value but is vain. Yet surely my righteousness is with the Lord. My concern is with the Lord and my recompense is with my God." ⁵ The Lord formed me to be his servant already in the womb to bring Jacob back to him so that Israel might be restored ¹¹⁹³ to him, (for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord), and my God has become my strength). ⁶ "It is small thing that you should be my servant to raise up ¹¹⁹⁴ the tribe of Jacob and to restore the remnant of Israel. I will make you a light to the nations, so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

3. The Homage of the Nations 49:7

⁷ The Lord the redeemer of Israel and his Holy One declares: "To be deeply despised, abhorred, ¹¹⁹⁵ by the nations, the servant of rulers: "Kings will see and arise; princes will fall prostrate because of the Lord, who is faithful for he is the Holy One of Israel, and it is he who has chosen you."

¹¹⁸⁷ "Cry out" is omitted. The Isaiah Scroll of the Dead Sea Scrolls reads: "and proclaim it to the ends of the earth."

¹¹⁸⁸ This sentence is found in Psalm 57:21. Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. The people's failure to enter worthily into the Lord's open doors should not surprise us, nor should we allow it to reduce for us the magnitude of what he did in the light of the poor dimensions of their response.

¹¹⁸⁹ LXX: "islands and gentiles, be attentive."

¹¹⁹⁰ Literally: "from the body of my mother." Note the growth and development of the Servant concept as compared with the first Servant passage.

¹¹⁹¹ There is little textual support in the LXX. Either it is a very casual translation of the Hebrew or a different Hebrew recension was used.

¹¹⁹² So: Targums, 1QIsa. Hebrew: "my help."

¹¹⁹³ Ketiv: "not to bring." Qere: "bring to him." NEB: foot note: "or, not swept away."

¹¹⁹⁴ Literally: "written unto life."

¹¹⁹⁵ LXX: "τον βδελυσσομενον."

4. Restoration of Land and People 49:8 – 9b

8 The Lord says: “In a favorable time ¹¹⁹⁶ I have responded to you; in a day of salvation I have helped you, I have kept you ¹¹⁹⁷ and given ¹¹⁹⁸ you as a covenant for the people, to restore the land, to apportion the desired heritage, ¹¹⁹⁹ 9 saying to the prisoners, ‘Come forth.’ To those who are in darkness he will say, ‘Appear’.”

5. New Exiles and Return of the Diaspora 49:9c – 12

“They will feed ¹²⁰⁰ along the paths and on the bare heights they will find pasture. ¹²⁰¹ 10 They will not hunger or thirst, They will not suffer because of scorching ¹²⁰² wind and the sun will smile on them, for he has pity on them and leads them to springs of water where they will gather. ¹¹ I will make all my mountains passable and all my highways will be readily passable. ¹²⁰³ 12 Watch for those who come from afar, and be assured there will be many from the north and from the west; and from the land of Syene.” ¹²⁰⁴

6. Hymn of Thanksgiving: The Lord has Comforted His People 49:13

¹³ “Sing for joy, O heavens! Exult, O earth! Burst forth in song, O mountains! The Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on those who have been afflicted.

7. The Lord has not Forgotten Zion 49:14 – 16

¹⁴ Zion responded: “The Lord has forsaken me! My Lord ¹²⁰⁵ has forgotten me!” ¹⁵ “Can a woman forget her children who nursed at her breast? Can she have no compassion toward the offspring of her womb? Even though she might forget --- I will not forget you! ¹⁶ Behold I have tattooed your name on the palm of my hand; your walls are continually before me (*or, You are constantly in my thoughts*).”

8. Glorious Times are Coming! Zion is Rebuilt and Repopulated 49:17 – 19

¹⁷ “Your builders ¹²⁰⁶ outdo those who destroy --- who have razed your buildings and leave your land. ¹⁸ Look up! Look around! See: they all gather, they come into your presence. As I live,” says the Lord, “you will receive them proudly and adorn them with jewels as one might adorn a bride. ¹⁹ You will surely overflow your waste lands and desolate areas, your limited boundaries will need to be expanded for those who dominated you will be far away.” ¹²⁰⁷

¹¹⁹⁶ LXX: “In an acceptable time.”

¹¹⁹⁷ LXX: “και επλασα σε.”

¹¹⁹⁸ LXX: “και εδωκα σε.”

¹¹⁹⁹ MFT: “For when the favoring hour comes, I will answer you, and aid you when the day of rescue dawns, restoring the ruined land, re-peopling desolate places, bidding exiles leave their prison and captives come forth to the light.”

¹²⁰⁰ So: LXX & 1QIsa or “all the mountain.” The Hebrew is uncertain.

¹²⁰¹ NEB: “They shall find pastures in the desert sand and grazing on all the dunes.”

¹²⁰² In Arabic the same word is used for “mirage.”

¹²⁰³ LXX: “every path is a pasture for them.” Literally: “my highways will be raised up.”

¹²⁰⁴ So: Versions. Hebrew “Sinim.” Scholars have sought to find the exact location. The LXX has “Persia.” More recent scholarship feels it is perhaps a site in NE Egypt. Others feel it is further south in the area of Aswan. The exact location is uncertain.

¹²⁰⁵ 1QIsa “My God.”

¹²⁰⁶ Some scholars re-vocalize the word to read: “Your sons.” 1QIsa, Vulgate, Targums and LXX: “your builders.”

¹²⁰⁷ NFT: “As for your ruins and desolate places, your ravaged land, it shall be too small then to hold your citizens, once our invaders have been driven afar.” NEB: “those who laid you in ruins are far away!”

8. *Whence have These Come? 49:20 - 21*

²⁰ “Children born during the time of your captivity ¹²⁰⁸ will still have the opportunity to see your land. They will say: ‘This place is too crowded for me to live here!’ ²¹ Then you will say to yourself, Now who bore me all these children? I am childless. I am barren. ¹²⁰⁹ I have been left alone. Can all these children be mine? ¹²¹⁰

9. *The Ensign to the Nations 49:22 – 23*

²² The Lord God says: “Behold I will raise my hand for the nations, and raise my sign to the people and they will bring their sons in their bosom and their daughters on their hips (*or, shoulders*). ²³ Kings will be their guardians and queens will nurse them. They will do homage to you, ¹²¹¹ bowing down to you and lick the dust on your feet. ¹²¹² Then you will know that I am the Lord. Those who wait for me will not be put to shame.”

10 *Savior, Redeemer and Mighty One of Jacob 49:24 – 26*

²⁴ “Can you take away spoils from the Almighty? Can the captives of a ruthless ruler be rescued?” ¹²¹³ ²⁵ The Lord affirms: “Even the captives of the mighty will be taken (*or, that is exactly what is going to happen*) and those who were captured by ruthless rulers will even contend with your enemies. I will maintain your cause and will rescue your children. ²⁶ I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh (*or, kill each other*). They will be as drunk on their own blood as if it were wine. ¹²¹⁴ Then everyone will know that I am the Lord who is your savior and redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.”

<CHAPTER 50>

B. *An Impenitent Nation and a Confessing Servant 50:1 – 11*

1. *God’s Judgment and Covenant Faithfulness 50:1 - 3*

¹ The word of the Lord: “Where is your mother’s certificate of divorce ¹²¹⁵ with which I separated from her? Or: which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? ¹²¹⁶ Behold, because of your misconduct you were sold, --- for your crimes your mother was dismissed. ¹²¹⁷ ² Why was it that when I came no one was there? When I called, why did no one respond? Is my power limited? ¹²¹⁸ Is it unable to redeem? ¹²¹⁹ Have I no [power to carry out my will? With mere rebuke I can dry up the sea and turn the rivers into a desert. The fish will stink ¹²²⁰ for lack of water and die. ¹²²¹ ³ I clothe the heavens with darkness and I make sackcloth their covering.”

¹²⁰⁸ Literally: “the children of your bereavement.”

¹²⁰⁹ NEB: “I am exiled and repudiated.” This is omitted by the LXX. Possibly it was an explanatory gloss.

¹²¹⁰ LXX: “Who has begotten me these? Whereas I was childless and a widow/ Who has raised these for me? I was left alone. Where do these come from that have been left to me?”

¹²¹¹ Literally: “with their faces to the ground.”

¹²¹² This is an extravagant but thoroughly oriental metaphor for abject self-humiliation.

¹²¹³ NIB: “Can a captive be rescued from a fiend?” The Hebrew is uncertain.

¹²¹⁴ This is descriptive of the horrors of siege conditions.

¹²¹⁵ Cf.; Deuteronomy 24:1 - 4

¹²¹⁶ A divorce or slavery could initiate a series of events making reconstitution of the original marriage impossible. The absence of a certificate shows that this process has not even started. As to slavery, in default of payment, a creditor was legally entitled to enslave the debtor’s dependents and, as long as this situation obtained, all rights lay with the creditor, none with the debtor.

¹²¹⁷ The fault was that of Israel, not of God. TAN: “you mother was dismissed for your crimes.”

¹²¹⁸ Literally: “hand cannot reach.”

¹²¹⁹ LXX: “του ποσασθαι..” “ransom” or “pay the price.”

¹²²⁰ LXX: “dry up.”

2. *The Suffering of the Disciple of the Lord 50:4 – 6*

⁴ “The Lord God has given me ability and the language ¹²²² to teach those who are being taught, that I am provided with the ability to speak appropriately, and to be sustaining to those who are weary. Morning by morning he awakes and I hear him as I might hear students who are being taught. ¹²²³ ⁵ The Lord God has opened my ear, and I did not rebel nor did I flee. ¹²²⁴ ⁶ I gave my back to those who flogged ¹²²⁵ me, my cheeks to those who tore out my beard. I did not hide my face from shame and spitting.” ¹²²⁶

3. *My Helper and Vindicator 50:7 – 9*

⁷ “The Lord is my helper, therefore I feel no disgrace. ¹²²⁷ I am determined ¹²²⁸ and I know that I will not need to be ashamed. ⁸ Will my vindicator confront me? Let us unitedly confront each other. ¹²²⁹ Who is my advocate? Let him approach me. ⁹ The Lord God will vindicate me! ¹²³⁰ Who will declare me guilty? Let him begin proceedings against me! ¹²³¹ Be assured, all my accusers will wear out like a garment. The moths will devour them.”

4. *The Light of Faith and the Fire of Judgment 50:10 – 11*

¹⁰ [“Who among you reveres the Lord and heeds the voice of his servant who walks in darkness and has not light, yet trusts in the name of the Lord and relies on his God! ¹¹ Each one of you who lights a [sacrificial] fire, ¹²³² who are led by such fires as you have lit, be assured that I, for my sake, declare to you that you will lie down in torment (*or, sorrow*).” ¹²³³

<CHAPTER 51>

C. The Coming Salvation 51:1 - 16C. ¹²³⁴

1. The Comforting of Zion 51:1 - 31

¹ “Listen to me, all you who pursue deliverance, ¹²³⁵ all you who seek the Lord! Look to the rock ¹²³⁶ from which you have been hewn and to the pit from which you have been quarried. ² Look to Abraham your ancestor and to Sarah who bore you for when Abraham was still single I called him, and I blessed him and made him to have many descendants. ³ The Lord will comfort Zion and will comfort all her waste places and will

¹²²¹ A change of vowel points would read: “on the parched ground.”

¹²²² Literally: “tongue.”

¹²²³ The speaker is heard but not identified until the ‘tail piece’ Verses 10 – 11.

¹²²⁴ LXX: “open my understanding to his will, nor did I flee.”

¹²²⁵ LXX: “μαστιγας.”

¹²²⁶ The speaker (servant) is gradually becoming more specific about his mission and what will befall him. The servant comes to the point of accepting suffering and shame along with resistance.

¹²²⁷ The Hebrew root word is also the root for “shame, insult.”

¹²²⁸ Literally: “I have set my face like a flint.”

¹²²⁹ The language is that of a legal encounter.

¹²³⁰ IQIsa: “help me.”

¹²³¹ TAN: “Who will get a verdict against me?”

¹²³² Literally: “gird yourself with branches.”

¹²³³ The tail piece (verses 10 – 11) takes the servant forward another step. The suffering servant enters a new dimension. Some scholars feel verses 10 – 11 are a later interpolation.

¹²³⁴ An oracle assuring that prayer is answered. A “Heilsorakal.”

¹²³⁵ LXX: “righteousness.” JB: “integrity.”

¹²³⁶ LXX: “solid rock.”

make her wilderness like [*the Garden of*] Eden. The desert will be like a garden to the Lord. Joy and gladness will be found there. Thanksgiving and singing will be heard.”

2. *The Time of Salvation is Near 51:4 – 6*

4 “My people: listen to me! ¹²³⁷ Listen to me, O nations, ¹²³⁸ for the law will go forth from me, and my justice will be a light to the people. 5 My deliverance is coming speedily; my salvation has gone forth and [my might will rule over the nations.] ¹²³⁹ The islands (*or, the more remote shores*) await me, and anxiously await my deliverance. ¹²⁴⁰ 6 Look up toward the heavens and look around at the earth, for the heavens will vanish ¹²⁴¹ like smoke. ¹²⁴² The earth will wear out like a garment. Those who live on it will die like gnats, ¹²⁴³ but my salvation will be for ever, and my deliverance will never end.” ¹²⁴⁴

3. *Fear not: Be not Dismayed 51:7 – 8*

7 “Listen to me! All who know righteousness, who truly care about my law ¹²⁴⁵ --- do not be fearful of the reproach of others. Do not be dismayed by their verbal attacks. 8 They will die, for just as a garment becomes moth eaten, or grubs eat wool, so it will be for them, but my deliverance is for ever and my salvation triumphs!” ¹²⁴⁶

4. *Interlude: A Fervent Call for God’s Intervention 51:9 – 11*

9 “Awake! Awake! Put on strength, O arm of the Lord. Awake as in the previous generations. It was you who cut Rahab ¹²⁴⁷ in pieces! It was you who pierced the dragon! ¹²⁴⁸ 10 Weren’t you the one who dried the sea, the waters of the great deep, making the depths of the sea a pathway for the redeemed to cross? 11 The redeemed of the Lord will return, singing to Zion. They will return with thoughts of everlasting joy and will obtain even more joy and gladness.”

¹²³⁷ The LXX repeats “listen to me.” Some Hebrew manuscripts read: “O people, O nations.”

¹²³⁸ LXX: “kings.”

¹²³⁹ Literally: “my arms will rule the princes of the people.” The LXX seems to merge verses 5 & 6 into one sentence. In the LXX the word that was translated as “deliverance” is “ὤς φῶς.” Some scholars feel the last phrase is a later interpolation.

¹²⁴⁰ The salvation of the Lord is eternal.

¹²⁴¹ LXX: “be darkened.”

¹²⁴² The Hebrew is uncertain. The root word here means “salt.”

¹²⁴³ BV: “die in swarms.” The Hebrew is a hapax legomenon. “Gnats” is an attempt to translate, based on an emendation. NEB: “The heavens will grow murky as smoke, the earth wears into tatters like a garment and those that live on it die like maggots; but my deliverance is everlasting and my saving shall never wane.”

¹²⁴⁴ LXX: “my righteousness will never fail.” Literally: “not be shortened.” Some scholars prefer to translate “will not cease.”

¹²⁴⁵ Literally: “whose heart is my law.”

¹²⁴⁶ MFT uses the word “triumph” to describe the literal Hebrew: “to all generations.”

¹²⁴⁷ The word means “loud mouth.” Rahab represented the forces of chaos and evil. Some scholars feel this was Isaiah’s nick name for Egypt.

¹²⁴⁸ In Near Eastern thought, (commonly in Babylon) there were mythological names. Rahab was a dragon (also called Tannin) who was vanquished by the Lord in a primordial conflict. The name appears in the Hebrew Scriptures only in poetic passages. The meaning is thought by some to be “rage” or “agitated” and comes from Akkadian. Others feel the source is Egyptian and it means “the roaring, turbulent one.” The LXX has “overweening.” Vulgate: “Superbus.” The intent of this poetic reference seems to have been used to designate the chaos before creation.

5. *The Consolation of Israel 51:12 – 14*

¹²⁴⁹ ¹² “I myself am the one who comforts you! What is the reason for you to be afraid of a man who dies, or of the son of man who is made like grass. ¹³ Have you forgotten your maker who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth? Why should you live every day with a constant fear because of the fury of the oppressor when he sets himself to destroy? Of what account is the fury of the oppressor? ¹⁴ He who is crouching down will soon be released; he will not die and go down to the pit, neither will his bread fail.” ¹²⁵⁰

6. *The God of Creation is Israel’s Covenant Lord 51:15 - 16*

¹⁵ “I am the Lord your God, ¹²⁵¹ who stirs up the sea so that the waters roar. The Lord of Hosts is his name. ¹⁶ I have put my words in your mouth and have sheltered you with my presence (*or, my hand*), ¹²⁵² stretching out the heavens and laying the foundation of the earth, and saying to Zion, ‘You are my people’. (*or, I have chosen you as a prophet nation.*)”

D. *The Lord has Become King 51:17 – 52:12*

1. *The Cup of Divine Judgment 51:17 – 18*

¹⁷ “Rouse yourselves, rouse yourselves. Stand up, O Jerusalem. You have drunk the cup of his wrath from his hand. You have drained the dregs from the bowl ¹²⁵³ and have staggered. ¹⁸ [There is no one among the sons she has borne to gild her. There is no one to take her by the hand among all the sons she has raised.”] ¹²⁵⁴

2. *Jerusalem’s Abject and Helpless Condition 51:29 – 20*

¹⁹ “A double calamity will befall you! Who will console ¹²⁵⁵ you? You will be confronted by devastation and famine, ¹²⁵⁶ as well as war. How will I comfort you? ¹²⁵⁷ ²⁰ Your sons are in a stupor. (They loaf at every street corner.) Like an antelope caught in a net they are full of the wrath of the Lord. They rebuke your God.”

3. *The Cup of Wrath 51:21 – 23* ¹²⁵⁸

²¹ “Therefore listen to this: You who are wounded, who are drunk though not with wine: ²² The Lord your God who pleads your case on behalf of his people says: ‘I have taken the bowl [*that has caused*] staggering from your hand, the bowl from which you will not drink from again. ¹²⁵⁹ ²³ I will put it into the hand of your tormentors ¹²⁶⁰ who

¹²⁴⁹ TAN: “What ails you that you fear man who must die.”

¹²⁵⁰ The Hebrew is uncertain. The prisoner cowering beneath the burden of his fetters will be freed from his captivity. To forget God and his promises results in terror, wrath, oppression and destruction.

¹²⁵¹ Literally: “As for me I am the Lord.” Some scholars feel verses 15 – 16 are a heroic fragment of poetry which is inserted here as a later interpolation.

¹²⁵² The Lord assigns a new role to the faithful remnant in this verse.

¹²⁵³ The word used here and in verse 22 has its origin in Ugaritic and is thought to mean “cup.” Cf. ANET p. 156b.

¹²⁵⁴ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. Cf.: ANET p. 150.

¹²⁵⁵ The Hebrew word literally means: “to shake the head to and fro in grief.”

¹²⁵⁶ NEB: “havoc and ruin.”

¹²⁵⁷ IQIsa: “Who will comfort..”

¹²⁵⁸ This seems to be a “Taunt Song.”

¹²⁵⁹ In ancient Canaan and Egypt it was the duty of those who were sober to attend to those who had become drunk.

¹²⁶⁰ The Dead Sea Scrolls add “and those who afflict you.”

have said to you: ‘Bow down that we might walk over you, and you have made your back like pavement, like a street for them to walk on’.” ¹²⁶¹

<CHAPTER 52>

4. “Awake, O Jerusalem 52:1 – 2

¹ “Awake! Awake! Put on your strength, ¹²⁶² O Zion. Put on your finest clothing O Jerusalem, the Holy City, for the un-circumcised (*or, Gentiles*) and the unclean ¹²⁶³ will no longer come to you. ² Shake the dust from yourself, stand captive ¹²⁶⁴ Jerusalem, loosen the bonds from your neck, ¹²⁶⁵ O captive daughter of Zion!”

5. *Without Compensation* 52:3 – 6 ¹²⁶⁶

³ [The Lord declares: “You were sold for nothing, you will be redeemed without money.” ⁴ The Lord says: “My people first went down into Egypt to reside there when the Assyrians had robbed them, giving nothing in return. ¹²⁶⁷ ⁵ Therefore what have I here,” ¹²⁶⁸ declares the Lord, “seeing that my people are taken away with nothing in return. Their rulers wail continually and my name is despised” says the Lord. ¹²⁶⁹ ⁶ Assuredly my people will know my name! Assuredly in that day they will know that it is I who speak. I have spoken.”]

6. “Your God has Become King” 52:7 – 8 ¹²⁷⁰

⁷ “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who announces peace, who brings good tidings (*or, happiness*), who publishes salvation, who says to Zion: ‘Your God reigns!’ ¹²⁷¹ ⁸ Listen! Your watchmen are all crying out: ‘Sing for joy! The Lord’s return to Zion is at hand. You will see this with your own eyes!’”

7. *Comfort, Redemption, and Victory* 52:9 – 10

⁹ “Break forth in song, you ruined places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has consoled his people and he has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰ The Lord has revealed his mighty power ¹²⁷² before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.”

¹²⁶¹ CEV: “Instead I will give it to your brutal enemies, who treated you like dirt and walked all over you.”

¹²⁶² TAN: “clothe yourself in splendor.”

¹²⁶³ MFT: “for pagans and profane men never more shall enter you.” Lyrically verse 2 should precede verse 1.

¹²⁶⁴ Possibly the word should be “humbled.” The Hebrew is in question. “Captive” is the word used in the versions.

¹²⁶⁵ Ancient depictions show captives bound together with a rope from neck to neck.

¹²⁶⁶ Several translations including NEB and JB printed these verses as prose. The BHS does not show these verses as prose. BHK has verses 3 & 4 as prose.

¹²⁶⁷ Many Israelites sought a haven in Egypt. Others were taken captive and brought to regions of the Assyrian Empire.

¹²⁶⁸ So: Qere and 1QIsa . Ketiv: ‘do I gain.’

¹²⁶⁹ 1QIsa : “The rulers constantly deal presumptuously because of the weakness of Israel . Other rulers mocked and derided Israel.” LXX: “Now why are you here? The Lord says: Because my people were taken for nothing, wonder and howl. Because of you my name is continually blasphemed among the Gentiles.” Verses 3 – 6 are considered by some scholars to be a later interpolation.

¹²⁷⁰ This passage is presumably announced by a herald or evangelist.

¹²⁷¹ In Babylon there was an annual New Year Festival. The god Markuk was carried through the streets and at this time the high priest cried out: ‘Marduk has become king.’ With that a new age was announced.

¹²⁷² Literally: “the Lord has bared his holy arm.”

8. *The New Exodus 52:11 – 12*

¹¹ “Depart! Depart [*from Babylon.*] Leave, do not touch anything unclean! Go out from the midst of her (*or, Babylon*). Purify yourselves, all you who are carrying the vessels. ¹²⁷³ ¹² You will not appear to be in a hurry, nor will you be fleeing as fugitives for the Lord will lead you, and the God of Israel will protect you on all sides.” ¹²⁷⁴

E. The Suffering Servant of the Lord 52:13 – 4312

¹³ “My servant ¹²⁷⁵ will prosper, he will be exalted and lifted up. He will be very highly exalted! ¹⁴ At that time many will be astonished at him. His appearance is disfigured beyond human expectation. He is marred almost beyond recognition. ¹²⁷⁶ ¹⁵ He will startle many nations. Kings will be silent because of him, for that which they have not been told will be revealed and what they have not heard they will now understand.”

<CHAPTER 53> ¹²⁷⁷

2. The Servant’s Life and Suffering 53:1 – 3

¹ “Who has believed what we have heard? To whom has the Lord’s might ¹²⁷⁸ been revealed? ² He grew up before him (*or, the Lord*) like a young shoot; and like a root out of dry ground. ¹²⁷⁹ He had no form nor beauty that we should admire him nor charm that we should find attractive. ³ He was despised and forsaken (*or, rejected*) by people, a man of sorrows (*or, pain*) and familiar with grief, and as one whom people might avoid. ¹²⁸⁰ He was despised and we saw nothing in him to esteem.” ¹²⁸¹

3. He Suffered for Us 53:4 – 6

⁴ “Yet he surely bore our sickness (*or, grief*) and carried our pains (*or, sorrows*) . We, however, thought of him as plagued, punished (*or, smitten*) by God and afflicted. ⁵ However he was wounded ¹²⁸² for our transgressions, he was bruised ¹²⁸³ for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was on him and through his wounds he has brought us healing. ⁶ We all went astray like sheep, each of us has gone his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

4. Silent Sufferer in Life and Death 53:7 – 9

⁷ “He was maltreated (*or, oppressed*) and yet he was submissive. He did not complain but humbly bore the maltreatment, like a lamb that was being led for slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent as it is being sheared, he did not complain. ⁸ Through

¹²⁷³ The people are to be ‘holy,’ not defiled. While in Babylon there was a lack of cleanliness as it was described and expected in the laws of cleanness in the Torah.

¹²⁷⁴ The people are being assured that they are under every possible divine care.

¹²⁷⁵ The Targum adds: “the Messiah.”

¹²⁷⁶ Some scholars feel this verse should be placed after 53:2.

¹²⁷⁷ Anselm developed a highly developed scholastic theology of the atonement based on Isaiah 53. Some scholars assume that these are the words of the people about the Suffering Servant. Others feel the Isaianic prophet is speaking under the inspiration of the Lord.

¹²⁷⁸ Literally: “the arm of the Lord upon” or “over whom has it been revealed?”

¹²⁷⁹ TAN: “For he has grown by His favor, like a tree crown, like a tree trunk out of the ground.” JB: “Like a sapling he grew up in front of us.” Some scholars emend the word to read “straight up.”

¹²⁸⁰ Hebrew uncertain. Literally: “whom men hide their faces from “

¹²⁸¹ Some scholars choose to insert 52:14 here, feeling it makes for a better read.

¹²⁸² Literally: “pierced through.” LXX: “made sick.”

¹²⁸³ Literally: “crushed.”

oppressive judgment he was taken away,¹²⁸⁴ and he was cut off from his generation who considered him, and taken from the land of the living and stricken for the transgression of my people. 9 They made his grave with evildoers and with a rich person in his death¹²⁸⁵ although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth.”¹²⁸⁶

5. The Lord's Purpose and the Servant's Destiny 53:10 – 12

¹⁰ [“Yet it was the Lord's will to bruise him: he caused him this grief.”]¹²⁸⁷ When he makes himself the offering for sin he will see his offspring,¹²⁸⁸ his life will be prolonged, and he will prosper through the hand of the Lord.¹²⁸⁹ ¹¹ He will see the results of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge the righteous one, my servant, will enable many to be accounted as righteous and he will bear the iniquity. ¹² Therefore I will divide a portion of honor with the great and he will divide the spoils with the strong, for he poured out his soul to death and was named among the transgressors’ yet he bore the sins of many and made intercession for the transgressors.”]¹²⁹⁰

<CHAPTER 54>

F, The Consolation of Israel 54:1 – 17

1. Zion's Many Children and Her Spacious Dwelling 54:1 - 3

¹ “Sing, O barren one,¹²⁹¹ who did not bear, sing out loudly and shout joyfully, you witnesses who have not been in labor. The children of the wife who is desolate will be more than the children of the one who married. The Lord declares this!¹²⁹² ² Enlarge the site of your tent, and extend¹²⁹³ the curtains of your dwelling place. Let it be extended. Do not hold back! Lengthen your tent cords and drive your tent pegs in firmly! ³ Your descendants will spread out in all directions and they will possess the nations and will re-populate the desolate cities.”

¹²⁸⁴ LXX: “in his humility his judgment was taken away.” JB: “By force and by law he was taken.” NEB offers an alternative: “after arrest and sentence....without protection, without justice.” Vulgate: “de angustia, es de iudicio sulatus est.”

¹²⁸⁵ Dead Sea Scroll: “his high place (or, mound)” which emended would read: “tomb.”

¹²⁸⁶ JB: “though there was no perjury in his mouth.” LXX: “for he practiced no iniquity nor craft with his mouth.”

¹²⁸⁷ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. Literally: “he made him sick.” MFT: “But the Eternal chose to vindicate his servant, rescuing his life from anguish, he let him prosper, to the full in a posterity with life prolonged.”

¹²⁸⁸ A number of scholars emend this to read “see his arm” or “see his vindication.”

¹²⁸⁹ NEB: “Yet the Lord took thought for his tortured servant and healed him who had made himself a sacrifice for sin, so shall he enjoy long life and see his children's children and in his hand the Lord's cause shall prosper.” Cf: ANET p. 380d.

¹²⁹⁰ The Isaianic prophet declares that it is God himself who takes the initiative to provide forgiveness and restoration.

¹²⁹¹ Jerusalem (Zion) was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE.

¹²⁹² LXX: “for more are the children of the deserted one than of her that had a husband.” MFT: “for when she was forlorn she had more sons than when she was wedded.” CEV: “The Lord has promised that you will have more children than someone married for a long time.” NEB: “For the deserted wife has more sons than she who lives in wedlock.” Motyer declares that “the children of the barren women are the children of salvation. There is however no natural explanation of the prophet's words.” TEV: “Jerusalem, you have been like a childless woman, but now you can sing and shout for joy. Now you will have more children than the woman whose husband never left her.”

¹²⁹³ Literally: “let them stretch out.”

2. *The Lord is the Husband of Israel* 54:4 – 5 ¹²⁹⁴

4 “Do not be fearful for you will not be ashamed ¹²⁹⁵ or confused for you will not be made to blush, for you will forget the disgrace of your youth and the humiliation of your widowhood. ¹²⁹⁶ You will no longer recall this! ¹²⁹⁷ 5 Your Maker whose name is the Lord of Hosts; the Holy One of Israel, your redeemer is your husband. He is called the God of the entire earth!”

3. *Everlasting Compassion and Everlasting Devotion* 54:6 – 8

6 “The Lord has called you as would a wife who is forsaken and grieved in spirit. ‘Can one cast off the wife of his youth, ¹²⁹⁸ says your God. 7 In a brief moment I forsook you, but I will gather you to myself again with great compassion. 8 In an outburst ¹²⁹⁹ of wrath, for a moment I hid my face from you, but I will have compassion for you with everlasting love, says the Lord.” ¹³⁰⁰

4. *The Everlasting Covenant* 54:9 – 10

9 “Just as in the days of Noah when I swore that the waters of Noah’s time should never again cover the earth, so now I swear that I will not be angry with you nor will I rebuke you. ¹³⁰¹ 10 The mountains may depart from you and my covenant of peace ¹³⁰² will not be removed says the Lord who has compassion ¹³⁰³ on you.”

5. *The New Jerusalem* 43:11 – 15

11 :O [*Jerusalem*] unhappy and afflicted, troubled by events and not comforted: be assured that I will set your footers solidly ¹³⁰⁴ and your foundation stones will be laid up with sapphires (*or, lapis lazuli*). ¹³⁰⁵ 12 I will make your pinnacles ¹³⁰⁶ of agate, your gates of carbuncle ¹³⁰⁷ and all your walls of precious stones. 13 Your sons will all be taught by the Lord and they will become prosperous. ¹³⁰⁸ 14 You will be established in righteousness (*or, founded in integrity*). Oppression will be remote. You will have no fear. You will be

¹²⁹⁴ Verses 4 – 5 take the form of a ‘Heilsorakal.’

¹²⁹⁵ LXXL: “Because you have been put to shame do not be confounded because you were reproached.

You will forget your former shame and will not recall the reproach of your widowhood.”

¹²⁹⁶ In Hebrew the words translated as “shame, disgrace, humiliation” all come from the same Hebrew root word.

¹²⁹⁷ CEV: “forget how sinful you were when you were young. Stop feeling ashamed for being left a widow.” TAN: “Fear not, you shall not be shamed. Do not cringe, you will not be disgraced. For you shall forget the reproach of your youth, and remember no more the shame of widowhood.”

¹²⁹⁸ An alternative translation might be: “Israel you are like a young wife whose husband left her, leaving her in great distress. The Lord calls you back to him, saying. ‘Can anyone reject the wife of his youth?’”

¹²⁹⁹ A hapax legmenon. Many emendations have been suggested. Cf. BHS. S.R. Driver: “with little emotion had.”

¹³⁰⁰ JB: “In excess anger I hid my face from you, for a moment but with everlasting love I have taken pity on you.”

¹³⁰¹ This verse assures us that God has a promise of an everlasting covenant based on steadfast love. MT offers a slightly different separation of letters thus making the meaning a bit different. The translation is based on the LXX and the suggestions in BHS.

¹³⁰² Covenant and peace are closely associated here and in four other places in the Hebrew Scriptures.

¹³⁰³ LXX: “he who is gracious has spoken.”

¹³⁰⁴ Literally: “set your stones in antimony.”

¹³⁰⁵ Cf.: ICC. The exact variety of stone mentioned here is uncertain. Scholars are divided concerning the exact translation. Precious stones are represented here.

¹³⁰⁶ LXX: “buttresses.”

¹³⁰⁷ LXX: “crystal.”

¹³⁰⁸ LXX: “your children will live in great peace.”

freed from terror which will not come. ¹⁵ If strife should come it will not be by my action. Whoever stirs up strife against you will fail (*or, surrender*).” ¹³⁰⁹

6. The Lord's Omnipotence 54:16 – 17

¹⁶ “Behold, I have created ¹³¹⁰ the smith ¹³¹¹ who blows on the fire to produce the metal, to create the weapon that can devastate or destroy. ¹⁷ No weapon is fashioned to be used against you. You will prevail and succeed against all judgmental criticism. This is the heritage of the Lord and the vindication for me. This is the utterance of the Lord!”

<CHAPTER 55>

G. Grace Abounding 55:1 – 13 ¹³¹²

1. The Invitation to the Hungry and Thirsty 55:1 – 2

¹ “Ho, everyone who thirsts: come ¹³¹³ to the water. Whoever has no money, ¹³¹⁴ come, buy ¹³¹⁵ and eat. Come! Buy wine and milk without money and without cost. ² Why do you spend money ¹³¹⁶ for that which is not bread? Why do you labor for what fails to satisfy? Listen to me diligently! You will have food that is good to eat and you will be delighted by the very rich diet.” ¹³¹⁷

2. The Everlasting Covenant of David 55:3 – 5

³ “Be attentive and come to me! Listen so that your soul might survive. ¹³¹⁸ I will make an eternal covenant with you, ¹³¹⁹ namely those promises made because of my steadfast love for my servant David. ¹³²⁰ ⁴ You will see that I made him a leader (*or, witness*) to the Gentiles as a prince and a commander ¹³²¹ for the Gentiles. ⁵ Be assured that you will call nations that thus far are unknown to you and nations that are not aware of you will run to you because of the Lord your God and of the Holy One of Israel; for he has glorified you!”

¹³⁰⁹ The Hebrew is difficult. LXX: “Be assured, strangers will come to you, at my direction and they will sojourn with you, coming to you for refuge.” MFT: “Should strife be stirring ‘tis not by me. Who falls on you shall fall in ruin.” TAN: “Surely no harm can be done without my consent: All who would harm you shall fall because of you.”

¹³¹⁰ This is emphatic in Hebrew.

¹³¹¹ LXX: “coppersmith.”

¹³¹² This invitation is for those to whom the heritage of the Suffering Servant fails to receive acceptance. Some scholars feel this chapter seems to teach a national welfare, physical well being as well as spiritual blessings. The promise seems to cover every needed supply.

¹³¹³ NEB: “come and fetch.”

¹³¹⁴ Some scholars feel the root word is Akkadian, meaning “food” or “meal.” This makes for better poetic parallelism.

¹³¹⁵ This word is omitted by the LXX and 1QIsa. Possibly it is dittography.

¹³¹⁶ Literally: “weigh out silver.” Pieces of silver were weighed since money was not yet minted. This began in the time of the Persians. LXX: “valued the price of money.”

¹³¹⁷ LXX: “your soul will feast itself on good things.”

¹³¹⁸ LXX adds: “in prosperity.”

¹³¹⁹ MFT: “an eternal compact I grant you the favors promised faithfully to David.” JB: “of the favors promised to David.”

¹³²⁰ Cf.: II Samuel 7:8 – 16. NEB: “to love you faithfully as I loved David.”

¹³²¹ LXX: “προστασσοντα.”

3. Repent, for the Time is Fulfilled 55:6 – 9

¹³²² 6 “Seek the Lord while he is still able to be found! Call on him while he is near. ¹³²³ 7 [Let the scoundrels abandon their ways, and those who are wicked change their ways of thinking. ¹³²⁴ Let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them ¹³²⁵ and to our God for he will pardon abundantly!] ¹³²⁶ 8 My thoughts ¹³²⁷ are not your thoughts (*or, plans*) and you ways are not my ways. ¹³²⁸ This is the utterance of the Lord! ¹³²⁹ 9 Just as the heavens are high above the earth, so too my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.”

4. The Activity of Mission of the Word of God 55:10 – 11 ¹³²⁸

¹³²⁹ 10 “Just as the rain and the snow come down from heaven do not return but water the earth, causing it to yield crops and sprout, giving seed for those who sow and bread for those who eat, ¹³³⁰ 11 so it will be as my word that goes forth from my mouth! ¹³³¹ It will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish all that I intend and it will prosper in all that I designate it to accomplish.”

5. The New Exodus 55:12 – 13

¹³³² 12 “You will go (*or, leave*) ¹³³³ with joy and will proceed, being led in peace. The mountains and hills before you will break out in singing, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. ¹³³⁴ 13 Instead of brambles ¹³³⁵ cypress will grow, instead of nettles ¹³³⁶ myrtle will grow and these will be as a memorial to the Lord, for these will be as an everlasting sign that will not fail.” ¹³³⁷

<CHAPTER 56> ¹³³⁴

III, Admonition and Proverbs 56:1 – 66:24

A. Prophetic Introduction 56:1 – 8`

1. Proem: Obey the Law 56:1

¹³³⁸ 1 Thus is the declaration of the Lord: ¹³³⁹ “Keep that which is lawful and do what is righteous for my salvation will soon come. My deliverance will be revealed.” ¹³⁴⁰

¹³²² LXX: “while he is near to you.”

¹³²³ LXX: “the transgressor his counsels.”

¹³²⁴ Some translators use the word “pity” which hardly describes the Hebrew word.

¹³²⁵ JB: “to our God who is rich in forgiving.” Literally: “for he will be great in pardon.” The Hebrew word translated as “pardon” is used more than 40 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

¹³²⁶ LXX: “counsels.”

¹³²⁷ Some scholars emend to read: “word.”

¹³²⁸ JB prints these verses as prose.

¹³²⁹ MFT: “passed my lips.” The word of God achieves its highest expression. It will be heard, be understood and will succeed.

¹³³⁰ I.e., leave Babylon to return to Judah and Jerusalem.

¹³³¹ This Hebrew word is only used here and in 7:19.

¹³³² So: LXX The exact meaning of the Hebrew word for “thorn bush” is uncertain. .

¹³³³ NEB: “Pine trees will shoot up in place of camel-thorn, myrtle instead of briars; all this shall win the Lord a great name, imperishable, a sign for all time.”

¹³³⁴ Scholars who feel Isaiah was written by three different prophets are divided as to whether chapter 56 was written by Isaiah 2 or Isaiah 3. Those scholars who think of Isaiah being the result of the work of an Isaianic school of prophets make no attempt to clarify who did the writing in the given chapters.

¹³³⁵ The TEV and JB among other translations present this chapter as prose. BHK and BHS do not.

¹³³⁶ Salvation and righteousness are for everyone. The prophet does not call people by righteous works but calls them to live lives like the life revealed by the Lord.

2. *Blessing and Exhortation 56:2 - 3.*

2 "Oh the happiness of those who do my bidding, and the persons who are faithful; the persons who hold fast, who keep the Sabbath, not profaning, it but do not do what is unrighteous. 3 Do not permit the foreigner ¹³³⁷ who has joined ¹³³⁸ himself to the Lord to say, 'The Lord will certainly keep me apart from his people.' ¹³³⁹ Do not let the eunuch say, 'Look! I am a tree'." ¹³⁴⁰

3. *Eunuchs 56:4 - 5*

4 This is the word of the Lord: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbath, who have chosen the things that please me, firmly adheres to my covenant: 5 I will give them my house and a monument within my walls with the names of sons and daughters. I will give them an everlasting name which will not perish." ¹³⁴¹

4. *Forgiveness 56:6 - 7*

8 "Those foreigners who join themselves to the Lord to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord and to be his servants --- all those who keep the Sabbath and do not profane it, and who firmly hold my covenant: 7 these will be brought by me to my mountain. ¹³⁴² Let them rejoice in my house of prayer with their burnt offerings and their sacrifices which will be welcome on my altar, for my house will be called a house of prayer for all people (*or, nations*)."

5. *The Gathered Community of God 56:8*

8 The word of the Lord God who gathers ¹³⁴³ the outcasts of Israel: "I will even gather more in addition to those that are already gathered."

8. *Blind Leaders and Corrupt Worship 56:9 - 57:13*

1. *The Decadence and Corruption of Leaders 56:9 - 10*

9 "All you beasts of the field: ¹³⁴⁴ come to devour; come all you beasts of the forest 10 for his, (*Israel's*) watchmen are blind ¹³⁴⁵ and each day are drunken and sprawled out in sleep, which they love." ¹³⁴⁶

2. *The Greedy Dogs 56:11 - 12*

11 "The dogs have an insatiable appetite (*or, are greedy*). They are never satisfied. The shepherds have no understanding. ¹³⁴⁷ Everyone has turned to his own way and each seeks his personal advantage. ¹³⁴⁸ 12 'Come' they say, 'let us get wine and arouse ourselves with liquor, and tomorrow we will do exactly the same, or even better.'" ¹³⁴⁹

¹³³⁷ "Foreigner" and "eunuch" become symbols of inclusiveness.

¹³³⁸ LXX: "οπροσκειρενος."

¹³³⁹ This had been used as a reason for exclusion of heathen. This, however, is not the prophet's intent.

¹³⁴⁰ LXX inserts: "a dry tree." The thought is 'unable to produce any offspring.'

¹³⁴¹ The Hebrew word for "memorial" is "yad" which is possibly ancient Phoenician in origin. It is the prophet's intention that the names be preserved for posterity.

¹³⁴² LXX inserts "holy" mountain.

¹³⁴³ Literally: "I will gather to him, to all his gathered ones."

¹³⁴⁴ The MT is emended by the BHS.

¹³⁴⁵ LXX: "See how they are all blind, they know." "φρονησαι."

¹³⁴⁶ The Hebrew is uncertain.

¹³⁴⁷ Literally: "They do not know being satisfied and there are the shepherds who cannot understand."

LXX: "they do not know hearing."

¹³⁴⁸ Hebrew unclear. A possible emendation reads: "Neither do the shepherds even know sufficiency."

¹³⁴⁹ This verse is completely absent from the LXX.

CHAPTER 57>

3. *The Fate of the Righteous 57:1- 2*

¹ ¹³⁵⁰ "The righteous man perishes, and no one really cares. ¹³⁵¹ People who are devout are taken away and no one thinks anything about it. Righteous persons are spared ¹³⁵² from calamity. ¹³⁵³ ² Yet these enter into peace, for those who are upright rest in their graves." ¹³⁵⁴

4. *Rebuke to the Apostate 57:3 – 4*

³ "You who come closer, you sons of the sorcerers, you sons of adulterers and prostitutes: ¹³⁵⁵ ⁴ With whom do you act familiarly? Against whom do you open your mouth? To whom do you stick out your tongue? Are you not children of transgressors, the offspring of deceit?"

5. *Devotion of the Nature Cult 57:5 – 6*

⁵ "You who were conceived through lust among the oaks (*or, tenebinths*) or under every green tree, ¹³⁵⁶ who sacrificed your children in the wadis (*or, ravines*) among the clefts of the rocks (*or, on the rocky cliffs*) ⁶ among the smooth (*or, slippery*) stones of the valley in your areas of cultic sensuality, they then are your gods, and you have poured out drink offerings to them, you have brought cereal offerings! [Should I be appeased by these actions?]" ¹³⁵⁷

6. *The Adulteries of Nature Worship 57:7 – 8*

⁷ "You have set up your couches on high and lofty mountains and there you offer sacrifices. ¹³⁵⁸ ⁸ You have set up the door and door posts as your symbols ¹³⁵⁹ thus abandoning me. You have uncovered your bed, you have gone to it! You have made it wide, you have made a covenant with yourselves, You have loved this bed and have chosen lust and nakedness." ¹³⁶⁰

¹³⁵⁰ The LXX begins this verse with "Behold."

¹³⁵¹ Literally: "no one really takes it to heart."

¹³⁵² Literally: "taken away."

¹³⁵³ TEV: "Good people die; and no one understands, or even cares. But when they die, no calamity can hurt them." The decadence of the time is revealed as moral and spiritual indifference along with callousness of prophets and priests.

¹³⁵⁴ LXX: "His burial will be in peace and he has been removed --- out of the way." The Hebrew is grammatically awkward.

¹³⁵⁵ Literally: "an adulterous and the prey of prostitutes." LXX: "adulterers" "και πορνης." LXX: "prostitutes" "she prostitutes herself." Prostitution, as a metaphor, is used 42 times in the Hebrew Scriptures.

¹³⁵⁶ Canaanite altar cults used green trees for their religious worship.

¹³⁵⁷ The Hebrew is most difficult. The word "stones" is lacking in the Hebrew text. The Dead Sea Scrolls offer no clarification. Some scholars feel the last sentence is a later gloss. MFT: "You choose the slippery gods of the glen; you settle to have them! To them you pour out your libations and offer cereals!" There seems to be a play on words in the last line. MFT: "Am I to leave all that unpunished?"

¹³⁵⁸ The practices of an immoral sex cult are clearly in the mind of the prophet in this and the following verse.

¹³⁵⁹ CB: "your phallic symbol." NAB: "immoral symbol."

¹³⁶⁰ Hebrew uncertain! Kittel: "You bought lying love and crouching lust from them." This is a translation made possible by a slight change in the vocalization. TAN: "You have loved bedding down with them."

7. Endless Cultic Exertions 57:9 – 10

9 “You traveled to Molech¹³⁶¹ with oil¹³⁶² and multiplied your perfumes. You sent your envoys to distant places, even attempting to send messages to the abode of the dead (or, *Sheol*). 10 You became weary in your travels, but you did not say, ‘I give up.’ You found new gratification for your lust which resulted in exhaustion (or, *becoming ill*).”

8. The Lord’s Indictment 57:11

11 “For whom did you have any dread or fear? Were you not concerned about me?¹³⁶³ Have I not stood by you, though silently, even for a long time?¹³⁶⁴ Do you not have a feeling of awe concerning me? The watchmen are unqualified, insatiable, undeserving and improvident.”¹³⁶⁵

9. The Fate of the Gods and the Grace of God 57:12 – 13

12 “I will reveal your righteousness¹³⁶⁶ and your actions but that will be of no help to you.¹³⁶⁷ 13 When you shriek let your idol collection¹³⁶⁸ save you! The wind will carry them off; in fact, a puff of wind will take them away. Whoever takes refuge in me will possess the land and will inherit my holy mountain.”

C. Persisting Grace 57:14 – 2

1. Prepare for the Time of Salvation 57:13

13 “It will be said: Build up! Build up!¹³⁶⁹ Prepare the way! Remove every obstruction from the people’s way!”

2. The Divine Dwelling Place 57:15

15 Thus says the High and Lofty One,¹³⁷⁰ the one who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and am one who possesses a humble and repentant spirit, a spirit to revive those who are humble and contrite.”

3. The Time of Judgment is Ended 57:16 – 17

16 “I will not always accuse, nor will I always be angry: for from me proceeds the spirit and I have made the breath of life. 17 Because of the indignant nature¹³⁷¹ of his covetousness I was angry. I struck him. I turned away¹³⁷² in anger, but he kept on backsliding doing what he himself desired.”

¹³⁶¹ “Molech” or “Milcom.” The root word also means “king.” The Canaanite worship was that of “Melek” whereas the Ammonite worship was that of “Molech.” These were different names for the same sort of worship experience.

¹³⁶² The word could perhaps be translated as: “you were drenched with oil” Vulgate: “et ornaste te regi unguen to.” Some scholars read this as “you anoint yourself with oil.”

¹³⁶³ LXX: “taken me in your mind, --- into your heart?” Literally: “You did not set it upon your heart.”

¹³⁶⁴ Vulgate: “quia ego tac ems, et quasi non videns.” LXX: “παρορω.”

¹³⁶⁵ Having misunderstood the silence of God the people no longer were in awe of him. Society was not favorable to those who had genuine faith.

¹³⁶⁶ The word “reveal” seems to cover the meaning of the Hebrew word better than “tell.” This is spoien ironically.

¹³⁶⁷ MFT: “I will expose your doings, this ‘religion’ of yours.” LXX: “it will not profit you.”

¹³⁶⁸ Literally: “your gathered things.” Emended: “idols” or “abominations.”

¹³⁶⁹ IQIsa “Cast up, cast up the highways.” LXX: “καθαρισαιτε.” “Purge the way before him.”

¹³⁷⁰ IQIsa “In the highest and in the holy place.” Some scholars translate: “in the highest” as “Holy One I sit enthroned.” The translation is a probable rendering of the Hebrew.

¹³⁷¹ LXX: “βροχυν.”

¹³⁷² Literally: “turned my face from him.” IQIsa: “I, myself.” This was possibly due to the miss-reading of one Hebrew letter.

4. *Healing, Comfort and the Gift of Praise 57:18 – 19*

¹⁸ “I have seen his ways; but I will heal him, I will lead him to comfort, ¹³⁷³ repaying them with comfort and creating truth from the lips of others for those who mourn. ¹³⁷⁴ ¹⁹ Peace, peace, to all who are far and near says the Lord; and I will provide healing.” ¹³⁷⁵

5. *The Wicked 57:20 – 21*

²⁰ “The wicked are like the restless sea; for it cannot be quiet and its waters toss for it cannot rest. ²¹ There is no peace (*or, safety*) says the Lord, for those who are wicked.”

<CHAPTER 58>

D. *The Service Pleasing to God 58:1 – 14* ¹³⁷⁶

1. *God’s Call to the Prophet 58:1 – 3b*

¹ “Cry aloud, spare not, project your voice ¹³⁷⁷ like a trumpet! Declare their transgressions to my people and declare their sinfulness to the house of Jacob. ¹³⁷⁸ ² Be assured, they seek me daily and eagerly learn my ways, as if they were a nation that did what was right and did not abandon the teachings (*or, ordinances*) of their God. They ask about the way of justice being delighted to be near God. ³ ‘Why have we fasted and not understood? Why have we afflicted our souls (*or, humbled ourselves*) and you did not even notice our actions?’” ¹³⁷⁹

2. *Do You Call this a Fast? 58:3c – 5*

Let it be known that in the day of your fast you do as you please and you abuse ¹³⁸⁰ your workers. ⁴ You only fast to engage in quarrels and to enjoy strife, using your fists. ⁵ If you fast in this manner do you still expect to be heard in heaven? ⁵ Is that the sort of fasting that I desire? Is it simply a day in which to starve one’s body? Is it just a day to hang one’s head like a bulrush and to spread out sackcloth and ashes under oneself? Is this sort of fasting acceptable to the Lord?” ¹³⁸¹

3. *The Rich Reward of the True Fast 58:6 – 9b*

⁶ “Is not this fast that pleases me intended to untie the fetters of injustice, to untie the cords of the yoke, ¹³⁸² to free the oppressed and to break every yoke [*of inhumanity*]. ⁷ It

¹³⁷³ 1QIsa seems to have a different recension. “I will not reward (*or, comfort*) them.”

¹³⁷⁴ Hebrew uncertain. Literally: “give complete comfort to him and to the mourners as I create the fruit of their lips.” This is thought to possibly be from ‘The Hymn of the Initiates’ found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

¹³⁷⁵ LXX: “His ways have seen and heard him and comforted him and given him true comfort.” God will no longer turn his face in anger but wills to ‘heal’ and ‘comfort.’

¹³⁷⁶ The prophet feels called upon to expose the sin of his people, Israel. Two possible understandings are evident. 1. The prophet argues that there is an inherent contrast between the empty religious practices and genuine religious spirituality. 2. Religion has become misdirected and replaced with a different direction for believers concern for the poor and homeless.

¹³⁷⁷ NEB: “Shout aloud without restraint.”

¹³⁷⁸ Up to this point the greatest source of grief for the Hebrew people had been the destruction of the temple in 586 BCE. Some scholars feel this verse is a reference to that event. George Adam Smith says: “Those who have never heard angry Orientals speak have no idea of what power of denunciation lies in the human throat.” Commentary: Isaiah II p. 447.

¹³⁷⁹ TEV: “The people ask ‘Why should we fast if the Lord never notices? Why should we go without food if he pays no attention?’”

¹³⁸⁰ The Hebrew word is the word that is also used for “taskmasters.” LXX: “*τοὺς υποχειρίους*.”

¹³⁸¹ The mistake was that the fast and all that accompanies it was carried out with a pharisaic spirit.

¹³⁸² The problem is mismanagement by treating people like animals. A change of one vowel would have the word read: “lawlessness.”

is absolutely true that your bread is to be shared with those who are hungry and to provide housing for the homeless poor.¹³⁸³ When you find them naked you are to provide a covering. Do not ignore your own family relatives. [*Provide help where it is needed.*] ⁸ It is then that your light will break through like the dawn and your healing ¹³⁸⁴ will quickly begin, for your righteousness ¹³⁸⁵ will precede you. The presence of the Lord will become your rear-guard.¹³⁸⁶ ⁹ Then you will call and the Lord will answer. You will call and he will respond, ‘Here I am’.”

4. Growing Promises 58:9c – 12

“If you banish the yoke from your midst, the pointed finger ¹³⁸⁷ and the evil speech; ¹⁰ if you give of your food for the hungry ¹³⁸⁸ and satisfy those who are afflicted, --- then your light will shine in the darkness and gloom --- as brightly as noonday.¹³⁸⁹ ¹¹ The Lord will continually guide you and satisfy your needs with good things. Your bones will be strong and you will be like a lush garden whose spring of water never fails.¹³⁹⁰ ¹² Your ancient ruins will be rebuilt on their old foundations that had been destroyed generations ago and the breaches in the walls will be rebuilt and the streets will be restored for its inhabitants.”

5. Keep the Sabbath 58:13 – 14

¹³ “If you do not trample the Sabbath by plying your trade on my holy day and if you do not look on the Sabbath as a day of pleasure and delight, using it to bargain or trade, but honor it, not going your own way or seeking your own pleasure with foolish talk, ¹⁴ then you will take delight in the Lord, and I will make a place for you in the high places of the earth. You will be well fed and permitted to enjoy the heritage of Jacob your ancestor. This is the word of the Lord!”

<CHAPTER 59>

E. God’s Intervention 59:1 – 21

1 The Separation Between God and the Community 59:1 – 4

¹ “Behold the Lord’s hand (*or, personal action*) is not shortened so it cannot serve, nor is his ear deaf so that he is unable to hear. ² Your iniquities have caused a separation ¹³⁹¹ between you and your God and your sins have hidden his face ¹³⁹² from you so that he does not hear. ³ Your hands are stained with blood and you have committed violence. ¹³⁹³ Your lips have spoken lies and your tongue utters wickedness.¹³⁹⁴ ⁴ No one deals honestly with the law and no one pleads his case truthfully. All rely on casuistry (*or, on that which has no legal value*). Falsehoods are spoken concerning wrongdoings resulting in evil decisions.”

¹³⁸³ LXX: “the poor and wanderers.” 1QIsa adds: “and with a garment.”

¹³⁸⁴ The Hebrew word is descriptive. “fresh skin that grows over a raw wound.”

¹³⁸⁵ TAN: “vindication.”

¹³⁸⁶ So: Hebrew. LXX: “the glory of God will surround you.”

¹³⁸⁷ The Hebrew is in question. Literally: “sending out the finger.” TAN: “the menacing hand.”

¹³⁸⁸ LXX: “If you give bread to the hungry from your soul.” Peshitta also has “bread.”

¹³⁸⁹ This word is a hapax legomenon in Hebrew. Some scholars read it as: “he will slake your thirst in parched places.”

¹³⁹⁰ Literally: “gushes forth.”

¹³⁹¹ TAN: “have been a barrier.” JB: “a gulf.” NEB: “raise a barrier.”

¹³⁹² MT: “faces.”

¹³⁹³ LXX: “committed sins.”

¹³⁹⁴ LXX: “meditates unrighteousness.” TAN: “utters treachery.”

2. *The Crooked Roads of Evil* 59:5 – 8

5 “They hatch adder’s eggs¹³⁹⁵ and weave a spider’s web. Whoever eats an egg will die and the crushed egg hatches out a viper.¹³⁹⁶ 6 Their webs will not serve as a garment. People will be unable to cover themselves with what they make, their deeds are deeds of iniquity, and violence defines their actions.¹³⁹⁷ 7 They pursue evil and are eager to shed innocent blood. They plot iniquity, desolation and destruction.¹³⁹⁸ These are constantly on their minds! 8 They do not know the way of peace and justice does not occur to them.¹³⁹⁹ They have made their life pathways to be crooked and no one who follows them knows peace.”¹⁴⁰⁰

3. *The Community Lament* 59:9 – 11

9 “Because of this justice is far removed from us and righteousness does not reach us. We seek light but see darkness; for brightness but walk in gloom. 10 Like the blind we grope for the wall as if we had no eyes and stumble about at noon¹⁴⁰¹ as if it were twilight. We are like the dead in the presence of those who possess vigor¹⁴⁰² for we grope like bears, moaning and moaning, mournful like doves --- we await justice, but there is none, for salvation, but we do not receive it.”

4. *The Community Confession* 59:12 – 15b

12 “Our transgressions are multiplied in your presence and our sins are a testimony against us. Our transgressions are constantly with us and we are aware of our iniquities.¹⁴⁰³ 13 Being rebellious and faithless toward the Lord we turn from him and thereby speak oppression and revolt, thereby causing us to deliberately¹⁴⁰⁴ utter lies. 14 Justice is altered and righteousness is distant for in the public square [*where justice is meted out*] truth has been pushed into the background and righteousness is forbidden to enter. 15 Honesty is missing and whoever seeks to do what is good becomes the prey of others.”¹⁴⁰⁵

5. *God Prepares to Intervene* 59:15c – 17

“The Lord saw this and was displeased that there was no justice. 16 He saw that there was no one to uphold justice and was appalled that there was no one to intervene. It was only through the Lord’s own strength and righteousness that justice and righteousness could be upheld. 17 He wore righteousness like a breastplate and the helmet of salvation on his head. He donned the garments of vengeance as clothing and wrapped his zeal about him like a coat.”

¹³⁹⁵ The Hebrew word is “Tziphoni” is the name of a legendary deadly monster. The word for “adder” in Hebrew, “sip’oni” is rarely used and its exact meaning is unclear. LXX: “asp’s eggs.”

¹³⁹⁶ This was possibly a proverb which gives the thought that bad starts always gets worse!

¹³⁹⁷ TEV: “your plots will do you no good. They are useless clothing made of cobwebs.”

¹³⁹⁸ The Dead Sea Scroll 1QIsa adds “violence.” The Hebrew literally has “are in their highways.”

¹³⁹⁹ Literally: “They do not know the way of peace, and justice is not in their path.”

¹⁴⁰⁰ Literally: “They have twisted their path for themselves and for their own hurt.” MFT: “They are not for what leads to bless. Their paths are void of justice. They take the crooked course where bliss will be unknown.”

¹⁴⁰¹ LXX: “midnight.”

¹⁴⁰² The Hebrew is unclear. The words translated as “who possess vigor” are a hapax legomenon. An emendation would read: “In the day time we are like dead.”

¹⁴⁰³ Literally: “our iniquities, we know them.”

¹⁴⁰⁴ Literally: “from the heart.”

¹⁴⁰⁵ TEV: “There is so little honesty that anyone who stops doing evil finds himself a victim of crime.”

6. God Comes as Redeemer 59:18 – 21

¹⁸ “God will repay according to their deeds for his wrath toward his enemies will be a reprisal even to the distant lands for their evil. ¹⁹ Those who are from the west will be in awe of his name and his glory will appear from (*or, to*) the east. He will come like a rushing stream that is driven by the wind. ¹⁴⁰⁶ ²⁰ He will come to Zion as the Redeemer, to those in Jacob who turn away from their transgressions.

Prose: ²¹ “As for me, ¹⁴⁰⁷ this is my covenant, says the Lord: My spirit is on you. I have spoken and have put words in your mouth, or these have come out of the mouths of your children and your children’s children. This declaration of the Lord is eternal!” **Prose ends.**

<CHAPTER 60>

F. The Coming Glory of the Lord 60:1 – 22 ¹⁴⁰⁸

1. The Dawn of Glory

¹ “Arise, shine, ¹⁴⁰⁹ for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord shines brightly (*or, dawns*) on you. ² Be assured that darkness ¹⁴¹⁰ will cover the earth and thick darkness will cover the people ¹⁴¹¹ but the Lord’s presence will shine on you and his glory will be evident! ³ Nations will come to be in your light and kings will seek your brightness.”

2. The Walls of the Nations 60:4 – 5

⁴ “Raise your eyes, look about, see! All have gathered together to be with you! They will come from great distances and your daughters will be carried on your hips. ¹⁴¹² ⁵ Then you will see in amazement and your heart will throb and rejoice because the abundance ¹⁴¹³ of the sea ¹⁴¹⁴ that is turned to you. The wealth of the nations will come to you.”

3. The Homage and Tribute of the East 60:6 – 7

⁶ “A multitude ¹⁴¹⁵ of camels are coming that will cover you, young camels ¹⁴¹⁶ from Midian and Ephah, ¹⁴¹⁷ all those from Sheba. ¹⁴¹⁸ They will bring gold (*or, gold and spices*), frankincense. They will be heralds of good news that will be praiseworthy. ¹⁴¹⁹ ⁷ All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered for you. The rams of Nebaioth ¹⁴²⁰ will serve

¹⁴⁰⁶ LXX: verses 18 – 19: ‘as one who is about to offer a repayment, even reproach to his adversaries.

Those of the west will be in awe of the name of the Lord and they that come from the rising sun will speak his glorious name, for the wrath of the Lord will come like a mighty river, it will come with fury.”

¹⁴⁰⁷ Many scholars feel this is a brief separate oracle. Others seek to have it fit into the oracle of chapter 59.

¹⁴⁰⁸ This is supreme example of a Hebrew literary style.

¹⁴⁰⁹ LXX: “strive” or “be enlightened.” The LXX, Targums & Vulgate add “Jerusalem.”

¹⁴¹⁰ LXX: “οδους.” JB: “though night shall cover the earth and darkness the people.”

¹⁴¹¹ LXX adds: “and great darkness over the people.”

¹⁴¹² So: Hebrew. This was the usual way of carrying small children. LXX: “carried on their shoulders.”

¹⁴¹³ The word can also be translated as “multitude” or “tumult.”

¹⁴¹⁴ The Hebrew word can easily be emended to read “islands” or “coast lands.”

¹⁴¹⁵ Literally: “a dust cloud.”

¹⁴¹⁶ The Hebrew word describes a young female camel. Some scholars translate this as “dromedary.”

¹⁴¹⁷ Midianites were looked upon as a tribe of camel driver who originally came from the area near the Gulf of Aqaba. Ephah was east of the Persian Gulf.

¹⁴¹⁸ In recent years scholars have been divided as to the location. 1. Ethiopia. 2. Southern Arabia. Recent scholarship has learned that the southern Arabia area was also sometimes called Sheba.

¹⁴¹⁹ Cf.: BDB, 1QIsa.

¹⁴²⁰ Kedar and Nebaioth were probably Nabateans whose home was in Jordan.

your needs. They will come to welcome and to bring offerings to be made at my altar, ¹⁴²¹ and I will thereby add glory to my glorious name.”

4. *Fleets of Exiles from the West* 60:8 - 9

8 “Are these white sails to be compared to cumulus clouds? 9 The costal lands will wait for me. The ships of Tarshish ¹⁴²² will be the first to bring your sons from distant lands along with their gold in the Name of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel because he has glorified you.”

5. *The Restoration of the Walls and the Wealth of the Nations* 30:10 – 12

10 “Aliens (*or, Foreigners*) will build up your walls and their kings will minister to you, for it is in my wrath that I have struck you but it is in my love that I have had mercy on you. 11 Your gates will remain open, day and night. They will not be closed so that people might bring their wealth to you, the wealth of the nations, with their kings leading the procession. ¹⁴²³ 12 [For the nations ¹⁴²⁴ of the world and the kingdoms that will not serve you will perish. ¹⁴²⁵ Such nations will perish.] ¹⁴²⁶

6. *The Temple will be Rebuilt* 60:13 – 14

13 “The finest wood from Lebanon ¹⁴²⁷ will come to you: cypress, plane and cedar. ¹⁴²⁸ These will come to you to beautify my sanctuary and I will make this place of my presence glorious. 14 The descendants of those who oppressed you will come to you, bowing low, and those who despised you will bow down at your feet. They will call your city ‘The City of the Lord, the City of Zion, the Holy One of Israel’.”

7. *The Eternal City* 60:15 – 16

15 “While you have been forsaken, hated and unvisited I will make you an eternally majestic city, a joy to behold! 16 You will suck the milk of the nations, you will suck the best of the kings (*or, kingdoms*). You will know that I, the Lord am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Righteous One of Jacob.” ¹⁴²⁹

8. *The Prosperity and Peace of Jerusalem.* 60:17 – 18

17 “Instead of bronze (*or, copper*) I will bring gold and instead of iron I will bring silver, instead of wood I will bring bronze, instead of stones, iron. I will make peace with your overseers and integrity within your government. 18 Violence will no longer occur in your land nor will devastation or destruction take place within your borders. You will call your walls ‘Salvation’ (*or, Protection*) and your gates ‘Praise’ (*or, Renown*).”

¹⁴²¹ The LXX simply says: “They will come.” The Hebrew is unclear. BHS and 1QIsa are the source of this translation.

¹⁴²² Tarshish is thought to be a Phoenician colony in Spain.

¹⁴²³ Literally: “and their kings led along.” BHS makes a slight emendation. NIV: “their kings led in triumphant procession.”

¹⁴²⁴ The “goyim: (the people of the world) come to the people of God.

¹⁴²⁵ MFT: “for the nations...that will not serve you will perish ,,,,such nations shall be utterly wasted.”

¹⁴²⁶ Scholars are divided as to whether this verse is a later interpolation or not. The verse gives the appearance of being ‘out of place’ in this strophe.

¹⁴²⁷ Literally: “The glory of Lebanon.”

¹⁴²⁸ The exact translation of the varieties of wood is in question. Translators use, among others: fir, pine, juniper, box wood, and elm.

¹⁴²⁹ Even the earth’s greatest are ready to take a ministering place in the city of Jerusalem. CF” ANET p. 134d In vss 15 – 16 there are 3 items of repetition. Forsaken, hated, no one. There are also 3 items of transformation: pride, milk, savior.

9. *God, the Everlasting Light and Glory of Zion 60:19 – 20*

¹⁹ “The sun will no longer need to be your light by day, nor will the moon be your light by night, ¹⁴³⁰ but the Lord will be your everlasting light for your God will be with you. ²⁰ Your sun will no longer need to set nor your moon withdraw itself for the Lord will be your everlasting light and your days of mourning will be ended.”

10. *The New People of the New Time 60:21 – 22*

²¹ “Your people will all be righteous. They will possess the land forever. (The shoot of my planting, ¹⁴³¹ that I might be glorified.) ¹⁴³² ²² The least one will become a clan and the smallest one will become a nation. I am the Lord. In its time I will hasten it.”

<CHAPTER 61>

G. *Glad Tidings of Salvation to Zion 61:1 – 11*

1. *The Prophetic Gospel of the Herald 61:1 – 3*

¹ “The Spirit of the Lord ¹⁴³³ God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the down trodden. ¹⁴³⁴ He has sent me to bandage the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of prisons (*or, the opening of eyes for the blind*); ¹⁴³⁵ ² the proclamation of the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort each one who mourns; ³ to provide ¹⁴³⁶ for those who mourn in Zion, ¹⁴³⁷ to give them a turban ¹⁴³⁸ instead of ashes, the oil ¹⁴³⁹ of gladness in place of mourning, the mantle ¹⁴⁴⁰ of praise instead of a sagging spirit so that they may be called ‘oaks of righteousness’; ¹⁴⁴¹ planted by the Lord that his glory might be manifested (*or, displayed*).”

2 *Restoration and Prosperity 61:4 – 5*

⁴ “The ancient ruins will be built up; the former devastations will be restored; ruined cities will be repaired, thus restoring the devastation of many generations. ⁵ Aliens will be your attendants, feeding your flocks. Foreigners ¹⁴⁴² will be your plowmen and vine dressers.”

3. *Zion’s Spiritual Pre-eminence and Material Prosperity 61:6 – 7*

⁶ “You will be called ‘the priests of the Lord’ and people will speak about you as ‘the ministers of our God.’ You will eat the wealth of the nations and will glory in their

¹⁴³⁰ So: one ancient Hebrew MSS and the LXX. In the other MSS of the MT this verse is omitted.

¹⁴³¹ Ketiv: “the shoot of the Lord’s planting.” Qere: “my planting.”

¹⁴³² When righteousness is perfected, tenure is secure.

¹⁴³³ “Lord” is omitted in 1QIsa.

¹⁴³⁴ LXX: “the poor.” MFT: “wretched men.” TAN: “He has sent me as a herald of joy to the humble.”

¹⁴³⁵ The two different translations depend on the vocalization of the MT. Both are possible and are grammatically acceptable. LXX: “recovery of sight for the blind.”

¹⁴³⁶ The Hebrew is uncertain.

¹⁴³⁷ MFT: “to give them coronals for coronachs”

¹⁴³⁸ TAN: “to give them turbans instead of ashes.” LXX: “glory.” NAB: “a diadem instead of ashes.” In Hebrew there is a pun. BDB: “turban.”

¹⁴³⁹ LXX: “anointing.” TAN: “festive ointment.”

¹⁴⁴⁰ One LXX MS has: “καταστοκην.”

¹⁴⁴¹ Cf.: 60:21. TAN: “terebinths of victory.” NEB: “They will be called trees of righteousness, planted by the Lord for his glory.”

¹⁴⁴² Literally: “sons of foreigners.”

riches.¹⁴⁴³ 7 Instead of [*merely*] having fame you will have a double portion¹⁴⁴⁴ and instead of having dishonor you will rejoice in your lot. Therefore you will possess a double portion in your land and you will have everlasting joy.”¹⁴⁴⁵

4 The Blessed People of the Everlasting Covenant 61:8 – 9

8 “I, the Lord, love justice!¹⁴⁴⁶ I hate robbery and wrongdoing.¹⁴⁴⁷ I will be faithful in giving them recompense and I will establish an everlasting covenant with them. 9 Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offerings will be remembered in the memory of the people and those who see them¹⁴⁴⁸ will recognize them for they are the people (*or, race*) whom the Lord has blessed.”

5. Hymn of Thanksgiving and Praise 61:10 – 11

10 “I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, my soul will exalt in my God; for he has enveloped me¹⁴⁴⁹ in the garment of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness: I am covered like a bridegroom¹⁴⁵⁰ wearing a turban¹⁴⁵¹ and like a bride who is adorned with jewels. 11 As surely as the earth brings forth shoots and as what is sown in the garden will grow, so also the Lord will cause righteousness to be a living force within all the nations.”

<CHAPTER 62>

II. The Messianic People 62:1 – 12

1. The Crown of Beauty 62:1 – 3

1 “For the sake of Zion I will not remain silent and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be still¹⁴⁵² until her vindication emerges in brightness¹⁴⁵³ and her salvation is as evident as a flaming torch. 2 The nations will see your vindication and all kings (*or, kingdoms*) will see your majesty. You will be called by a new name which will be given you through the mouth of the Lord.¹⁴⁵⁴ 3 You will be a crown of beauty¹⁴⁵⁵ in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem¹⁴⁵⁶ in the hand of your God.”

¹⁴⁴³ Hebrew obscure. JB: “array yourself in their magnificence.” TAN: “revel in their riches.” The NEB has a footnote saying: “Hebrew unintelligible.” It then translates: “You will be furnished with their riches.” The word translated “glory” is a hapax legomenon. LXX: “θαυμας θεσεσθε.” Some scholars choose to emend the verse.

¹⁴⁴⁴ Literally: “Instead of your double shame and dishonor they will rejoice in their lot.”

¹⁴⁴⁵ The Hebrew is uncertain. The words translated as “double portion” in the last sentence, in the LXX are: “the second time.” The Dead Sea Scrolls have the 2nd person while the Hebrew has the 3rd person. The LXX repeats the last two lines. One scholar has emended to read: “You will shout in triumph.”

¹⁴⁴⁶ The Targum has: “Jerusalem has said.”

¹⁴⁴⁷ Literally: “robbery with a burnt offering.” The Hebrew word for “burnt offering” re-vocalized would be “wrongdoing.” JB: “I hate robbery and all that is wrong.” MFT: “iniquitous harrying I hate.” CB: “I hate robbery and crime.”

¹⁴⁴⁸ The LXX could possibly be translated as “acknowledged.”

¹⁴⁴⁹ Literally: “clothed me.”

¹⁴⁵⁰ LXX: “he has placed a miter on me so that I am adorned like a bridegroom and adorned me with ornaments like a bride.”

¹⁴⁵¹ NEV: “as the bridegroom adorns his head like a priest.”

¹⁴⁵² LXX: “relax.” Dead Sea Scrolls: “keep silent.”

¹⁴⁵³ TAN: “till her victory emerges resplendent.”

¹⁴⁵⁴ The actions in verse 2 are somewhat surprising. The Lord who rules over his world will give the people a sign --- a sign which they are awaiting.

2. *The New Covenantal Marriage* 62:4 – 5

⁴ “You will never again be called ‘Forsaken’ ¹⁴⁵⁷ nor will you be called ‘Desolate,’ ¹⁴⁵⁸ but you will be called ‘My delight in her.’ ¹⁴⁵⁹ and your land will be ‘Married.’ ¹⁴⁶⁰ ⁵ Just as a young man marries a virgin ¹⁴⁶¹ so will your sons marry you ¹⁴⁶² and as the bridegroom rejoices ¹⁴⁶³ over the bride, so will your God rejoice over you!”

3. *The Watchers on Zion’s Walls* 62:6 – 7

⁶ “I have set watchers on the walls of Jerusalem who watch all day and all night ¹⁴⁶⁴ who will never be silent. These watchmen constantly keep the Lord in mind, taking no rest, and giving the Lord no rest until Jerusalem is completely restored and is again looked upon with renown through out the earth.”

4. *The Felicity of Zion* 62:8 – 9

⁸ “The Lord has solemnly vowed ¹⁴⁶⁵ ‘I will never again give your newly harvested grain as food for your enemies and never again will foreigners ¹⁴⁶⁶ drink of your wine for which you labored. ⁹ Those who harvest will be able to eat their grain and praise the ¹⁴⁶⁷ Lord and the vintners will drink it in the courts of my sanctuary.’” ¹⁴⁶⁸

5. *The Messianic People* 62:10 – 12

¹⁰ “Enter, enter the gates! ¹⁴⁶⁹ Prepare the way for the people! Build up the highway! Clear it of stones! Erect a banner that the people will know! ¹⁴⁷⁰ ¹¹ Be aware! The Lord has made a proclamation reaching to the ends of the earth! Tell the daughters of Zion ‘Be assured! Your salvation ¹⁴⁷¹ is coming! His reward is with him, and his recompense is before him!’ ¹² These will be called ‘The Holy People, The Lord’s Redeemed,’ and you will be called ‘Sought After’ and a city: ‘Not Forsaken’.” ¹⁴⁷²

¹⁴⁵⁵ Cf.: Isaiah 28:1 ff. This was a usual sign in the Middle East. CEV: “The Lord will even give you a new name. You will be a gorgeous crown, a royal headband for the Lord your God.” CB: “You shall be a glorious crown in the hand of the Lord, a royal diadem in the hand of our God.”

¹⁴⁵⁶ Literally: “turban.”

¹⁴⁵⁷ Hebrew: “Azabah”

¹⁴⁵⁸ Hebrew: “Shomamah” Cf.: Isaiah 54:1. LXX: “Desert, Abandoned.”

¹⁴⁵⁹ Hebrew: “Hephzibah.” LXX: “My pleasure, My delight.” [My delight is in her.]

¹⁴⁶⁰ Hebrew: “Beulah.” LXX: “inhabited.” TAN: “espoused” here and again in v, 5. These are not messianic names but reveal the nature of God’s love.

¹⁴⁶¹ LXX: “your sons live with a virgin.”

¹⁴⁶² A re-vocalization of the vowels yields “he who rebuilds you.” CB: “your builders marry you.” MFT: “Your founder marries you.” JB: “The one who built you will wed you.”

¹⁴⁶³ Literally: “the exultation of a bridegroom.”

¹⁴⁶⁴ It is a ceaseless task that is vocal and vital.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Literally: “sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm.” LXX: “by his glory and by his right arm.”

¹⁴⁶⁶ Literally: “sons of foreigners.”

¹⁴⁶⁷ IQIsa inserts “the name of the Lord, says your God.”

¹⁴⁶⁸ MFT: “those who have gathered the grapes shall quaff it in my sacred shrine.” TAN: “in my sacred courts.”

¹⁴⁶⁹ LXX omits “Enter, enter,” and uses “Build up, build up.”

¹⁴⁷⁰ MFT: “bank up the causeway, clear out the stones, signal to the nations”

¹⁴⁷¹ LXX & Vulgate: “your savior” or “your deliverance.”

¹⁴⁷² Some scholars insert 61:10 here.

<CHAPTER 63>

J. The Year of Redemption 63:1 – 6 ¹⁴⁷³

1. The Conqueror From Edom 63:1

¹ “Who is this that comes from Edom in garments from Bozrah ¹⁴⁷⁴ that are stained crimson for he is glorious ¹⁴⁷⁵ in his apparel, marching ¹⁴⁷⁶ in the greatness of his strength? ¹⁴⁷⁷ It is I who is announcing vindication that is mighty to save!” ¹⁴⁷⁸

2. The Treader of the Wine Press 63:2 – 3

² “Why is your apparel red, ¹⁴⁷⁹ so that your clothing looks like that of one who treads grapes in the wine press?” ³ “I have trodden the wine press alone, and no one from among the people assisted me. ¹⁴⁸⁰ In my anger I trod and trampled them because of my rage. Their lifeblood ¹⁴⁸¹ spattered on my clothing and I have stained all my clothing.” ¹⁴⁸²

3. The Day of Vengeance 63:4 – 6

⁴ “The day of vengeance has been in my heart and the year of redemption (*or, the year of my redeemed*) has arrived. ¹⁴⁸³ ⁵ I looked for helpers but there were none. I was appalled but there was no support. It was my strength that brought about victory and my wrath supported me. ¹⁴⁸⁴ ⁶ I trod on the people in my anger. I made them drunk ¹⁴⁸⁵ with my rage and I caused their lifeblood to be poured out.” ¹⁴⁸⁶

K. Prophetic Intercessory Prayer 63:7 – 64:12

1. The Election and Judgment of Israel 63:7 – 10

⁷ “I will review ¹⁴⁸⁷ the steadfast love of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, according to all the Lord has granted us, along with all the great goodness ¹⁴⁸⁸ granted to the house of Israel ¹⁴⁸⁹ because of his mercy and his never failing steadfast love. ⁸ He said, ‘These are surely my people, my children who will not deal falsely’ ¹⁴⁹⁰ and he became their

¹⁴⁷³ This poem would fall into the class of eschatological judgment. TEV has the chapter as prose but the Hebrew seems clearly to be poetry.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Bozrah was the capital and largest city of Edom which was a portion of present day Jordan. LXX:

“Βαϊνών.”

¹⁴⁷⁵ TAN: “majestic in attire.”

¹⁴⁷⁶ The MT is uncertain. Literally: “inclining” or “lowered down.” An emendation would read “striding.” TAN: “pressing forward.”

¹⁴⁷⁷ NEB: “under his clothing his muscles stand out and he strides, stamping in his might.”

¹⁴⁷⁸ LXX: “with saving judgment.” The verse is difficult and the Hebrew is unclear.

¹⁴⁷⁹ “Red” in Hebrew has the same consonants as “Edom.” Literally: “Why is there red to your apparel?”

¹⁴⁸⁰ 1QIsa: “and from my people.”

¹⁴⁸¹ Hebrew uncertain: possibly: “juice.”

¹⁴⁸² LXX: “I am filled with treading grapes, and there is no one with me from the nations. I trampled them in my fury and dashed them to pieces like clods of earth and caused their blood to be spilled on the earth.”

¹⁴⁸³ Literally: “my redeemed.” Some scholars emend to read: “my recompense.”

¹⁴⁸⁴ The Isaiah Dead Sea Scroll uses a different Hebrew word from the MT for the word that is translated “supported.” TAN: “my own arm brought the triumph.” Some scholars emend to read: “my victorious right hand brought me salvation.”

¹⁴⁸⁵ Targum: “I shattered them.” The LXX omits the word “rage.”

¹⁴⁸⁶ Literally: “brought down their juice to the earth.”

¹⁴⁸⁷ Literally: “I will cause to remember.”

¹⁴⁸⁸ LXX: “αγαθος.”

¹⁴⁸⁹ Literally: “according to the abundance of the goodness.”

¹⁴⁹⁰ LXX: “These are my people, aren’t they? These children will surely not be rebellious. I will become their deliverance.” Verses 8 – 9: Ketiv: “So he was their deliverer in all their troubles. No angel or messenger. His own presence delivered them.”

savior. ⁹ In all their afflictions he did not act as an adversary and the angel of his presence saved them for because of his love and pity he redeemed them, raising them up and carrying them all in the ancient times. ¹⁴⁹¹ ¹⁰ They rebelled and grieved his holy spirit. Therefore he himself became their enemy and fought against them.” ¹⁴⁹²

2. *The Wonders of the Ancient Days 63:11 – 14*

¹¹ “They remembered the ancient days: the days of Noah, the Lord’s servant, ¹⁴⁹³ when he brought the people up out of the sea, when he shepherded his flock. [*Where is he*] who put his spirit in the midst of the people! ¹² [*Where is he*] who caused his glorious power to direct Moses to lead the people through the sea that was divided before them, making an everlasting name for himself. ¹³ [*Where is he*] who led them through the depths. Like a surefooted horse in the desert they did not stumble. ¹⁴⁹⁴ ¹⁴ Like cattle going down into a valley they were led by the spirit of the Lord who guided them. You, O God led my people making an everlasting name for yourself.” ¹⁴⁹⁵

3. *You are Our Father and Our Redeemer 63:15 – 16*

¹⁵ “Look down from heaven and see: from your holy and glorious habitation. Where are your zeal and your might? The longings of my heart ¹⁴⁹⁶ and your compassion are withheld from me. ¹⁴⁹⁷ ¹⁶ You surely are our father through Abraham, though you did not acknowledge Israel (*i.e. Jacob*). You O Lord are our father, our redeemer, even from ancient times, for you have always rescued us.”

4. *Return 63:17 – 19*

¹⁷ “O Lord, why is it that you cause us to mistakenly forsake your way and harden our hearts ¹⁴⁹⁸ so that we are not in awe of you? Return for the sake of your servant, the tribe of my heritage. ¹⁸ Your holy people possessed (*or, established*) your sanctuary briefly but our adversaries have destroyed it. ¹⁴⁹⁹ ¹⁹ We have become like strangers to you (*or, those over whom you have never ruled*), like those who have never been called by your name.” ¹⁵⁰⁰

¹⁴⁹¹ The Hebrew is very unclear. LXX Codex B: “neither envoy nor messenger – but his own presence saved them.”

¹⁴⁹² To grieve the Lord’s spirit is to grieve him.

¹⁴⁹³ The text of the LXX & Vulgate differ considerably. The Hebrew text is rather uncertain. Some scholars emend the text but none has an ideal solution to the problem.

¹⁴⁹⁴ TEV: “Led by the Lord they were as sure footed as a wild horse and never stumbled.”

¹⁴⁹⁵ CEV: “Just as cattle find rest when led down into a valley, the name of the Lord was praised for doing these things.”

¹⁴⁹⁶ The KJV has: “the sounding of your bowels.”

¹⁴⁹⁷ NIV: “Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us.” Some scholars emend to read: “Refrain not yourself/ Do not stand aloof!; for you are our father.”

¹⁴⁹⁸ TAN: “turn our hearts from revering you.”

¹⁴⁹⁹ The text of v. 18 is very uncertain. Many emendations have been proposed. LXX: “that we might inherit a small patrimony, your holy mountain. We have become as at the beginning. Why have your adversaries trampled down your sanctuary. We have become like a wall before you, calling your name but you have not called to us.” NAB: “Why have the wicked invaded your holy place? Why have your enemies trampled your sanctuary?”

¹⁵⁰⁰ Chapter 64, verse 1 should be the last verse of chapter 64. The verses in Hebrew are so designated. TAN: “We have become as a people you never ruled, to which your name was never attested.”

<CHAPTER 64>

5. Prayer for a Universal Theophany 65:1 – 5b

¹ [H 63:20] “O that you would tear open the heavens and ¹⁵⁰¹ come down, for then the mountains would tremble ¹⁵⁰² ² [H 1] as when fire sets the brushwood ablaze or causes water to boil. ¹⁵⁰³ Your name would be made known to your adversaries (*or, opponents*) so that nations might tremble in awe at your presence. ³ [H 2] When you did wonders which did not appeal we did not observe that you came down and the mountain quaked because of your presence. ¹⁵⁰⁴ ⁴ [H 3] Since ancient times no one has heard nor perceived whether by hearing or sight any god beside you provides (*or works*) for those who wait for him. ¹⁵⁰⁵ ⁵ [H 4] You meet him who is the one whose works are joyfully righteous [*according to the ones*] who remember your ways.” ¹⁵⁰⁶

5. A Confession of Guilt 64:5c – 7

“We realize that you were angry and we sinned and have been in our sins ¹⁵⁰⁷ for a long time, ¹⁵⁰⁸ but: will we be saved? ⁶ [H 5] We have all become like persons who are unclean and all our righteous deeds are like a defiled garment. We are like shriveled leaves, ¹⁵⁰⁹ and our sins are swept away as if by the wind. ⁷ [H 6] There is no one who prays to you (*or, calls on your name*), who arouses himself to cling to you, for you have turned away from us (*or, you have hidden your face from us*) and we are oppressed.” ¹⁵¹⁰

7. Final Supplication 64:8 – 12

⁸ [H 7] “In spite of this you, O Lord, are our father for you are the potter, we are the clay. We are all the work of your hand. ¹⁵¹¹ ⁹ [H 8] Do not become violently angry, O Lord! Do not remember of sins forever! Remember that we are all your people! ¹⁰ [H 9] Our holy and beautiful house (*or, the temple*) ¹⁵¹² where our ancestors praised you has been burned, and this entire desirable area has become ruins. ¹² [H 11] O Lord, will you restrain yourself because of these things? Will you keep silent and let us suffer greatly?” ¹⁵¹³

¹⁵⁰¹ The word “and” is omitted in the MT. This is presumed to be a scribal error.

¹⁵⁰² LXX: “the mountains would melt.” TAN: “trembling would take hold on the mountains.” NEB: “Why didst thou not rend the heavens and come down and make the mountains shudder before them?”

¹⁵⁰³ LXX: “they will melt like wax in the fire, like water the wood devours.” Some scholars emend to read: “water which the fire boils, by the thunder and boiling water.”

¹⁵⁰⁴ Some scholars emend to read: “O that you would come down, that the mountain would quake.”

¹⁵⁰⁵ The Isaianic prophet is wondering if it is too late to hope. Some scholars feel these four verses originally were one sentence. JB: “no eye has seen any god but you act like this.” CEV: “You are the only God ever seen or heard of who works miracles for his followers.”**

¹⁵⁰⁶ LXX: “He will meet those who do righteousness.” “και των οδων σου μνησθησεται.”

¹⁵⁰⁷ The Hebrew text seems to be saying ‘it is because you were angry that we sinned.’ Because of this many translations follow suggested emendations, as for example: RSV; NRSV; NIV; NEB.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Literally: “in them of old and we will be saved.” LXX & Targum: “therefore we have erred.” TAN: “we have been steeped in them from of old.” NAB: “though thou wast angry, yet we sinned.”

¹⁵⁰⁹ We have fallen as leaves because of our unrighteousness.”

¹⁵¹⁰ The Hebrew text is difficult but is supported by LXX, Syriac and Targum.

¹⁵¹¹ The concern of the Isaianic prophet in verses 4 – 5 (footnote 1505) is met in verses 8 – 9 when he considers the unchanged and unchanging God.

¹⁵¹² Literally: “the house of our holiness and our beauty (*or, glory*).”

¹⁵¹³ CB: “will thou keep silent and afflict us beyond measure?”

<CHAPTER 65> ¹⁵¹⁴

L. Judgment and Salvation 65:1 – 25

1. The Lord is Accessible 65:1 – 2

¹ “I was ready to be sought (*or, I let myself be sought*) by those who did not ask for me¹⁵¹⁵ though I was ready (*or, on hand*) to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, ‘Here I am, here I am’ to the nation that did not call me by name. ² I constantly spread out my hands to the disloyal people ¹⁵¹⁶ who walk a pathway that is not good, for they follow their own desires.” ¹⁵¹⁷

2. The Corrupt and Superstitious City 65:3 – 5

³ “This nation constantly provokes me brazenly ¹⁵¹⁸ by incessantly offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks. ¹⁵¹⁹ ⁴ They crouch inside tombs and spend the night in secret locations, where they eat pork and broth in their bowls that is made from abominable things.’ ¹⁵²⁰ ⁵ They say, ‘Keep your distance! We are too holy for you.’ ¹⁵²¹ All this is like smoke in my nostrils; ¹⁵²² a fire that burns constantly.” ¹⁵²³

3. The Toll of Divine Judgment 65:6 – 7

⁶ “Let it be understood: it is written before me – I will not keep silent but I will repay, ¹⁵²⁴ yes, I will repay them! ⁷ They will be repaid additionally based on the sins of their ancestors says the Lord because they burned incense (*or, sacrifices*) on the mountain and defiled me on the hills. I will determine ¹⁵²⁵ what recompense they deserve for all past ¹⁵²⁶ deeds.”

4. God Will Not Destroy the Entire Nation 65:8 – 10

⁸ The Lord declares: “When the new wine is present in the cluster [*of grapes*] it is said, ‘Don’t destroy it for there is a blessing in it’ ¹⁵²⁷ so will I also do for the sake of my servants, for I will not destroy them all. ¹⁵²⁸ ⁹ I will have descendants of Jacob and Judah come forward [*as leaders*] to become the inheritors of my mountain for my chosen ones

¹⁵¹⁴ The chapters 56 – 66 are sometimes called “The Book of the Conqueror.”

¹⁵¹⁵ “For me” is omitted in the Dead Sea Scroll. JB has verses 1 - 10 and verses 15 – 25 as prose.

¹⁵¹⁶ LXX: “προς λαον απειθουντα και αντιλεγοντο.”

¹⁵¹⁷ The form of the latter part of the verse is litotes (*an understatement*).

¹⁵¹⁸ Literally: “The people provoking me against my face.”

¹⁵¹⁹ Bricks were not authorized as suitable places to burn incense since they were not a natural product. Cf. Exodus 20:25; Deuteronomy 27:1 – 6. Some scholars emend to read “roofs.” LXX: “on bricks to devils.” The Dead Sea Scroll offers no help in the text of this verse, offering something considerably different from the MT. MFT: “under the white poplars.”

¹⁵²⁰ The locations are specially selected so they can make contact with and consult with the dead or with other spirits. To spend time in a tomb would cause one to be ‘unclean’ along with the eating of pork and ‘abominable things’ in broth. LXX adds: “for the sake of dreams.” The purpose was necromancy.

¹⁵²¹ An alternate translation might be: “Don’t come close to me for I am set apart from you.” Literally: “So that I not make you holy (or, taboo).” Another translation might be: “I am too sacred for you. I would render you consecrated.”

¹⁵²² Literally: “nose.” LXX: “wrath.”

¹⁵²³ These verses present humans as pressuring God as over against the Biblical way of responding to divine grace.

¹⁵²⁴ TAN: “deliver their sins into their bosom.”

¹⁵²⁵ Literally: “measure into their bosom payment.” TAN: “I will count out their recompense in full into their bosoms.” MFT: “I will first weigh what they deserve, then let them have their punishment.”

¹⁵²⁶ Omitted by LXX.

¹⁵²⁷ Possibly a line from a vintner’s song.

¹⁵²⁸ Literally: “the whole.”

will inherit it, and my servants will live there.¹⁵²⁹ ¹⁰ Sharon ¹⁵³⁰ will become a pasture land for flocks and the Valley of Achor ¹⁵³¹ a place for herds to rest, for my people who have sought me.”

5. *The Destruction of the Apostates 65:11 – 12*

¹¹ “You, however, who have forsaken the Lord, forgetting my holy mountain (*or, having forsaken the Lord*), who spread out a table for Gad (*Fortune*) ¹⁵³² and who fill their bowls with blended wine ¹⁵³³ for Meni (*Destiny*). ¹⁵³⁴ ¹² I will destroy ¹⁵³⁵ you with war and you will be required to kneel down to be slaughtered because when I called you did not answer, and when I spoke you did not listen, but you did what was displeasing in my sight, doing what I despised.”

6. *The Lord's Servants and the Apostates 65:13 – 14*

¹³ Therefore the Lord God says: “Understand clearly: my servants will eat but you will be hungry. Understand clearly: my servants will drink but you will be thirsty. Understand clearly: my servants will rejoice but you will be put to shame. ¹⁴ Understand clearly: my servants will sing with joyous gladness but you will cry out in pain, wailing because of anguish.”

7. *The New Name and the New Blessing 65:15 – 16*

¹⁵ “You will leave your name to my chosen for a curse, ¹⁵³⁶ and the Lord will destroy you, but his servants will be called by a different name. ¹⁵³⁷ ¹⁶ Whoever blesses himself in the land will bless himself by the God of Truth, and whoever takes an oath in the land will bless himself by the name of his God. ¹⁵³⁸ This is true because the past troubles are forgotten and are not seen by me, says the Lord.”

8. *The New Creation and the New Age 65:17 – 19*

¹⁷ “Be assured: I will create a new heaven and a new earth and the past events will no longer be remembered nor come to mind. ¹⁸ You however are to be glad and rejoice for I will create rejoicing in Jerusalem and there will be joy among the people. ¹⁵³⁹ ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem and have delight in my people. Never again will there be cries of hunger and wailing.”

¹⁵²⁹ CB: “I will bring out of Jacob a scion, Out of Judah an heir to my mountain; And my chosen ones shall inherit the land, My servants shall dwell in it.”

¹⁵³⁰ Sharon is a name for the maritime plain from Mount Carmel to Joppa. LXX: “there will be in the forest folds of flocks.”

¹⁵³¹ This is probably the Wadi el-Buqe'an southwest of Jericho. With Sharon to the west and the Valley of Achor to the east this becomes a descriptive term for the entire country.

¹⁵³² Gad was originally a Syrian deity.

¹⁵³³ These are descriptive of aspects of false religion.

¹⁵³⁴ Meni was perhaps originally an Arabian god who has been less well known but often worshiped in the pre-Isaianic period. Fortune and Destiny (*or, Fate*) were looked to for a solution to the problems of the people rather than turning in faith to God.

¹⁵³⁵ In Hebrew there is a pun on the word for “destroy.”

¹⁵³⁶ LXX: “for loathing.”

¹⁵³⁷ LXX: “a new name.” “δε δουλευουσιν αυτω κληθησεται.” The concept is that a name is to be used in receiving a blessing.

¹⁵³⁸ NEB: “the God whose name is Amen.” Some scholars exclude this verse since it seems not to fit the strophe and therefore feel it should be excluded.

¹⁵³⁹ LXX: “they will find in her joy and gladness.” Some scholars emend to read “eternal city.”

9. *Life in the Messianic Community* 65:20 – 23

²⁰ “It will no longer happen that an infant will live only a few days ¹⁵⁴⁰ or an old person dies before his time, ¹⁵⁴¹ for children will attain the age of one hundred and anyone who dies prior to that age will be thought of as having been accursed. ²¹ Houses will be built and inhabited by their builders. Vineyards will be planted and those who plant them will enjoy their fruit. ²² No one will build and have another person inhabit: no one will plant and have another person eat, for my people will long lives, like the lives of trees, for my chosen people will enjoy long lives ¹⁵⁴² and will be able to enjoy their accomplishments. ²³ They will not labor in vain nor bear children ¹⁵⁴³ for sudden terror for they will be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord along with their children.”

10. *An Age of Peace* 65:24 – 25

²⁴ “I will answer before they call! I will hear while they are still speaking. ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb will eat together, the lion will eat straw as does the ox, serpents will only eat dust. They will neither hurt nor destroy in my entire holy mountain. I the Lord have spoken.”

<CHAPTER 66>

M. *The New Birth of Zion and the Fiery Judgment* 66:1 – 16

1. *Worship in Spirit and in Truth* 66:1 – 2

¹ This is the word of the Lord:: “Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What is the house which you would build for me, and what ¹⁵⁴⁴ is the place that is intended for me to rest? ¹⁵⁴⁵ ² I have made all things with my own hand, and therefore it is through me that all these things come into being. ¹⁵⁴⁶ Yet, the persons to whom I will look are those who are downtrodden and brokenhearted (*or, humble and contrite*) and are awed by my word.”

2. *The Corruption of the Sacrificial Cult* 66:3 – 4

³ “[*On the other hand there are*] those who slaughter an ox but would also offer a human sacrifice. There are those who sacrifice a lamb but would also break the neck of a dog. ¹⁵⁴⁷ There are those who offer cereal offerings but would also offer a swine’s blood. There are those who offer votive offerings of incense but would also make offerings to false gods. ¹⁵⁴⁸ These must change their ways for their souls delight in abominations. ⁴ Therefore I on my part choose to pursue affliction for them, because when I called no one

¹⁵⁴⁰ Literally: “an infant of day.”

¹⁵⁴¹ Literally: “live out his days.”

¹⁵⁴² Literally: “will not wear out.”

¹⁵⁴³ LXX: “τεκνοποιησουσιν.”

¹⁵⁴⁴ LXX: “ποιον.”

¹⁵⁴⁵ Literally: “my resting.” TAN: “what place could serve as my abode?”

¹⁵⁴⁶ Hebrew literally: “all the things came to be.” LXX: “και στιν εμα.”

¹⁵⁴⁷ Justin in *History of the World* XIX. 1, 10: “Darius forbade the Carthaginians to offer human sacrifice or eat the meat of dogs. This however was a practice in Roman Festivals.”

¹⁵⁴⁸ LXX: “But the transgressor who sacrifices a calf to me is also the one who kills a dog and the one who offers a cereal offering is the one who offers swine blood. The one who offers frankincense as a memorial is like one who is blasphemous.” There are 4 mentions of permitted acts and 4 that are un-permitted. 1. Offer a bull: accepted. Kill a person: unaccepted. 2. Sacrifice a lamb: accepted. Kill a dog: unaccepted. 3. Bring cereal offerings: accepted. Offer swine blood: unaccepted. 4. An incense memorial: accepted. Offering to idols: unaccepted. Those who do not follow God make their choice. God is not to be blamed.

answered and when I spoke no one listened but they did evil in my sight, choosing to do in my sight what I did not allow.” ¹⁵⁴⁹

3. *The Voice of Judgment for the Cities* 66:5 – 6

⁵ Hear the word ¹⁵⁵⁰ of the Lord all you who tremble at his word: “Your kinsmen who hate ¹⁵⁵¹ you do so because of my name. They say, ‘Let the Lord be glorified that we might see your joy,’ but these are the ones who will be put to shame. ⁶ Listen for there is a tumult in the city and a voice from the temple, the voice of the Lord bringing about retribution!” ¹⁵⁵²

4. *The Wonderful Birth of a New People* 66:7 – 9

⁷ “Before labor began she delivered; before pain developed she had given birth to a male child. ⁸ Who has ever heard of something like that? Will the land be established (*or, born*) in one moment? Yet Zion, at the onset of labor, brought forth their son. ⁹ Should I bring on labor and not bring forth a birth?” The Lord declares: “Should I close the womb?” ¹⁵⁵³

5. *The Joy and Plenty of the Messianic Age* 66:10 – 11

¹⁰ “Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad with her, ¹⁵⁵⁴ rejoice with her with great joy, all you who mourn for her ¹¹ that you might nurse and be satisfied with her consolation ¹⁵⁵⁵ so that you may drink deeply, with delight, from her bounty.” ¹⁵⁵⁶

6. *Prosperity and Comfort* 66:12 – 14

¹² The Lord declares: “Let it be understood: I will extend prosperity ¹⁵⁵⁷ to her ¹⁵⁵⁸ like a river, and the wealth of the nations like a torrent and you will receive: ¹⁵⁵⁹ for you will taken care of like a child that is being carried on the hip ¹⁵⁶⁰ and dandled on your parent’s knees. ¹³ You will be comforted as a mother might comfort a child for in a like manner I will comfort you. Jerusalem, you will be comforted! ¹⁵⁶¹ ¹⁴ You will see and your heart will rejoice, your limbs will be resilient (*or, strong*) like the grass, and the power of the Lord will be recognized by her servants and his rage will be evident toward his foes.”

¹⁵⁴⁹ LXX: “I also will choose their mockery and will repay them for their sins because I called them and they would not listen to me. I spoke but they refused to listen. Thus they did evil and chose to do things that I look upon as being evil.” Worship that is merely doing the appropriate actions seems to the Isaianic prophets to be idolatry.

¹⁵⁵⁰ 1QIsa: “his works.”

¹⁵⁵¹ The Hebrew word used here, in later years came to mean “excommunication.”

¹⁵⁵² MFT: “Hark! The city is in uproar! It is coming from the people. ‘Tis the Eternal dealing vengeance to the full upon his foes.”

¹⁵⁵³ LXX: “I have raised the expectation, yet you have not remembered me, says the Lord. Be aware! Haven’t I made women who give birth and women who are barren says the Lord your God.” CB: “Shall I who give delivery shut up the womb?” CEV: “The Lord is the one who makes birth possible and he will see that he has many more deliveries.”

¹⁵⁵⁴ LXX: “You rejoice, O Jerusalem.”

¹⁵⁵⁵ Literally: “consoling breasts.” “Breasts” is a loan word possibly Ugaritic: or, it might be Akkadian and mean “udder.” Cf.: ANET: p. 134d.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Literally: “the nipple of her glory.”

¹⁵⁵⁷ The Hebrew word can also mean “peace.” “Have prosperity” seems to fit the thought better.

¹⁵⁵⁸ LXX: “I turn myself to the river of peace.”

¹⁵⁵⁹ Literally: “suck.”

¹⁵⁶⁰ Literally: “side” since at that time in the Middle East children were carried on the hip of their mothers.

LXX: “their children.” “τα παῖδια αὐτῶν.”

¹⁵⁶¹ JB: “(and by Jerusalem you will be comforted.)”

7. *The Lord Comes to Judge the Earth* 66:15 – 16

¹⁵ “Be assured that the Lord will come as fire, and his chariots will be like a whirlwind to vent his anger and his rebuke with flaming fire.” ¹⁵⁶² ¹⁶ The Lord will carry out his judicial right upon all humanity with fire and warfare and the number of those who are slain by the Lord will be great.”

N. An Eschatological Summary 66:17 – 24

Prose. ¹⁷ “Those who sanctify and purify themselves to enter the garden ¹⁵⁶³ follow the one in the center, eating pork, reptiles and vermin (*or, rodents*). will surely together meet their end, says the Lord.

¹⁸ “I know their works, their thoughts, ¹⁵⁶⁴ and I am coming to gather people of all nations and languages. When I come in all my glory ¹⁹ I will set a sign ¹⁵⁶⁵ in their midst, and from there I will send survivors to the nations: to Tarshish, ¹⁵⁶⁶ Put ¹⁵⁶⁷ and Lod who are archers, ¹⁵⁶⁸ to Tubal, ¹⁵⁶⁹ Jevan (*Greece*) and to the distant islands who have never heard of my fame nor seen my glory. My glory will be declared among the nations. ²¹ They will return all your kinfolk from the nations as an offering to the Lord, arriving on horses, chariots, and litters, on mules and dromedaries as they come to my holy mountain, Jerusalem. The Lord has spoken. This will take place just as the Israelites bring their cereal offerings to the house of the Lord. ¹⁵⁷⁰ ²¹ I will take some of them as priests and Levites ¹⁵⁷¹ says the Lord.” **End of Prose.**

²² “As the new heaven and the new earth which I make will endure before me, says the Lord, so also your descendants and your name will endure. ²³ [From new moon to new moon ¹⁵⁷² and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all humanity will come to worship before me, says the Lord. ²⁴ They will go forth and look at the corpses of those who rebelled against me, for the worm will not die. The fire will not be quenched and this will be a horror ¹⁵⁷³ to all of humanity.”]

¹⁵⁶² JB: “to assuage his anger with burning, his threats with flaming fire.” Cf.: ANET pp. 132, 245, 136, 137.

¹⁵⁶³ Hebrew text is obscure. Scholars feel it is a reference to a purification ceremony that was used by those who participated in cultic practices. TAN: “Those who sanctify and purify themselves to enter the groves, initiating one in the center, eating the flesh of the swine, the reptile, and the mouse, shall one and all come to an end --- declares the Lord.”

¹⁵⁶⁴ LXX: “their imagination.” Scholars are divided as to whether verses 17 & 18 should be prose. The meter is not clearly evident in the MT. Hebrew literally: “their words and their thoughts have come together.”

¹⁵⁶⁵ Dead Sea Scrolls: “signs.”

¹⁵⁶⁶ A Phoenician mercantile city in Spain named Tartessus.

¹⁵⁶⁷ So: LXX. Hebrew: “Pul.” It was also known as Lydia in North Africa.

¹⁵⁶⁸ Literally: “who draw the bow.” Possibly the intent in Hebrew is to be a transliteration and it is a nation, “Moroth” or an alliance of nations that are prepared for warfare since the word means “to draw the bow.”

¹⁵⁶⁹ A country in Asia Minor (Turkey). Some scholars feel the previous word “Moroth” should be Meshech which is mentioned historically with Tubal. If so, these two locations were southeast of the Black Sea in Turkey.

¹⁵⁷⁰ LXX: “as though the children of Israel should bring their sacrifices to me in the house of the Lord with Psalms.”

¹⁵⁷¹ LXX: “I will take priests and Levites to them.”

¹⁵⁷² Some scholars feel the last two verses are a later interpolation. New moon to new moon are times of feasting and joy.

¹⁵⁷³ LXX: “apostate.” This verse became the source of the concept within Judaism of Gehenna.

From new moon to new moon
and from Sabbath to Sabbath,
all humanity will come to worship before me,
says the Lord.¹⁵⁷⁴

¹⁵⁷⁴ The Masoretic Scholars gave instruction that when the last verse (v. 24) was read it should be followed by a positive message and therefore verse 23 should again be read. There are similar examples in some of the Minor Prophets.