

## Chapter Nineteen

**19-Vs. 1: An oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt; and the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence, and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.**

The last time *masa'* or "oracle" began a chapter was Seventeen, that is, concerning Damascus. This term fundamentally means a burden and indeed is a heavy one for Isaiah to bear. He seems to have a certain reluctance in making it known, fully aware that most people won't accept his words.

*Rakav* or "riding" usually applies to a horse-drawn chariot. "I will give you two thousand horses if you are able on your part to set riders upon them" [36.8]. Just as "swift" (*qal*, cf. 18.2) as this chariot is the cloud on which the Lord is riding to Egypt, presumably from the temple in Jerusalem. As always, Israel is an annoying little country Egypt must subdue before moving on to Assyria and elsewhere. The same holds true in reverse.

Note the similarity between "tremble" (by idols) and "melt" (*lev*, singular 'heart' of the Egyptians; cf. 15.5) or *masas* (cf. 13.7). Such melting takes places "within" the heart of each Egyptian or more precisely, *qerev*, their very center (cf. 12.6).

**19-2: And I will stir up Egyptians against Egyptians, and they will fight, every man against his brother and every man against his neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom;**

*Sakak* is the verb meaning "stir up" noted last in 9.11 and also means to protect in the sense of to cover. Such stirring up will result in fighting on all levels of society. "For I have come to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law" [Mt 10.35].

**19-3: and the spirit of the Egyptians within them will be emptied out, and I will confound their plans; and they will consult the idols and the sorcerers and the mediums and the wizards;**

*Ruach* or "spirit" (cf. 11.15) is singular and applies to the plural Egyptians, more specifically as located "within" or *qerev* as in vs. 1. This one *ruach* which animates all Egyptians will be "emptied out," *baqaq* suggestive of pouring all at once. "The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled" [24.3].

*Balah* means "confound" (cf. 9.16) as well as making confused, here with respect to "plans" or *hetsah* (cf. 16.3 as 'justice').

Seeking counsel or *darash* is noted last in 16.5 and literally means a treading, here with respect to spiritual entities other than the Lord. Actually such *balah* or confounding will drive...*darash*...the Egyptians in this direction.

**19-4: and I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a hard master; and a fierce king will rule over them, says the Lord, the Lord of hosts.**

*Sakar* is the verb for "give over" which usually translates as to shut up and has two other

biblical references, Gen 8.2 and Ps 63.11, the latter being cited here: “for the mouths of liars will be stopped.” In the verse at hand, this *sakar* concerns those masters who are “hard” or *qasheh* (cf. 14.3).

*Haz* is the adjective for “fierce” which connotes strength and is found next in 25.3: “Therefore strong peoples will glorify you.” The identity of this king isn’t given but seems to involve some retribution for the four hundred years of slavery before Moses liberated the Israelites.

NB: Vss. 5-10 deal with the practical results of the current oracle against Egypt, especially as it relates to the Nile River, the very heart and soul of the country and its identity. If that source of life should dry up, the country would perish almost at once.

**19-Vs. 10: Those who are the pillars of the land will be crushed, and all who work for hire will be grieved..**

*Shyth* is the verbal root (the form doesn’t seem to be listed in dictionaries) for “pillars” and found last in 15.9 but not noted there as “bring upon.” The basic meaning of *shyth* is to lay, appoint or to array. Those who are so arranged, if you will, can be taken as the wise men of Egypt similar to those who had advised Pharaoh during Moses’ time: “Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers; and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same by their secret arts” [Ex 7.11]. Compare these with the sorcerers, mediums and wizards of vs. 3.

Those working for hire will be “grieved” or *’agme-nepshesh*. This double word consists of *nepshesh* or “soul” noted last in 16.11. *’Agam* literally means a pool (of water) found last in 14.23 but not noted there. The idea seems to be that the pools created from the Nile’s water in which fish were have has been rendered useless.

**19-Vs. 11: The princes of Zoan are utterly foolish; the wise counselors of Pharaoh give stupid counsel. How can you say to Pharaoh, “I am a son of the wise, a son of ancient kings?”**

The first biblical reference to Zoan is Num 13.22: “Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.” The two Psalm references (78.12 & 43) deal with divine signs and miracles which aren’t specified but seem associated with the dividing of the sea and turning water into blood. The princes of Zoan are “foolish” or *’evyl* which contains the notion of impiety. “The unclean shall not pass over it (Holy Way), and fools shall not err therein” [35.8].

*Yahats* is a participle for “counselors” (cf. 14.27) who here are supposedly “wise” (*chakam*, cf. 3.3) but in actuality offer “counsel” (*hetsah*, cf. vs. 3) which is “stupid” or *bahar* noted last in 9.18 as to kindle. In other words, this counsel sets on fire...consumes...any proposal Pharaoh may offer as was the case dealing with Moses and Aaron, especially the ten plagues.

Apparently the question posed concerns these counselors who also are sorcerers, mediums and wizards as they attempt to divine the future.

**19-Vs. 12: Where, then, are your wise men? Let them tell you and make known what the Lord of hosts has purposed against Egypt.**

This verse echos 1Cor 1.20: “Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”

The question posed can be applied to the advisors under Pharaoh who contested with

Moses during the ten plagues. Once defeated, they must have asked themselves a similar question. Apparently wisdom had fled them when it was needed the most. That is to say, Moses out-did any sign they were able to perform. As for the plague of gnats, they admitted that “This is the finger of God” [Ex 8.19].

In the previous verse are mentioned the unwise counsel given by Pharaoh’s advisors, that is, their *hetsah* (cf. vs. 11). By way of contrast in the verse at hand the verbal *yahats* means “purposed” (cf. vs. 11) with regard to the Lord.

**19-Vs. 13: The princes of Zoan have become fools, and the princes of Memphis are deluded; those who are the cornerstones of her tribes have led Egypt astray.**

Three types of stupidity or foolishness are mentioned with regard to two chief cities as well as those who are considered “cornerstones” (*pinah*, cf. 28.16) to Egyptian society:

1) *Ya’al* (the root of *’evyl*, vs. 11) which has three other biblical references, Num 12.11 and Jer 5.4 & 50.36, the first being cited here: “Do not punish us because we have done foolishly and have sinned.”

2) *Nasa’* or “deluded” noted last in 13.2 which fundamentally means to take or raise up.

3) *Tahah* or “led astray” noted last in 9.16.

**19-Vs. 14: The Lord has mingled within her a spirit of confusion; and they have made Egypt stagger in all her doings as a drunken man staggers in his vomit.**

To have a “spirit” or *ruach* (cf. vs. 3) of “confusion” is bad enough (*hivhym*, the only use of this term in the Bible and seems to connote depravity), but to have it “mingled” (*masak*, cf. 5.22 but not noted there) is worse, especially “within” oneself or within one’s very center of being, *qerev* (cf. vs. 3).

*Tahah* means “stagger” as in the previous verse, here made worse by within one’s own “vomit” or *qy’* which has two other biblical references, Jer 48.26 and 28.8, the latter being cited here: “For all tables are full of vomit, no place is without filthiness.”

**19-Vs. 15: And there will be nothing for Egypt which head or tail, palm branch or reed, may do.**

The references seem to apply to what grows by the Nile River, source of all life for Egypt.

Because some parts of Isaiah consist of an extended list of curses, woes and oracles of condemnation, key words of these section are picked out instead of going through the text verse by verse. Such is the case with regard to vss. 16 through 25 although they are presented first to orient the reader. The following mode of presentation will be followed through Chapter Twenty-Four as well as later.

16. In that day the Egyptians will be like women, and tremble with fear before the hand which the Lord of hosts shakes over them. 17. And the land of Judah will become a terror to the Egyptians; every one to whom it is mentioned will fear because of the purpose which the Lord of hosts has purposed against them. 18. In that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt which speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the Lord of hosts. One of these will be called the City of the Sun. 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. 20. It will be a sign and a 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 and deliver them. 21. And the Lord will make himself known to the Egyptians; and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day and worship with sacrifice and burnt offering, and they will make vows to the Lord and perform them. 22. And the Lord will smite Egypt, smiting and healing, and they will return to the Lord, and he will heed their supplications and heal them. 23. In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. 24. In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, 25. whom the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage."

Vs. 16 begins with the now familiar phrase "in that day" or *yom* (cf. 17.14) and continues through the rest of the chapter with the same expression found in vss. 18, 19, 21, 23 and 24. Note the following key elements in accord with these references to *yom*:

- In this first of five examples of *yom* Egyptians will "tremble" or *charad* which also means to fear. It is found last in 10.29 but not noted there. The reason for such *charad* is the Lord shaking his hand over them, the verb being *nuph* as in 13.2.

- Also in this *yom* Judah will be a "terror" to the Egyptians, *chaga'* being the only use of this term in the Bible. The "purpose" or *hetsah* (cf. vs. 12) of the Lord will cause fear.

- The second *yom* will have five Egyptians cities speaking the language of Canaan as it swears allegiance to the Lord, the verb being *shavah* (cf. 14.24) which means to swear an oath.

- The third *yom* will see an altar to the Lord set up "in the midst of" Egypt, *betok* (cf. 7.6) which is more in the middle of (Egypt). A "pillar" or *matsevah* (can refer to a statute) will be erected at Egypt's border, presumably the Red Sea. This is no ordinary *matsevah* but one dedicated to the Lord. Nothing is said about an inscription on it. "So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone which he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar" [Gn 28.18]. This pillar will have two functions: "sign and witness" to the Lord, *'oth* and *hed*; cf. 8.18 & 8.2 respectively. Although situated at the border (Red Sea?), it will look inward, if you will, toward Egypt, most likely to that altar in its "midst" or *betok*. The Egyptians will be graced with a "savior," the participle *yashah* (the verbal root for the proper name Jesus) being used as in 43.3: "the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." The purpose of this *moshiyah* (participle form) will be to "deliver" (*natsal* connotes a drawing or pulling out) the Egyptians although the identity of this *moshiyah* and the nature of distress are not specified. "He will protect and deliver it (Jerusalem), he will spare and rescue it" [31.5].

- The fourth *yom* contains a reciprocal *yadah* (cf. 12.4): by the Lord to the Egyptians and by the Egyptians to the Lord. Integral to such *yadah* is "worship" and the making of "vows," *havah* and *nadar*. The former is the common verb to do (cf. 14.3) used with the noun for "sacrifice" or *zevach* (cf. 1.11). Often the second is found with the noun *neder* ('to vow a vow'). "How he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob" [Ps 132.2]. Immediately afterwards (the conjunctive *v-* as usual serves to move the text along quickly) comes a smiting of Egypt by the Lord, *nagaph* as in 2Chron 21.18: "And after all this the Lord smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease." Such smiting is temporary, to effect healing (*rapha'*, cf. 13.7 for another meaning) and is bound up with heeding the supplications by the Egyptians, *hatar* meaning to entreat. "And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife because she was barren" [Gn 25.21].

-The fourth *yom* will see a “highway” constructed between two former foes, Egypt and Assyria. Of course, Israel is in between as a kind of mediator. *Mesilah* is noted last in 11.16 but see 7.16 for a similar context. As for “worship,” the verb is *havad* (cf. vs. 21) which seems to imply that the Egyptians will serve the Assyrians, *havad* often used in the context of being enslaved.

-The fifth and final *yom* will see Israel as on that highway of vs. 23 between Egypt and Assyria, though not as an obstacle but as a mediating influence, a “blessing” or *berakah* (cf. 36.16). The words “in the midst (*qerev*, cf. 19.14) of the earth (*‘erets*, cf. 18.3)” suggest being at the most important cross road area of the world at that time. “Make your peace with me and come out to me” [36.16].

-Although not specifically mentioned as part of the fifth *yom*, vs. 25 goes well with it, a fitting conclusion to Chapter Nineteen. Two former enemies, Egypt and Assyria who had been hostile toward Israel, will be reconciled. They are called the “work” of God’s hands (*mahseh*) whereas Israel is called his “heritage” (*nachalah*). The former is found last in vs. 15 but not noted there. For the latter, cf. 47.6: “I was angry with my people, I profaned my heritage.”

## Chapter Twenty

1. In the year that the commander-in-chief, who was sent by Sargon the king of Assyria, came to Ashdod and fought against it and took it—2. at that time the Lord had spoken by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, “Go, and loose the sackcloth from your loins and take off your shoes from your feet,” and he had done so, walking naked and barefoot—3. the Lord said, “As my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and a portent against Egypt and Ethiopia, 4. so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians captives and the Ethiopians exiles, both the young and the old, naked and barefoot, with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. 5. Then they shall be dismayed and confounded because of Ethiopia their hope and of Egypt their boast. 6. And the inhabitants of this coast land will say in that day, ‘Behold, this is what has happened to those in whom we hoped and to whom we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria! And we, how shall we escape?’”

This is a short chapter of six verses, an oracle of sorts against Egypt although that term isn’t used. It comes coming after a good number of verses pertaining to that country’s relationship with the Lord. It is notable in that Isaiah himself takes a direct role as a “sign and portent” [vs. 3] against Egypt and well as Ethiopia, *‘oth* and *mopheth*. Both terms are used together in 8.18. By going naked, Isaiah resembles a prisoner and does this for three long years. Although the king of Assyria will take Egyptians as captives, there is no indication that the extended witness on Isaiah’s part had any positive impact.

## Chapter Twenty-One

This chapter consists of three separate oracles (*masa’*; cf. 19.1): concerning Babylon (vss. 1-10), Dumah (vss. 11-12) and Arabia (vss. 13-17.). Key elements of each are listed as follows after each section of this chapter is given:

1. The oracle concerning the wilderness of the sea. As whirlwinds in the Negeb sweep on, it comes from the desert, from a terrible land. 2. A stern vision is told to me; the plunderer plunders, and the destroyer destroys. Go up, O Elam, lay siege, O Media; all the sighing she has caused I bring to an end. 3. Therefore my loins are filled with anguish; pangs have seized me, like the pangs of a woman in travail; I am bowed down so that I cannot hear, I am dismayed so that I cannot see. 4. My mind reels, horror has appalled me; the twilight I longed for has been turned for me into trembling. 5. They prepare the table, they spread the rugs, they eat, they drink. Arise, O princes, oil the shield! 6. For thus the Lord said to me: "Go, set a watchman, let him announce what he sees. 7. When he sees riders, horsemen in pairs, riders on asses, riders on camels, let him listen diligently, very diligently." 8. Then he who saw cried: "Upon a watchtower I stand, O Lord, continually by day, and at my post I am stationed whole nights. 9. And, behold, here come riders, horsemen in pairs!" And he answered, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the images of her Gods he has shattered to the ground." 10. O my threshed and winnowed one, what I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I announce to you.

The *masa'* with regard to the "wilderness" of the sea, *midbar* (cf. 14.17), which could refer to what's now the Persian Gulf or the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

*Suph* or "whirlwind" comes from the "desert" or *midbar* just noted with regard to the sea.

*Chazoth* or "vision" (similar to *chazon*, 8.11) comes to Isaiah who most likely is still naked and barefoot (cf. 20.3). He speaks from this point onward through vs. 5.

*Matnym* is the noun for "loins," usually referring to the lower part of the back and thus connotes strength. It is found last in 11.5 but not noted there. In the verse at hand they are filled with "anguish" or *chalchalah* which has three other biblical references. "A sword shall come upon Egypt, and anguish shall be in Ethiopia" [Ezk 30.4]. Compare with "pangs" or *tsyr* (cf. 13.8).

*Bahal* is the verb for "dismayed" as in 13.8 which in the verse at hand prevents Isaiah from seeing.

*Levav* means "mind" (cf. 14.13), more generally referring to the heart which here "reels" or *tahah* (cf. 19.14 as 'stagger').

*Palatsuth* means "horror" which has three other biblical references and derives from a verbal root meaning to trample. "Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me" [Ps 55.5]. In the verse at hand, such horror "has appalled" Isaiah, *bahat* implying fear. "Terrors frighten hm on every side and chase him at his heels" [Job 18.11].

Twilight can be taken as the time for the beginning of the Sabbath, eagerly longed for or *chesheq* (noun: 'twilight of my pleasure') which has three other biblical references pertaining to desire. "All that Solomon desired to build" [1Kg 9.1]. In the verse at hand, twilight has become (*sum*: the verb for to place, cf. 14.17 but not noted there) "trembling" or *charadah*. "We heard a voice of trembling" [Jer 30.5].

"They" seems to apply to the princes who "prepare," *harak* implying a laying out in order with regard to a table. "To whom then will you liken God" [40.18]? Next in the same verse is the command for the princes to arise for battle, perhaps the table preparation being in anticipation of a victory feast.

*Mitspeh* is the noun for "watchman" which has one other biblical reference, 2Chron 20.24: "When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness." In the verse at hand, such a person (i.e., on this tower) will "announce" what he sees, *nagad* (cf. 3.9 as 'proclaim').

The verb *qashav* for “listen” is used three times for special emphasis, that is, with regard to the watchman after he sees riders approaching the city (Jerusalem?). This verb stresses close attention and found last in 10.30 but not noted there.

*Qara'* or “cried”(cf. 14.20) along with the noun for lion reads literally as “he who cries lion.” The “watchman” or *tsaphah* (participle; cf. vs. 11) on duty (*hamad* for ‘stand,’ cf. 11.10) is there “continually” or *tamyd* found next in 49.16: “your walls are continually before me.” *Hamad* has a correspondence with the verb “posted” or *natsav* noted last in 3.13 and connotes a sense of being put in place. Also the verbal root for “post” (*mishmereth*) or *shamar* (cf. 7.4) connotes being watchful. “Because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge”[Gen 26.5].

As soon as the watchmen detects riders on horses, that is, in pairs, he exclaims that Babylon has already fallen. Cf. 13.19 where Babylon is likened to Sodom and Gomorrah. This image concerning Babylon is taken up in Rev 14.8: “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of her impure passion.” Note only is Babylon overturned, but her “idols” or *pesylym* (cf. 10.10 as ‘graven images’) have are “shattered,” *shavar* (cf. 8.15). “To the ground” can suggest being cast into the underworld. Just the approach of these riders are enough to bring about Babylon's downfall by Media (cf. vs. 2) as aided by Persia.

Isaiah concludes this oracle against Babylon by addressing (most likely Judah) as having been threshed and winnowed. He hears something from the Lord although it is not spelled out but continues directly with the oracle concerning Dumah. *Nagad* is the verb for “announce” (cf. vs. 6).

The second of three oracles now concerns Dumah:

11. The oracle concerning Dumah. One is calling to me from Seir, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" 12. The watchman says: "Morning comes, and also the night. If you will inquire, inquire; come back again."

Dumah has three other biblical references: Gn 25.14, Jos 15.52 and 1Chron 1.30. The Genesis verse numbers Dumah as the descendants of Ishmael, son of Abraham.

An unidentified person is “calling” (*qara'*, cf. vs. 8) from Seir, presumably to Dumah. Seir has a relationship with Esau (Jacob defrauded him of his birthright, cf. Gn 25.34) as in Gn 36.8: “So Esau dwelt in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom.” The person from Seir, that is, a descendant of Esau, is calling out to Dumah, a descendant of Ishmael. In other words, we have two descendants communicating with each other or two who have not been chosen by the Lord. Jacob was favored instead of Esau and Ishmael was born of Hagar and rejected by Abraham's other wife whom he favored, namely, Sarah. In the verse at hand, the person calling is addressing the “watchman” or *shamar* (participle; cf. 7.4), this word differing from that in vs. 6, *tsaphah* which connotes a shining, brightness as well as being overlaid. For this last example, cf. 1Kg 6.20: “and he (Solomon) overlaid it with pure gold.”

The watchman stationed at Dumah (a descendant of Ishmael, son of Hagar) responds to the question from Seir, a descendant of Esau, that morning is about to come followed by the night. In other words, nothing has happened, hence the request to inquire again. *Bahah* is the verb for “inquire” which fundamentally means to cause to swell and involves a sense of seeking. It has two other biblical references plus Is 30.13: “this iniquity shall be to you like a break in a high wall, bulging out and about to collapse.”

The third and final oracle concerns Arabia:

13. The oracle concerning Arabia. In the thickets in Arabia you will lodge, O caravans of Dedanites. 14. To the thirsty bring water, meet the fugitive with bread, O inhabitants of the land of Tema. 15. For they have fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, from the bent

bow, and from the press of battle. 16. For thus the Lord said to me, "Within a year, according to the years of a hireling, all the glory of Kedar will come to an end; 17. and the remainder of the archers of the mighty men of the sons of Kedar will be few; for the Lord, the God of Israel, has spoken."

*Yahar* is the noun for "thickets" and often refers to a forest, something you don't associate with Arabia. It is found last in 10.34 but not noted there. This is the only biblical mention of the Dedanites, Dedan being in northern Arabia (cf. Ezk 25.13).

Tema is first noted in Gn 25.15, an oasis in northern Arabia and associated in that verse with the descendants of Ishmael. Both are places of refuge from Kedar (cf. vs. 17).

Isaiah brings to a close this chapter by the Lord again addressing him directly with regard to the future demise of Kedar. He re-affirms this divine communication with the words "the Lord...has spoken" (*davar*, cf. 20.2).

## Chapter Twenty-Two

As with Chapter Twenty-One, the one at hand has a series of brief notations after the text. Again, the reason is due to the significant amount of curses and condemnations that have been going on for some time and will continue for several more chapters.

1. The oracle concerning the valley of vision. What do you mean that you have gone up, all of you, to the housetops, 2. you who are full of shoutings, tumultuous city, exultant town? Your slain are not slain with the sword or dead in battle. 3. All your rulers have fled together, without the bow they were captured. All of you who were found were captured, though they had fled far away. 4. Therefore I said: "Look away from me, let me weep bitter tears; do not labor to comfort me for the destruction of the daughter of my people." 5. For the Lord God of hosts has a day of tumult and trampling and confusion in the valley of vision, a battering down of walls and a shouting to the mountains. 6. And Elam bore the quiver with chariots and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield. 7. Your choicest valleys were full of chariots, and the horsemen took their stand at the gates. 8. He has taken away the covering of Judah. In that day you looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest, 9. and you saw that the breaches of the city of David were many, and you collected the waters of the lower pool, 10. and you counted the houses of Jerusalem, and you broke down the houses to fortify the wall. 11. You made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But you did not look to him who did it, or have regard for him who planned it long ago. 12. In that day the Lord God of hosts called to weeping and mourning, to baldness and girding with sackcloth; 13. and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." 14. The Lord of hosts has revealed himself in my ears: "Surely this iniquity will not be forgiven you till you die," says the Lord God of hosts. 15. Thus says the Lord God of hosts, "Come, go to this steward, to Shebna who is over the household, and say to him: 16. What have you to do here and whom have you here, that you have hewn here a tomb for yourself, you who hew a tomb on the height, and carve a habitation for yourself in the rock? 17. Behold, the Lord will hurl you away violently, O you strong man. He will seize firm hold on you, 18. and whirl you round and round, and throw you like a ball into a wide land; there you shall die, and there shall be your splendid chariots, you shame of your master's house. 19. I will thrust you from your office, and you will be cast down from your station. 20. In that day I will

call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, 21. and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your girdle on him, and will commit your authority to his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. 22. And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. 23. And I will fasten him like a peg in a sure place, and he will become a throne of honor to his father's house. 24. And they will hang on him the whole weight of his father's house, the offspring and issue, every small vessel, from the cups to all the flagons. 25. In that day, says the Lord of hosts, the peg that was fastened in a sure place will give way; and it will be cut down and fall, and the burden that was upon it will be cut off, for the Lord has spoken."

Chapter Twenty-Two continues the theme of an "oracle" or *masa'*, here as a valley of "vision," *chazyon* (note the similarity to *chazon* in 8.11) and is found next (and last) in vs. 5, "valley of vision." Chances are that a valley is a suitable place where the Lord reveals himself through Isaiah to Israel though the place is unspecified. Usually it's on a high place; both valleys and mountains are associated with divine revelation as well as worship of the gods. At the same time these heights are also places where local divinities are worshiped..

Vs. 1 has the people going to their housetops in order to see some divine manifestation which will never come. The shouting and tumultuous nature of the town, presumably Jerusalem in vs. 2, point to the collective nature of their desperation. Historically speaking, the invading army (Sargon's expedition) captured Jerusalem without a fight as intimated in vs. 3.

*Shahah* is the verb for "look away" (cf. 17.8) in vs. 4 concerning "me" who possibly is Isaiah as eyes and ears of the Lord in the midst of all this confusion. *'Uts* means "labor" or to urge or hasten on behalf of Jerusalem's inhabitants who are sympathetic to Isaiah because they are aware that he is sharing their plight. "The angels urged Lot" [Gn 19.25]. *'Uts* is used in reference to *nacham* or "comfort" (cf. 12.1), that is, concerning not so much the city's destruction but destruction of "the daughter of my people," a term of endearment as used in Jer 6.26, which makes it all the more tragic.

"Day" or *yom* (cf. 19.24) in vs. 5 is associated with "tumult, trampling and confusion." Note that each word begins with the letter "m" as if to draw out the picture of destruction: *mehumah* (cf. Ezk 7.7), *mevusah* (cf. 18.7 but not noted there) and *mevukah* (Mic 7.1). All three are to take place in the "valley of *chazyon*" of vs. 1 where Isaiah has his oracle, the two being closely associated. Such a *yom* is, as mentioned elsewhere, a *kairos* event which is not necessarily limited to a day commonly understood. There is no question that everyone will recognize this day when it comes yet they have no knowledge as to how long it will last.

Elam (cf. 21.2) and Kir (cf. 15.1) seem to be part of the invading Babylonian army. Vs. 7 speaks of "choicest valleys" or placed well-watered and therefore sources of food.

"Covering" or *masak* of vs. 8 often applies to the veil before the gate of the divine tabernacle, frequently appearing in Exodus as in 40.8: "And put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle" [40.28]. "House of the Forest" applies to the temple itself made of cedars of Lebanon. "He (Solomon) built the House of the Forest of Lebanon" [1Kg 7.2]. In the verse at hand, the temple seems to house an armory, hence the mention of weapons.

Vs. 9 speaks of Jerusalem as the "city of David" which is the "daughter of my people" in vs. 4 (cf. Neh 12.37).

Vss. 10 and 11 mention how material from houses were used to fortify Jerusalem's walls. In this desperate act the inhabitants believed that they alone could look out for themselves. Thus they failed to "look" to the Lord who was responsible for construction of the city initiated

by King David whose lineage is suggested here. The verb at hand is *navat* (cf 18.4) which implies a sense of beholding and therefore being held captive by what one beholds. Compare with *ra'ah* or the common verb for to see which here is “regard.” If the inhabitants of Jerusalem followed through with this double kind of looking, if you will, they would have seen the Lord at work while taking into consideration the wickedness in their midst over an extended period of time. During all those years the Lord had “planned” for this *yom*...this *kairos* event...*yatsar* often associated with devising or even artistic work. “He that formed them will show them no favor” [27.11].

Vs. 12 has another reference to “that day” which seems a continuation, if you will, of the one in vs. 8 and further back in vs. 5. The noun *misped* for “mourning” is more intense than weeping, that is, it implies lamentation. “Make mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation” [Jer 6.26]. Although the Lord bids this, the people do the opposite, namely, they hold a feast noted in vs. 13 consisting of “joy and gladness,” *sason* (cf. 12.3) and *simchah* (cf. 9.3).

*Galah* is the verb for “revealed” in vs. 14 noted last in 16.3 with its alternate meaning of to go into exile, presumably because those who did went naked or partly so. In the verse at hand, *galah* is done in the ears of Isaiah, that is to say, it is part of the *masa'* or oracle of vs. 1 specifically aimed to be heard. The Lord speaks of “iniquity” or *havon* (cf. 14.21) which pertains to failing to heed the “day” or *yom* of the Lord in vs. 12 and other places. It will remain until the day “you” die, this second person most likely referring to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Both the beginning and end of vs. 14 have “Lord God of hosts” suggestive of the Lord as head of an angelic army.

Vs. 15 shifts gears but continues the revelation of the Lord in Isaiah's ears, that is, against Shebna or “steward” of King Hezekiah's household, *sakan* being a participle which fundamentally means to dwell, to associate with. “And she became the king's nurse and ministered to him” [1Kg 1.4].

In vs. 16 note the correspondence between “tomb” and “habitation,” *qever* (cf. 14.19 but not noted there) and *mishkan* which also refers to a tabernacle. “My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings and in quiet resting places” [32.18].

The “strong man” of vs. 17 or *qever* apparently is the steward Shebna, this term being a general one for man as opposed to a woman. “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord” [Jer 17.7]. In the verse at hand, the Lord will “hurl away violently” this man, the verb *tul* coupled with the noun derived from it (the only biblical reference) *taltelah*. As for a reference to the former, cf. Jer 16.13: “Therefore I will cast you out.” Before this, however, the Lord will “whirl” Shebna around, *tsanaph* being used twice, a verb meaning to roll up. The other biblical reference is Lev 16.4: “He (Aaron) shall wear the linen turban,” that is, will wrap it around his head.

The chariots of vs. 18 seem to be symbolic of Shebna's high office, the means by which he got around to conduct the king's business.

The “office and station” or *matsav* and *mahamad*. The former also refers to a military garrison as in 1Sam 14.1: “Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on yonder side.” The latter derives from a verbal root meaning to stand and has four other biblical references, one of which is 2Chron 9.4: “The attendance of his servants.” The verb *hadaph* pertains to *matsav* (‘thrust’) as in Jer 46.15: “because the Lord thrust him down.” The verb *haras* (‘cast down’) pertains to *mahamad* and is found last in 14.17 but not noted there.

“In that day” (*yom*) of vs. 20 can be the same or different from the one in vs. 12.

Regardless, the theme of both is a day of reckoning by the Lord, the temporal duration of which is secondary.

Vs. 20 recounts the Lord choosing Eliakim to replace Shebna although both appear later in 36.11. Shebna is last mentioned in 37.2 when King Hezekiah sends him to consult Isaiah. Eliakim will assume the external signs of power, that is, “robe, girdle and authority:” *ketoneth*, *’avnet* and *memshalah*. The first is a tunic, often an inner garment close to the skin. Sg 5.3: “I have put off my garment, how could I put it on?” The second is a kind of belt usually associated with priests. “And you shall gird them with girdles” [Ex 29.9]. The last is found in 39.2: “There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.” All three will work to make Eliakim a father to both Jerusalem and Judah.

Vs. 22 has the Lord placing the key belonging to the house of David on the shoulder of Eliakim, implying that while he may not become a king after the lineage of David, he will wield power for the good as steward under the current reign of King Hezekiah. His ability to open and shut is reminiscent of Peter’s authority given by Jesus: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven” [Mt 16.19]. The other symbol attributed to Eliakim is he being a peg (connotes a tent) and a throne of “honor” or *kavod*’ (cf. 17.4).

Once Eliakim has become a peg and throne, symbols of stability, vs. 24 recounts that people will hang on him the entire “weight” of his father’s house, another use of the noun *kavod* in its original sense.

Chapter Twenty-Two concludes with yet another mention of “in that day” (*yom*, cf. vs. 20) which has an ominous tone about it, especially after the Lord himself had spoken so eloquently of Eliakim as peg (cf. vs. 23). The “sure place” or *maqom* (cf. 18.7) that is *’aman* (cf. 11.5) or worthy of belief and trustworthiness will “give way” or *naphal* which means to fall (cf. 17.1). Furthermore, the “burden” or *masa’* will be cut off, this noun being the same as oracle mentioned a number of times earlier.

The very last words of this chapter are “for the Lord has spoken” which make everything definitive and unalterable. While a dire future seems in store despite the divine support of Eliakim, it seems that the Lord is saying this to preclude relying upon human support. After all, the Lord is dealing with the line of David or the kingship which he opposed vehemently. “They have rejected me from being king over them” [1Sam 8.7]. It is this the Lord wishes the people to keep in the forefront of their minds despite anything they may suffer, even loss of their rule and even land.

### Chapter Twenty-Three

1. The oracle concerning Tyre. Wail, O ships of Tarshish, for Tyre is laid waste, without house or haven! From the land of Cyprus it is revealed to them. 2 Be still, O inhabitants of the coast, O merchants of Sidon; your messengers passed over the sea 3. and were on many waters; your revenue was the grain of Shihor, the harvest of the Nile; you were the merchant of the nations. 4. Be ashamed, O Sidon, for the sea has spoken, the stronghold of the sea, saying: "I have neither travailed nor given birth, I have neither reared young men nor brought up virgins." 5. When the report comes to Egypt, they will be in anguish over the report about Tyre. 6. Pass over to Tarshish, wail, O inhabitants of the coast! 7. Is this your exultant city whose origin is from days of old, whose feet carried her to settle afar? 8. Who has purposed this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants were princes, whose traders were the honored of the

earth? 9. The Lord of hosts has purposed it, to defile the pride of all glory, to dishonor all the honored of the earth. 10. Overflow your land like the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish; there is no restraint any more. 11. He has stretched out his hand over the sea, he has shaken the kingdoms; the Lord has given command concerning Canaan to destroy its strongholds. 12. And he said: "You will no more exult, O oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon; arise, pass over to Cyprus, even there you will have no rest." 13. Behold the land of the Chaldeans! This is the people; it was not Assyria. They destined Tyre for wild beasts. They erected their siege towers, they razed her palaces, they made her a ruin. 14. Wail, O ships of Tarshish, for your stronghold is laid waste. 15. In that day Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, like the days of one king. At the end of seventy years, it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the harlot: 16. "Take a harp, go about the city, O forgotten harlot! Make sweet melody, sing many songs, that you may be remembered." 17. At the end of seventy years, the Lord will visit Tyre, and she will return to her hire, and will play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. 18. Her merchandise and her hire will be dedicated to the Lord; it will not be stored or hoarded, but her merchandise will supply abundant food and fine clothing for those who dwell before the Lord.

The procedure here follows the same of the last chapter, namely, treating the contents as a single unit followed by notations of key elements within them. It concerns an "oracle" or *masa'* with regard to Tyre which is located on the seacoast. The next time *masa'* is mentioned is Chapter Thirty.

Chapter Twenty-Three starts off dramatically with the verb "wail" or *yahal* (cf. 16.7) which concerns ships, vital to Tyre's existence (See vs. 14 for a similar verse). *Shadad* as "laid waste" is noted last in 16.4. If the city is destroyed, the ships are left as orphans and must seek other harbors and therefore other masters. Because the island of Cyprus has a substantial Phoenician colony where some of these ships are based, they got wind of Tyre's destruction. *Galah* is the verb for "revealed" noted last in 22.14. Although the person bidding Tyre to wail and follows with similar commands, he isn't identified, suggesting it could be the Lord speaking through Isaiah within this *masa'*. As for the *masa'*, it involves both the Lord and Isaiah rolled into one.

Vs. 2 speaks of another coastal city, Sidon, which is north of Tyre or more specifically, its inhabitants who are bidden to "be still" or *damam*, a verb which connotes being astonished. "Put yourself into your scabbard, rest and be still" [Jer 47.6]! Although this city's destruction isn't mentioned, presumably the same fate is in store as with Tyre, given the next few verses.

Use of the word "messengers" (*mal'ak*, cf. 18.2) suggests a different economy than that of Tyre, something along the lines of offering communication, a kind of postal service. In addition to this, Sidon was (note past tense in vs. 3) a trader in food and grain. Vs. 5 speaks of Egypt's reaction and dismay at no longer receiving grain. The fate of Tyre and Sidon are reminiscent of the fallen city of Babylon depicted in Rev 18.15: "The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud."

Vs. 4 mentions both the sea and its "stronghold" or *mahoz* (cf. 17.10) seems to refer to Tyre, the stronger of the two cities, as well as being a guarantor of safe passage on the Mediterranean Sea. Tyre is reported as speaking about her neighbor to the north (Sidon) as having come to naught.

Through the medium of Isaiah and his *masa'* the Lord bids those living in Tyre and Sidon to flee to the opposite end of the Mediterranean, namely Tarshish or modern day Spain. This brings to mind Jonah who fled the Lord: "He went down to Joppa and found a ship going

to Tarshish...away from the presence of the Lord" [Jon 1.3]. Vs. 7 speaks of settlers who most likely reached Tarshish which implies all the lands in between.

After vs. 8 recounts Tyre's renown, in vs. 9 the Lord speaks as the "Lord of hosts" (*tseva'oth*, cf. 10.33) or head of his angelic army. Clearly he states that he has "purposed" what he has said in the *masa'*, *yahats* (cf. 19.12) also meaning to counsel which has the alternate meaning as to defile and to dishonor, *chalal* and *qalal*. For the former, see 56.2: "Blessed is the man who...keeps the sabbath, not profaning it." The latter is found in 9.1. In the verse at hand, *chalal* is associated with the "pride of glory" or *ga'on* found next in 24.14: "over the majesty of the Lord they shout from the west." *Qalal* is associated with the "honored" belonging to the earth, the verbal root *kavad* (cf. 3.5).

In vs. 10 the Lord bids Tarshish to overflow its land, possibly flooding from the ocean, "daughter" being a term of endearment. *Mezeth* is the noun for "restraint" and has two other biblical references, Job 12.21 and Ps 109.19, the latter being cited: "like a belt with which he daily girds himself."

Vs. 11 has the Lord stretching (*natah*, cf. 10.4) out his hand over the (Mediterranean) sea along whose coast are situated Tarshish (Spain) on one end and Tyre and Sidon on the other. In other words, this hand extends all across the Mediterranean and is reminiscent of Moses at the Red Sea: "Lift up your rod and *natah* out your hand over the sea and divide it that the people of Israel may go on dry ground through the sea" [Ex 14.16]. Accompanying this *natah* in the verse at hand is a shaking of kingdoms, *ragaz* (cf. 14.16). Also the Lord bids Canaan—inland to the seacoast cities—to destroy its "strongholds" or *mahoz* (cf. vs. 4).

Vs. 12 begins with "And he said," that is, the Lord speaking directly compared with the mediation of Isaiah through his *masa'* or "oracle" which begins this chapter. The speaking is only with this verse after which Isaiah gets back to communicating through *masa'*. The words here are directed toward Sidon whom the Lord calls "virgin daughter" compared with "daughter" pertaining to Tarshish in vs. 9. Due to her undue self-exultation (*halaz* being the verb; cf. Ps 68.4), Sidon will move to Cyprus where apparently the inhabitants of Tyre had fled earlier. Despite this move, those of Sidon will have no "rest" or *nuach* (cf. 14.7).

Vs. 13 shifts gears to the Chaldeans introduced by *hineh* (cf. 13.17) or "behold" which intimates that anything the Lord is about to communicate will not be favorable. They, not Assyria, brought about the destruction already mentioned, making Tyre a "ruin" or *mapelah* which has one other biblical citation, 25.2. The RSV has a footnote calling this term "obscure."

Vs. 15 has the familiar phrase "in that day" (*yom*, cf. 22.25) which lays in the future or when Tyre will be forgotten but not forever, that is, only a period of seventy years. What will happen after that is spelled out in the remaining verses of this chapter. A "harlot" (*zanah*; participle, cf. 1.21) implies gain at Tyre's expense through shameful behavior. Vs. 16 contains this song which consists of one verse, possibly along the lines of a refrain, and is performed by the harlot with a harp in order to keep alive the shame of Tyre.

Once seventy years has passed during which time the harlot's song will have been sung, the Lord himself will "visit" Tyre (*paqad*, cf. 13.11), this term having military connotations such as mustering. He will make Tyre a harlot to the world's kingdoms as before chiefly through her sea trade. This verse is reminiscent of Chapter Seventeen of Revelation, the fall of Babylon (cf. Chaldeans of vs. 13), "the great harlot who is seated upon many waters" [vs. 1].

Chapter Twenty-Three concludes on a positive note. Despite the ill repute of Tyre, the Lord will use her merchandise and hire as "dedicated" to himself, *qodesh* meaning holy as in 11.9 and thus set apart. A similar incident happened with regard to Jericho: "But all silver and gold

and vessels of bronze and iron are *qodesh* to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord" [Jos 6.19]. Instead of being hoarded, such goods will be for the use of those who "dwell" before the Lord, *yashav* (cf. 18.3) which may correspond to the treasury and therefore temple as noted in the verse from Joshua. The abundance of food and fine clothing will be sufficient, not stashed away, which is not unlike the heavenly manna (cf. Ex 16.17-21).

## Chapter Twenty-Four

1. Behold, the Lord will lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants. 2. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the slave, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor. 3. The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the Lord has spoken this word. 4. The earth mourns and withers, the world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. 5. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. 6. Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left. 7. The wine mourns, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. 8. The mirth of the timbrels is stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased, the mirth of the lyre is stilled. 9. No more do they drink wine with singing; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. 10. The city of chaos is broken down, every house is shut up so that none can enter. 11. There is an outcry in the streets for lack of wine; all joy has reached its eventide; the gladness of the earth is banished. 12. Desolation is left in the city, the gates are battered into ruins. 13. For thus it shall be in the midst of the earth among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, as at the gleaning when the vintage is done. 14. They lift up their voices, they sing for joy; over the majesty of the Lord they shout from the west. 15. Therefore in the east give glory to the Lord; in the coastlands of the sea, to the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. 16. From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One. But I say, "I pine away, I pine away. Woe is me! For the treacherous deal treacherously, the treacherous deal very treacherously." 17. Terror, and the pit, and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth! 18. He who flees at the sound of the terror shall fall into the pit; and he who climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare. For the windows of heaven are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble. 19. The earth is utterly broken, the earth is rent asunder, the earth is violently shaken. 20. The earth staggers like a drunken man, it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again. 21. On that day the Lord will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth. 22. They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished. 23. Then the moon will be confounded, and the sun ashamed; for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before his elders he will manifest his glory.

A footnote to vs. 1 in the **RSV** calls Chapters Twenty-Four through Twenty-Seven the "Isaiah Apocalypse" because of the use of eschatological themes found in later apocalyptic writings." It begins with *hineh* or "behold" noted last in 23.13 as a way of grabbing one's attention. The Lord doesn't waste any time, starting off with four types of devastation: "lay

waste, make desolate, twist and scatter” or *baqaq* (cf. 19.3), *balaq*, *havah* (cf. 23.3 but not noted there) and *puts*. As for *balaq*, it fundamentally means to make empty and has one other reference, Nah 2.10: “Desolate! Desolation and ruin! Hearts faint and knees tremble, anguish is on all loins, all faces grow pale!” As for *puts*, cf. 28.25: “When he has leveled its surface, does he not scatter dill, sow cummin?”

Vs. 2 applies this fourfold devastation to six categories of people which includes just about everybody.

Vs. 3 again speaks of what befalls the “earth” or *‘erets* for the second time, this being the unfortunate recipient of human evil. *Baqaq* is the verb for “utterly laid waste” and used twice for emphasis (cf. vs. 1). The same technique is used with the verb *bazaz* (cf. 11.14). Not entirely unlike this double use of a verb vs. 3 has “the Lord has spoken (*davar*, cf. 21.17) this word (*davar*).”

For the third time in vs. 4 *‘erets* is mentioned almost in a personal manner, for it “mourns and withers” or *‘aval* (cf. 19.8 but not noted there) and *navel* (cf. 1.30 but not noted there). In addition to the physical *‘erets* vs. 4 speaks of the “world” or *tevel* (cf. 18.3), usually inhabited regions. If this weren’t enough, the heavens join in with *‘erets* as they “languish” or *‘amal* (cf. 19.8 but not noted there) which connotes being weak.

Vs. 5 speaks of the *‘erets* for the fifth time, here as “polluted” or *chanaph* which also means to make profane. “Both prophet and priest are ungodly” [Jer 23.11]. Mention of *‘erets* here is especially poignant because it is “under its inhabitants.” The nature of the pollution is clarified, that transgression (the common verb *havar*, cf. 8.8) of *Torah* (cf. 8.20) causes it along with “statutes and covenant” or *choq* (cf. 10.1) and *beryth*. “We have made a covenant with death” [28.15].

Vs. 6 has the sixth mention of *‘erets* which is devoured (*‘akal*, the common verb to eat, cf. 9.20) by a “curse” or *‘alah* which also means an oath or pledge. “Then you will be free from my oath when you come to my kindred” [Gn 24.41]. “Suffer from guilt” or *‘asham* also means to punish. “Evil shall slay the wicked; and those who hate the righteous will be condemned” [Ps 34.21]. This guilt causes people to become “scorched” or *charah*. “My bones are burned with heat” [Job 30.30].

Vss.7-11 deal with the fate of revelers belonging to the city of “chaos” mentioned in vs. 10, *tohu* being the word to describe that from which God had created the world: “the earth was without form and void” [Gn 1.2]. The next occurrence of *tohu* in Isaiah is 29.21: “and with an empty plea turn aside him who is in the right.”

Vs. 11 had the seventh mention of *‘erets* with respect to “gladness” or *masus* (cf. 8.6), having been “banished,” *galah* being more as sent into exile (cf. 23.2 with its alternate meaning of ‘revealed’). So if *‘erets* is banished, that means no foundation literally speaking which is why vs. 12 speaks of “desolation” as the only thing left in the city (Jerusalem), *shamah* (cf. 13.9).

The eighth mention of *‘erets* is vs. 13, more specifically, its “midst” or *qerev* (cf. 19.24) suggests the very center of *‘erets*. Compare the use of *qerev* with “among” relative to nations, *betok* (cf. 19.19).

Despite the drama of what the Lord is about to do to the earth, vss. 14-16 recounts the joy at deliverance even though the Lord continues with details about his judgment. “They” of vs. 14 is not specified nor how these people fit into the wider context of Chapter Twenty-Four. However, this group resides in the west which is referred to by the noun “sea” (cf. next verse with reference to the east) but most likely applies to nearby mountains facing Jerusalem. In other words, those who have escaped divine judgment first lift up their voices followed

immediately by “singing for joy” or *ranan* (cf. 12.6). Beholding the divine “majesty” or *ga'on* causes this outburst noted last in 16.4 with its alternate meaning of pride. As a result they “shout” or *tsahal* (cf. 12.6). We have no details as to how these people (nor how many were they) escaped to the west but must be a small number, given the context of this chapter.

Vs. 15 speaks of a second group of survivors, if you will, who are situated in the “east” or *'ur* which also can apply to Urim or the casting of lots used by the high priest as well as a pouch on a breast plate used by him to contain these lots (cf. Ex 28.15-30). “The Lord, whose fire is in Zion and whose furnace is in Jerusalem” [31.9]. In the verse at hand, those in the east are to “give glory” to the Lord, *kavad* (cf. 3.5).

Reference to “coastlands” of the sea” in vs. 15 is the opposite direction of the east, that is, the west mentioned in vs. 14. They too will *kavad* the Lord or more specifically, his name.

Vs. 16 speaks of “we” or those in both the east and west (of Jerusalem). They hear of others whom the Lord had favored, that is, they hear them in the “ends” of the earth, *kanaph* (cf. 11.12) which fundamentally means a wing. Nothing is said of their identity, perhaps people who had been scattered even further afield, those who never had been led astray or had known the Lord. From such extreme distances is heard “songs of praise” or *zemyr*. “You subdue the noise of the aliens” [25.5]. Also is heard (songs) of “glory” or *tsevy* (cf. 13.19; compare this word with *kavod*, the former also applicable to beauty) which belong to *Tsadyq* (cf. 3.10). There is no problem about hearing the sound of this praise from the earth’s extremes, for it is not transmitted by hearing but by attention to the Lord.

Despite the upbeat tone of vss. 14, 15 and part of 16, Isaiah enters the picture for one verse (16), giving voice to a complaint over the tragedy he has been witnessing. It causes him to “pine away” or *razy* which is a noun, the only use in the Bible and derived from a verbal root meaning to consume, to destroy. Thus the verse reads literally “destruction to me.” The verbal root *bagad* (to deal treacherously) is used in vs. 16 five times and can also mean to plunder as found last in 21.2 but not noted there.

Vs. 17 resumes with what apparently is the Lord speaking again after the brief interruption, if you will, by Isaiah. “Terror, pit and snare” or *pachad*, *pachath* and *pach*, three nouns with a distinct “pach” sound which conveys a sense of inevitability and panic. The first is noted last in 2.10, the second is found in the next verse (18) and the third noted last in 8.14. All are directed to the singular inhabitant upon the earth which could be Jerusalem and therefore Israel as a nation.

Vs. 18 mentions the three as being inescapable and adds two more inescapable places, if you will, with regard to “earth” or *'erets* (ninth mention of being subject to divine wrath due to human disobedience): 1) the windows of “heaven” or *marom* which connotes a high place (compare with the more common *shamym*, suggestive of a vault, 7.11) and is found last in 22.16 but not noted there. 2) “Foundations” of the earth or *mosadoth*. “Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth” [40.21]? Perhaps the Lord is referring to the flood of Noah where “all the fountains of the deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened” [Gn 7.11]. In other words, water came from above and below.

Vs. 19 has the tenth instance of *'erets* mentioned here three times: “utterly broken, rent asunder and violently shaken” or *raha* (cf. 14.20 but not noted there) which connotes evil, *parar* (cf. 14.27) and *mut* [40.20; not noted there]. Each word is used twice, a way of exaggerating the action at hand.

Vs. 20 has the eleventh and last mention of *'erets* as staggering and swaying or *nuah* (cf. 7.2) and *nod*, the latter mentioned in 51.19: “Who will condole with you?” In the verse at hand,

for the first time in these various references to *'erets* it is directly responsible for a “transgression” or *peshah*. “I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake” [43.25].

Vs. 21 has the familiar phrase, “on that day (*yom*)” noted last in 23.15 and here refers to the future punishment by the Lord first concerning the “host” (*tsava'*, cf. 13.4 but pertaining to the Lord) or those heavenly ranks lined up against him. *Paqad* is the verb for “will punish”(cf. 23.17), a verb with military connotations. The second object of this divine *paqad* will be kings of the earth. The text is clear to put them “on the earth,” that is to make a firm distinction between any *tsava'* they may muster and the *tsava'* in heavenly.

Vs. 22 speaks of a “pit” or *bor*, the same imagery as in 14.10 which in the verse at hand is equivalent to a “prison” or *misger*. “To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness” [43.7]. After “many days” both the hosts of heaven and kings of the earth will be “punished” or *paqad* as in the previous verse, the nature of which is not specified. In fact the duration of these “many days” will be just as painful by reason of not knowing what this *paqad* is about as they stand there crowded or jammed together in darkness. Compare this image with that of Rev 20.3: “and threw him (the dragon) into the pit and shut it and sealed it over him that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were ended.”

Vs. 23 brings Chapter Twenty-Four to a conclusion on an apocalyptic note not unlike Rev 6.12-3: “the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.” In the verse at hand, the moon will be “confounded” and the sun “ashamed,” *chapher* and *bosh*, both in 1.29. Along with stars, they are essential for marking time. In their place, however, the “Lord of hosts will reign” (*malak*). “Your God reigns” [52.7]. Such *malak* will be first on Mount Zion (i.e., the temple) and second, in Jerusalem. While there, the Lord will “manifest (his) glory,” *kavad* being the verb (cf. vs. 15). Such elders are mentioned frequently in Revelation: “Round the throne were twenty-four thrones and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders clad in white garments with golden crowns upon their heads” [4.4].

## Chapter Twenty-Five

This chapter reverts to the listing of each verse, the first time since 19.15.

**25-Vs. 1: O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.**

This song of thanksgiving is uttered by Isaiah after the universal judgment described in the last chapter. *Rum* is the verb for “exalt” (cf. 14.13) with reference to the Lord and *yadah* for “praise” (cf. 19.21) with reference to his name. Both are one and the same but come across different for the person actually doing it.

“Wonderful things” is the noun *pele'* (cf. 9.6) meaning wonder and *hetsah* (cf. 19.17) is the noun for “plans” which usually refers to counsel.

“Faithful and sure” or *'emunah* (cf. 11.5) and *'omen* (the only use of this noun in the Bible but derived from the verbal root *'aman* (cf. 22.25).

**25-Vs. 2: For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt.**

Identity of the city is uncertain (the same with regard to the fortified city and palace), but the Lord has made it a “heap” or *gal* which also means a fountain or spring. It is mentioned last in 10.30 but not noted there as “daughter of Gallim” or daughter of the heaps.

*Qiryah* is a poetic term for “city” (cf. 1.26) which here is “fortified” or *batsar*, it is mentioned in 2.15 but not noted there. This city is a “ruin” or *mapalah* (cf. 17.1; from a verbal root meaning to fall). Compare *qiryah* with the more common term *hyr* (cf. 1.26) for “city” with regard to aliens.

*'Armon* is the noun for “palace” found last in 23.14 but not noted there and in the verse at hand, belongs to “aliens” or *zur*, a participle found last in 17.10.

**25-Vs. 3: Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you.**

*Haz* is the adjective for “strong” found last in 19.9 as “fierce.” They will “glorify” the Lord, *kavad* (cf. 24.23) while cities inhabited by “ruthless nations” or *haryts* (cf. 13.11) will “fear” the Lord, *yare'* being the common verb.

**25-Vs. 4: For you have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat; for the blast of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall,**

The Lord himself will be a *mahoz* or “stronghold” (cf. 23.11) shelter for the “poor and needy” or *dal* and *'evyon*, both found in 14.32 as well as a *machseh* (cf. 4.6 but not noted there) or “shelter” from the storm.

Note the use of two similar words concerning the “ruthless” (*haryts*, cf. vs. 3): *ruach* (cf. vs. 3) for “blast” and *zerem* (cf. 4.6 but not noted there).

**25-Vs. 5: like heat in a dry place. You subdue the noise of the aliens; as heat by the shade of a cloud, so the song of the ruthless is stilled.**

*Tsayon* has one other biblical reference, 32.2: “like streams of water in a dry place.”

The act of subduing the aliens is an attempt to humble them, the essence of the verb *kanah*. “I would soon subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes” [Ps 81.14]. More precisely, *kanah* is directed towards the aliens' “noise” or *sha'on* which is more akin to an uproar (cf. 17.13). Also *kanah* acts as a muffling sound through the image of a cloud's shade coming over heat.

*Zemyr* is the noun for “song” belonging to those who are “ruthless” (*haryts*, cf. vs. 3) which also means psalmist and found last in 24.16.

**25-Vs. 6: On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined.**

The mountain isn't specified but most likely is Zion, the place where the Lord will prepare a “feast” or *mishteh* which fundamentally pertains to drinking (cf. 5.12). “Lees” are

mentioned twice, *shemarym* which applies to dregs. “And all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs” [Ps 75.8].

**25-Vs. 7: And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.**

*Balah* is the verb for “destroy” (cf. 19.3) and fundamentally means to swallow, that the Lord will swallow up a “covering” or *lut*, the only use of this term in the Bible which has its verbal root as “cast” and connotes a type of wrapping up not unlike *balah*. That root has two other references, 1Sam 21.9 and 1Kg 19.13, the former being cited here: “Behold, it (sword of Goliath) wrapped in a clothe behind the ephod.”

The second object of *balah* is the “veil” or *masekah* (from the verbal root *kasah*, to cover) which has one other reference, 28.20: “the (bed) covering too narrow to wrap oneself in it.” This veil is “spread” over the “nations” or *goy* (cf. 16.8) compared with the “people” or *ham* (cf. 13.4), *nasak*, the only biblical reference though seems to be the same spelling as the verb applied to a liquid as for anointing. Both this covering and veil don't seem imposed by the Lord but woven by their own devices, if you will, over a long period of time.

**25-Vs. 8: He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken.**

*Balah* is the verb for “swallow” and is noted in the previous verse as “destroy.”

The image of wiping away tears brings to mind Rev 7.17: “For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd...and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” In the verse at hand, *machah* is the verb which means to blot out utterly (cf. 43.25).

*Cherpah* (cf. 4.1) or “reproach” which is upon the Lord's “people” or *ham* (cf. previous verse) seems to have extended to the rest of the “earth” (*'erets*, cf. 24.20). The means of doing this is not specified—a kind of worldwide rollback, if you will—effected by the Lord speaking as at the conclusion of this verse, “for the Lord has spoken,” *davar* (cf. 24.3). It took place instantly and without warning because the divine *davar* isn't limited by space and time.

**25-Vs. 9: It will be said on that day, "Lo, this 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 and rejoice in his salvation."**

Note the familiar words “on that day (*yom*),” cf. 24.21 which lays in the future but as this verse recounts, already has a response prepared which intimates the *kairos* nature of such a day.

“Lo” or *hineh* is like the “behold” of 24.1 which introduces someone or something important about to come on the scene, the Lord being the object of waiting, *qavah* which also means hope as in 8.17. The object of such waiting/hoping is for the Lord to “save,” *yashah* (cf. 19.20) which is used with the preposition *l*, literally as “to us.” In the verse at hand, *qavah* is in the past tense with *hineh* introducing the Lord as already present.

The Lord being already present causes the people to both “be glad and rejoice” or *gyl* and *samach* (cf. 9.3 and 14.8) in divine “salvation” or *yeshuhah* (cf. 12.3), the proper name for Jesus.

**25-Vs. 10: For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain, and Moab shall be trodden down in his place, as straw is trodden down in a dung-pit.**

Most likely the mountain is Zion upon which the divine hand will “rest” or *nuach* (cf. 23.12) which implies settling down.

Moab (cf. 16.14), Israel's enemy, seems out of place here but will be “trodden down” or *dush* which implies being threshed. “Dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge” [18.27].

**25-Vs. 11: And he will spread out his hands in the midst of it as a swimmer spreads his hands out to swim; but the Lord will lay low his pride together with the skill of his hands.**

“Midst of it” (*qerev*, cf. 24.13) seems to apply to Moab whose “pride” or *ga'avah* (cf. 16.6) the Lord will “lay low,” *shaphel* noted last in 10.33 and is similar to *ga'avah*, *gavoah* (cf. 10.33) or “lofty.” The Lord will effect this with the “skill” or *'arboth*, the only use of this noun in the Bible which can be translated as ambush.

**25-Vs. 12: And the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down, lay low and cast to the ground, even to the dust.**

*Mivstar* suggests something fenced in as in 17.3 and here is “high” or *misgav*, a noun found next in 33.16: “He will dwell on the heights.” *Shaphel* or “lay low” is used to describe their fate, the same verb as in the previous verse. Not only will this happen but defenses will be cast to the ground and even further, to the dust or pulverized so they will disappear altogether.

## Chapter Twenty-Six

**26-Vs. 1: In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks.**

For all intensive purposes the phrase “in that day (*yom*) could be the same *yom* as in 25.9. Regardless, *yom* as a *kairos* or special occasion transcends the limits of space and time. In the verse at hand, *yom* pertains to “this song” or *shyr* (found last in 24.9 but not noted there) which continues through vs. 6.

The song begins with reference to an unidentified city which is “strong” or *hoz* (cf. 12.2) and has “salvation” or *yeshuhah* (cf. 25.9) as protection, meaning it lacks the tradition type and is invisible to the naked eye.

**26-Vs. 2: Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps faith may enter in.**

The gates of the city are to open not just for a people but for a “nation” or *goy* (cf. 25.7), a term which often stands for those who are not Israelites. Nevertheless, the Lord has made them “righteous” or *tsadyq* (cf. 24.16) because they are keeping (*shamar*, cf. 21.11) “faith” or *'emun*. “Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but a faithful man who can find” [Prov 20.6]? The entry of such a large group of people means that the city has to be large enough to accommodate them.

**26-Vs. 3: You keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.**

The verb for “keep” is *natsar* noted last in 1.8 and differs from the keeping of vs. 2 (*shamar*) by reason of its association with the notion of defending and hiding whereas *shamar* applies to observation or attention to something. The form of *natsar* here is *titsor* which is similar in sound to *yetser* or “mind.” The person addressed in this verse can be taken as one of the *goy* or the *goy* as a collective one or singular person.

This verse begins with the noun *yetser* or “mind” which fundamentally means a frame or formation. “Or the thing formed say of him who formed it, 'He has no understanding” [29.16]? In the verse at hand, this *yester...thought or form...is kept or samak*. “And stay themselves on the God of Israel” [48.2].

The object of keeping/hiding (that is, *natsar*) is “perfect peace” which comes across as the double use of *shalom* (cf. 9.7).

**26-Vs. 4: Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.**

The verb *batach* ('trust') is used in the previous verse with regard to the Lord and again here (cf. 12.2), that is, the Lord as a “rock” or *tsur* (cf. 17.10). Note the two uses with regard to eternity: “forever and everlasting” or *hady-hed* and *holamym*. The former literally means “ages (perpetuity of time) age” and the latter is plural and often refers to time in the future.

**26-Vs. 5: For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height, the lofty city. He lays it low, lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust.**

The city can refer to the one in 25.2, *qiryah* being the same term and seems to differ from the unidentified one in vs. 1. The verb *shaphel* ('brought low,' cf. 25.12) is used twice for emphasis regarding the inhabitants, that is, of the city which is “lofty” or *sagav* (cf. 12.4). The noun *rum* ('height') applies more to that which is lifted up on high. Compare *shaphel* with *nagah* or “casts” (cf. 8.8), a verb which fundamentally pertains to touch.

**26-Vs. 6: The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.”**

This verse ends the song begun in vs. 1. *Ramas* is the verb for “tramples” which is done by both the “poor and needy” or *hany* (cf. 14.32) and *dal* (cf. 25.4). The noun “foot” with regard to these two groups of unfortunates emphasizes the action of *ramas*.

**26-Vs. 7: The way of the righteous is level; you make smooth the path of the righteous.**

Note two words with regard to walking: *'orach* is the (poetical) noun for “way” (cf. 3.12) and *mahgal* which refers more to a track or rut. “He leads me in the paths of righteousness” [Ps 23.3]. The former is “level” or *meyshrym*, a noun meaning up-righteousness, hence “way of up-righteousness.” The latter is the verb *palas* which connotes a weighing out. “Nay, in your hearts you devise wrongs; your hands deal out violence on earth” [Ps 58.2].

**26-Vs. 8: In the path of your judgments, O Lord, we wait for you; your memorial name is the desire of our soul.**

The Hebrew text lacks the preposition “in” and has instead *'aph* (besides, quite, indeed) followed by *'orach* ('path') noted in the previous verse. Here *'orach* is associated with “judgments,” *mishpat* (cf. 16.5). Thus the text reads “indeed the path of your judgments.”

*Qavah* (cf. 25.9) is the verb for “wait” which takes place on one end of the *'orach*, if you will, awaiting the divine judgments to descend to it. Although such judgments lay in the future, those waiting for them have a “memorial” or *zeker* (cf. vs. 14 as 'remembrance') which has become the “desire” (*ta'avah*) of “soul,” *nephesh* (cf. 19.10). It is singular in order to indicate the collective nature of those so waiting. As for *ta'avah*, see Ps 10.21.2: “You have given him his heart's desire.” Because *zeker* as memorial implies physical begetting (the noun 'male' derives from the verbal root), looking at it in a threefold manner or waiting-memorial-desire, can tie into the giving birth of the present generation which will continue into the next and so forth.

**26-Vs. 9: My soul yearns for you in the night, my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.**

In the previous verse the collective *nephesh* and *'avah* ('soul' and 'yearns,' a noun) are mentioned in conjunction with waiting for the Lord in the path of his judgments whereas here it is specified, if you will, by taking place at night. In addition to *nephesh* is the equally collective *ruach* or “spirit” (cf. 25.4) which is seeking the Lord, *shachar* connoting a breaking forth as the dawn. “O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you” [Ps 63.1]. Instead of the adverb “earnestly” the Hebrew has *qerev* (cf. 25.11) or “in the midst of me.”

Again *mishpat* or “judgements” are present “in the earth,” the preposition *l-* being prefaced to *'erets* (cf. 25.8), literally, “to the earth.” Only when this happens will the “world's” (*tevel*, cf. 24.4) inhabitants learn “righteousness,” *tsedeq* (cf. 16.5), the verb being *lamad* (cf. 2.4) which implies chastisement as well as discipline.

**26-Vs. 10: If favor is shown to the wicked, he does not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he deals perversely and does not see the majesty of the Lord.**

Here is another type of learning (*lamad*), namely, a type of discipline which the “wicked” (*rashah*, cf. 14.5) fail to grasp even if “favor is shown” to them, the verb being *chanan*. “Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you” [30.18].

*'Erets* or “land” (cf. previous verse) is identified fully with “righteousness” or *nakoach*., suggestive of that which is in front or over against (compare with *tsedeq* of vs. 9). “Prophecy not to us what is right” [30.10]. In this particular land the wicked person “deals perversely” or *haval* which has one other biblical reference, Ps 71.4: “Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man” [Ps 71.4]. This prevents seeing the divine “majesty” or *ga'on* (cf. 24.14).

**26-Vs. 11: O Lord, your hand is lifted up, but they see it not. Let them see your zeal for your people, and be ashamed. Let the fire for your adversaries consume them.**

Despite the Lord having “lifted up” (*rum*, cf. 25.1) his hand, the people do not see it.

The reason for this blindness or lack of attention isn't given but can be surmised from the last few verses. *Chazah* (cf. 2.1) is the verb for “see” in the sense of something present in one's mind when beholding it. What one sees there is immediate, so if you miss it, you miss it fully.

*Chazah* is used in a second sense or with regard to divine “zeal” or *qin'ah* (cf. 11.13) which results (unfortunately) in being “ashamed,” *bosh* (cf. 24.23).

The common verb *'akal* (to eat, cf. 24.6) is used for “consume.”

### **26-Vs. 12: O Lord, you will ordain peace for us, you have wrought for us all our works.**

*Shaphat* (cf. 16.5) is the verb for “ordain” meaning more properly to judge. It implies that the people involved are subject to some form of divine judgment where the intent is for them to have “peace” (*shalom*, cf. vs. 3).

Two words related to activity: “wrought and works” or *pahal* and *mahaseh*. The former applies to undertaking anything, to create and the latter to anything that is made. A reference showing the use of both (respectively): “Who has performed and done this” [41.4]?

### **26-Vs. 13: O Lord our God, other Lords besides you have ruled over us, but your name alone we acknowledge.**

*Bahal* is the verb for “ruled” noted last in 16.8, the root for Baal, originally a Phoenician god and who at times rivaled the God of Israel, that notion being implied here. Instead of this *bahal* by “gods” (*'adony*), the people “acknowledge” or *zakar* (cf. 17.10) the Lord's name alone. As stated in other places, this verb means to remember from which is derived the noun “male” signifying procreation...children being a kind of memory of their parents which is transmitted to yet another generation and so forth.

### **26-Vs. 14: They are dead, they will not live; they are shades, they will not arise; to that end you have visited them with destruction and wiped out all remembrance of them.**

Those *'adony* or “gods” of the previous verse who were rivals to the Lord are not just dead but are “shades” or *repha'ym* (cf. 14.9). In the verse at hand, to live and to arise are one and the same.

*Paqad* (cf. 24.22) is the verb for “visited” and has military connotations, that is, of mustering troops which here could apply to destruction of the gods or shades. “Destruction and wiped out” are two verbs, *shamad* (cf. 13.9) and *'avad* (note the similar sound), the latter suggestive of perishing. “For they were no gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore they were destroyed” [37.19].

*Zeker* (cf. vs. 8) is the noun for “remembrance” and derived from *zakar* as in vs. 13, “acknowledge.” Given the sense of this verb as described there, the ruin at hand applies to a lack of future generations.

### **26-Vs. 15: But you have increased the nation, O Lord, you have increased the nation; you art glorified; you have enlarged all the borders of the land.**

*Goy* or “nation” is mentioned twice, the same as the righteous one in vs. 2 where here the Lord has “increased,” *yasaph* (cf. 11.11) being suggestive of increase or extension which is

continuous.

Similar to *yasaph* in the context at hand are the two verbs *kavad* ('glorified,' cf. 25.3) and *rachaq* (cf. 6.12), the latter connoting far off. It is used with regard to the borders of the "land" or *'erets* (cf. vs. 10), that they will expand outward to an indefinite degree.

**26-Vs. 16: O Lord, in distress they sought you, they poured out a prayer when your chastening was upon them.**

We could say there's a correlation between the enlarging of borders in vs. 25 and those within them seeking the Lord, *paqad* being the verb (cf. 14) with its military connotations of mustering all their energy to this end.

*Lachash* is the noun for "prayer" noted last in 3.3 and has a magical sense, there translated as "charms." The idea behind this word is whispering, of uttering prayers quietly or in secret. The pouring out or *tsoq* has two other references, Job 28.2 and 29.2, the former being cited here. It is similar to another verb meaning to blossom or to be in distress. "Iron is taken out of the earth, and copper is smelted from the ore." In the verse at hand, *lachash* happens when (divine) "chastening" visits the people (*musar*), the preposition *l-* (to) used as a preface reading literally as "to them." "Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole" [53.5].

**26-17: Like a woman with child who writhes and cries out in her pangs when she is near her time, so were we because of you, O Lord;**

The distress which in the previous verse caused people to be distraught here is realized in a positive sense, not unlike that of a woman giving birth to a child. The word "time" is not in the Hebrew text but implied by the word (birth) "pangs," *chevel* (cf. 13.8). Some one must have had this insight concerning *chevel* onto which the people latched, otherwise, they would have died in this childbirth, if you will.

**26-Vs. 18: we were with child, we writhed, we have, as it were, brought forth wind. We have wrought no deliverance in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.**

Even when the people had been pregnant—and this extends over a nine month period—they knew they were about to give birth to something that wasn't good. Already they could feel this "wind" or *ruach* (cf. vs. 9). Usually *ruach* has positive connotations but not in this case.

*Yeshuhah* (cf. vs. 1) or "deliverance" is what the people had desired, and while they could feel the *ruach* roiling around within their collective womb, they knew the opposite would come to birth, something quite hideous. The desired *yeshuhah* would have been born in the "earth" or *'erets* (cf. vs. 15), that is, it would have taken root there after birth and mature to something wonderful.

The inhabitants are both on the *'erets* with its expected salvation as well as belonging to *tevel* (cf. vs. 9), the inhabited parts of this *'erets*.

**26-Vs. 19: Your dead shall live, their bodies shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and on the land of the shades you will let it fall.**

Despite the woeful condition of the people, the Lord steps with what appears to be a promise of resurrection, *qum* (cf. 14.24) being the verb for “rise.”

*Yashav* (cf. 23.18) or “dwellers” is the second use of this verb; compare with the same who inhabit the world in the previous verse. Perhaps this dust is the result of the *ruach* to which the people had given birth, both symbols of impermanence.

The Lord bids such dwellers of the dust to “awake and sing for joy,” *quts* and *ranan* (cf. 24.14). For the former, cf. 29.8: “As when a hungry man dreams he is eating and awakes with his hunger not satisfied.”

Almost to counter the dry, lifeless dust in which the people are dwelling we have “dew” or *tal* (cf. 18.4) which is of a refreshing nature. To enhance this *tal* even more, it consists of light. Thus the Lord bids that the people let this dew of light fall on the *'erets* of the “shades” (*repha'ym*, cf. vs. 14) which are even more insubstantial.

**26-Vs. 20: Come, my people, enter your chambers and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past.**

The sequestration here is not unlike the Israelites in Egypt when they confined themselves for celebration of the Pasch as well as to avoid their first born being slain by the Lord through smearing a lamb's blood on their doorposts (cf. Ex 12.21-23). In the verse at hand the Lord makes direct appeal, “My people.” *Cheder* as “chambers” usually refers to an inner room or apartment. “The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord searching all his innermost parts” [Prov 20.27].

Within the deepest recesses of their dwelling the people are to “hide” or *chavah* which has four other biblical references although similar to *chava'* of the same meaning. “Hide yourselves there (in the hills) three days until the pursuers have returned” [Jos 2.16]. Such hiding is for a short time or until the “wrath” or *zaham* (cf. 13.5 as indignation) has passed. The nature of this *zaham* isn't spelled out but can have parallels with the *Pasch* just noted.

**26-Vs. 21: For behold, the Lord is coming forth out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed upon her and will no more cover her slain.**

The concluding verse of this chapter begins with *hineh* (cf. 25.9) or “behold” which grabs the attention of the people back to the Lord or more specifically, “his place” (*maqom*, cf. 22.25). It isn't specified but made personal by “his,” most likely the temple at Jerusalem which would qualify as a *maqom*. “Until I find a *maqom* for the Lord” [Ps 132.5].

*Paqad* is the verb for “punish” (cf. vs. 16) and applies to the inhabitants of the *'erets* (cf. vs. 19) which means he will pass from the Jerusalem temple through the city, through Israel and then out to the nations. In other words, this *paqad* won't affect Israel proper but will be like the Lord roaming the streets of Egypt as he slays the first born. However, here it's “iniquity” or *havon* (cf. 22.14).

For some time now *'erets* had concealed blood that was poured out upon her but no will give up her slain. This is reminiscent of Cain slaying his brother Abel: “And now you are cursed from the ground (*'adamah*) which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground (*'adamah*), it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth (*'erets*)” [Gn 4.11-12].

## Chapter Twenty-Seven

**27-Vs. 1: In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.**

“In that day (*yom*)” begins Chapter Twenty-Six which encompasses everything about to transpire just as the case here. It occurs two other times, vss. 2.12 and 13. Punishment is characteristic of this *yom*, *paqad* being the verb as in 26.21. In the verse at hand *paqad* pertains to “Leviathan” or *Livyatan* which most likely means a whale. “You crushed the heads of Leviathan, you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness” [Ps 74.14]. A footnote to the RSV claims that it “may refer to Assyria and Babylon.” This (sea) monster already is in the process of fleeing (*barach*), thereby opening this new chapter with quite a commotion. Such fleeing is done in a “twisting” manner, if you will, *haqilathon* being the only use of this adjective in the Bible and connotes a slinking motion.

Note that the sword in the hands of the Lord is singled out as being “hard” (*qesheh*) which also means rough, this adjective symbolic of having no mercy. *Qesheh* is found last in 21.2 but not noted there.

Leviathan is also called “dragon” or *tanyim* which can apply to any type of sea monster, perhaps after the fashion of a crocodile. “Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon” [51.9]? And so this sea creature is presented as both a kind of whale and crocodile.

**27-Vs. 2: In that day: "A pleasant vineyard, sing of it!"**

It's uncommon to have “in that day (*yom*)” follow in such rapid succession and seems to be the same *yom* when the Lord takes vengeance upon Leviathan as in the last verse. In other words, the exclamation here which is a song ending in vs. 5 is a celebration of what the Lord had accomplished in the previous verse. Between here and the end of this song in vs. 5 no specific reference is given as to the vineyard's identity, most likely being the nation of Israel.

The Lord blurts out with joy, “a pleasant vineyard,” *chemed* being a noun which means beauty or pleasantness rendering the phrase literally as “a vineyard of pleasantness.” “Beat upon your breasts for the pleasant fields” [32,12]. In the next breath he adds “sing of it,” the verb being *hanah* with has multiple meanings, 14.10 the last time it is found.

**27-Vs. 3: I, the Lord, am its keeper; every moment I water it. Lest any one harm it, I guard it night and day;**

This verse is reminiscent of several parables Jesus uses as in Matthew 20 and 21. In the verse at hand the Lord claims that he is the vineyard's “keeper” or *natsar*, a verb noted last in 26.3. Apparently the Lord is by this vineyard constantly because he waters it “every moment” or *regah* found last in 26.20 but not noted there.

The same constancy is borne out by the Lord guarding the vineyard day and night which also is the verb *natsar*, that is, against harm, the verb being *paqad* (cf. vs. 1) which has military associations and can suggest some kind of assault.

**27-Vs. 4: I have no wrath. Would that I had thorns and briers to battle! I would set out against them, I would burn them up together.**

The Lord is very clear to say that he is not angry, *chemah* being the noun for “wrath” which also means poison and fury. “For the Lord is enraged against all the nations and furious against all their host” [34.2]. However, he speaks as a warning and follows through on venting this *chemah* by wishing to have for battle thorns and briers.

*Pasah* is the verb for “set out,” the only use of this verb in the Bible which fundamentally means to stride against anyone attempting to burn the vineyard.

**27-Vs. 5: Or let them lay hold of my protection, let them make peace with me, let them make peace with me.”**

The Lord holds out an opportunity of reconciliation compared with the threat made in the last verse. Also this verse concludes the song begun in vs. 2. *Chazaq* is the verb for “lay hold of” (cf. 4.1) with regard to divine “protection” or *mahoz* (cf. 25.4). This noun is prefaced with the preposition *b-* (in), literally as “in my protection.”

Compare the use of the preposition *b-* with regard to *mahoz* with the one of *l-* (to), “make peace (*shalom*, cf. 26.12) to me,” these words being used twice to show that despite the threat in vs. 4, he is earnest to effect *shalom*.

**27-Vs. 6: In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit.**

The Hebrew text lacks “days” and reads literally as “those to come” so “days” can be implied. Note mention of both Jacob and Israel (both one and the same) which hearkens back to Gn 32.28: “Your name shall no more be called Jacob but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.”

*Sharash* or “take root” will belong to Jacob. “Scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth when he blows upon them and they wither” [40.28].

*Tsuts* (cf. 14.16) and *parach* or “blossom and put forth shoots” will belong to Israel, the latter meaning to break forth or to flourish mentioned last in 17.11 but not noted there.

This flourishing of both Jacob and Israel acting as one will work together to fill the “world” or *tevel* (cf. 26.18) with fruit, this more specifically meaning inhabited regions.

**27-Vs. 7: Has he smitten them as he smote those who smote them? Or have they been slain as their slayers were slain?**

A rhetorical question by the Lord to Israel or for anyone else who may be listening in. No response is expected, more to shame the people into restoring their former relationship with him. Two verbs are used relative to being put to death, *nakah* (cf. 10.24) and *harag* (cf. 10.4). The former tends to slaughtering in general whereas the latter can involve scourging or beating.

**27-Vs. 8: Measure by measure, by exile you did contend with them; he removed them with his fierce blast in the day of the east wind.**

The RSV calls the word “measure” as unknown, and the NIV has “by warfare.”

“Warfare” is the common verb *shalach* (to send; cf. 9.8) which represents resistance by the people, most likely at having been expelled from their homes during the Babylonian captivity. The same sentiment is conveyed by the verb *ryv* (cf. 3.13) or “contend” which reads here literally as “contend with her.”

*Hagah* (not to be confused with the verb of the same transliteration meaning to meditate) means “removed” and has two other biblical references, Prov 25.4 and 5, the former being cited here: “Take away the dross from the silver.” Thus *hagah* seems akin to a kind of refining, the divine “blast” or *ruach* (cf. 26.19) as the agent which is “fierce” or *qashah* (cf. 19.4), essentially something that is hard. Such a fearful *ruach* takes place in a “day” or *yom...a kairos* event...marked by the east wind, that is, coming from the desert.

**27-Vs. 9: Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be expiated, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalk stones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or incense altars will remain standing.**

“By this” refers to the exile just noted although the people didn't realize that they, descendants of Jacob, had incurred “guilt” or *havon* (cf. 26.21) resulting from worship of false gods such as the Asherim mentioned here. This guilt can't be lifted by their own efforts but requires divine expiation or *kaphar* not unlike Isaiah in 6.7, this verb implying covering over not so much to conceal but to avoid shame. Such thoughts were on the top of the minds of the people as they left Jerusalem under guard, wondering if ever again they would gaze upon their city. The same sentiment is mirrored in King David when his own son Absalom drove him from Jerusalem. For a brief moment he was able to pause on the Mount of Olives before losing sight of Jerusalem (cf. 2Sam 15.30+).

Note that the singular noun “sin” or *chata'th* (cf. 6.7) along with the adjective *kal* ('full') which also means all as a totality, is applied to the equally singular Jacob or the people as a whole.

References to altars (plural) which will crumble like stones of chalk standing in contrast to the one at the Jerusalem temple along with those altars belonging to Asherim noted last in 17.8 in the same context, that is, “incense altars of incense” or *chamanyim*.

**27-Vs. 10: For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken like the wilderness; there the calf grazes, there he lies down and strips its branches.**

The city which is “fortified” or *batsar* is reminiscent of the same description in 25.2 only here with emphasis upon being called “solitary” or *badad* which connotes being separated or alone. This is a noun whose adjectival form is found in 14.31 but not noted there. “For you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety” [Ps 4.8].

The same city (Jerusalem) is called a “habitation” or *naveh*, applicable to a place where shepherds and sheep dwell. “My people will abide in a peaceful habitation” [32.18]. Unfortunately this *naveh* has become abandoned not unlike the “wilderness” or *midbar* (cf. 21.1).

“Deserted and forsaken” or *shalach* (cf. vs. 8) and *hazav* (cf. 18.6).

A calf will reside there, symbolic of abandonment, yet having a certain peacefulness by reason of no human habitation. Such an animal can't live unprotected implying that there are no dangerous animals around.

**27-Vs. 11: When its boughs are dry, they are broken; women come and make a fire of them. For this is a people without discernment; therefore he who made them will not have compassion on them, he that formed them will show them no favor.**

This verse could refer to the city which had been abandoned where calves live unmolested. The women can refer to those who had been left behind to care for the land, representative of people too poor and useless to be carried off into exile.

The second sentence of vs. 11 can refer to those who had been carried off into exile, those who lack “discernment” or *bynah* (cf. 11.2) which can be applied to insight and is related to the preposition “between”...a spirit of being able to see between things, if you will. Most likely such *bynah* is in reference to worship of the Asherim in vs. 9.

This lack of *bynah* leads to a drastic move by the Lord, that he who had made the people will not have “compassion” upon them, the verb being *racham* (cf. 14.1). From it is derived the noun “bowels” which connotes the deepest and most passionate form of love. In addition to this, the Lord “will show (the people) no favor” or *chanan* (cf. 26.10). The verb *yatsar* is used (cf. 22.11) which suggests forming compared with the more general fabricating of *hasah* ('made,' cf. 12.5).

**27-Vs. 12: In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt the Lord will thresh out the grain, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel.**

As noted in vs. 1, this is the second of three uses of the phrase “in that day (*yom*)” pertaining to a stretch of territory in the form of an arc running from east to west which encompasses Israel. *Nachal* is the noun for “brook” which can apply to a wadi where water rushes in from time to time and could refer to the annual flooding of the Nile. It is found last in 15.7 but not noted there.

In between the Euphrates and the Nile the Lord will be thrashing out grain, the verb *chavat* found in 28.27: “but dill is beaten out with a stick.” This territory encompasses a large area or more importantly, is the location for the world's greatest powers. Presumably the Israelites had been scattered throughout these lands as the previous verses intimated when talking about exile, etc. Note that the Lord will not collect the people as a whole and at one time. Instead, he will gather each Israelite one by one which means the process could take a long time. Such is the duration of a “day” or *yom* in this verse. Such a drawn-out process is deliberate to show the Israelites that the Lord is their God and that the nations in which they had been led captive must submit to him.

**27-Vs. 13: And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.**

Here is the third and final mention of “in that day (*yom*)” which complements the one in the previous verse. A “trumpet” or *shophar* will be blown not unlike a similar situation in 18.3. The Israelites who had been led into exile “from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt” (quoting from vs. 1) will hear this single trumpet.

As noted in the previous verse, the trumpet's sound will echo all along the arc of this

territory with equal force. Only the Israelites are capable of hearing it, not their captors. Its sound will endow them with special power to leave their lands, unstoppable much like their ancestors leaving Egypt under Moses' direction, as they return to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. *Shachah* is the verb for "worship" (cf. 2.17) which essentially means to bow down.

## Chapter Twenty-Eight

**28-Vs. 1: Woe to the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim and to the fading flower of its glorious beauty which is on the head of the rich valley of those overcome with wine!**

The RSV says that Ephraim refers to Samaria just before the attack by Assyria, and the crown refers to the walls of Samaria.

This fairly lengthy chapter begins with "woe" or *hoy* noted last in 10.1 which also commences that chapter. The Lord utters this brief word of distress and surprise through the intermediary of Isaiah. *Hoy* has as its immediate object Ephraim comprised as a bunch of drunken persons as well as a valley proper to that place. Ephraim is found last in 17.3 whose northerly location made it close to Damascus and hence is allied with that city.

Most likely the valley is "rich" or *shemen* (cf. 1.6) which fundamentally means oil and therefore suggests coming from olives as well as vineyards, the source of wine. At one time Ephraim had a "beauty" or *tiph'arah* (cf. 13.19 as 'pride') which now is "fading" or *navel* noted last in 24.4 as "withers." Such beauty is equivalent to a "flower" or *tsyts* (cf. 40.6).

**28-Vs. 2: Behold, the Lord has one who is mighty and strong; like a storm of hail, a destroying tempest, like a storm of mighty, overflowing waters, he will cast down to the earth with violence.**

This verse counters the woe which opens the current chapter with "behold" or *hineh* (cf. 26.21), that is, it introduces action which will play out the divine complaint against Ephraim. Here the Lord is both "mighty and strong" or *chazaq* (cf. 27.1 but not noted there) and *'amyts* which has five other biblical references. "Because he is strong in power, not one is missing" [40.26]. Both words relate to "the Lord" or *'Adony* by use of the preposition *l-*, literally as "to the Lord."

This divine strength takes the form of a "storm and tempest" or *zerem* (cf. 25.4 as 'blast') and *sahar* which fundamentally means horror and has three other biblical references, one of which being Job 18.20: "and horror seizes them of the east." In the verse at hand, *zerem* also applies to the destructive power of waters coming from above and crashing upon the earth with "violence" or *yad* which means "hand." In other words, the divine hand is at work through this imagery.

**28-Vs. 3: The proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim will be trodden under foot;**

Here again reference is to Ephraim or more specifically its drunkards who in their stupor crowned themselves. *Ramas* is the verb for "trampled" (cf. 26.6), the exact antithesis to "proud" or *ge'oth* noted last in 12.5. It is a noun which more literally reads as "crown of pride."

**28-Vs. 4: and the fading flower of its glorious beauty which is on the head of the rich valley will be like a first-ripe fig before the summer: when a man sees it, he eats it up as soon as it is in his hand.**

This verse is a kind of rehash of vs. 1 where Ephraim's beauty is presented as "fading" or *navel*. Despite this, people will snatch it up to eat like a newly budded fig.

**28-Vs. 5: In that day the Lord of hosts will be a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of his people;**

In place of the proud crown of vss. 1 and 3, vs. 5 has the Lord himself taking their place. It is set off, as it were, by the now familiar "in that day" (*yom*), a *kairos* event, the time of which remains unspecified. Those hearing this phrase have no knowledge when it comes but will recognize its arrival. In addition to *hatarah* ('crown'), he will be a "diadem" or *tsphyrah* which has two other references (Ezk 7.7 and 10), the former being "your doom has come to you," the RSV having a footnote saying "uncertain." In the verse at hand, this diadem will be one of "beauty" or *tiph'arah* which contrasts with the one belonging to Ephraim in vs. 1. Furthermore, both will belong not just to the Lord's people but to his people as a "remnant," *she'ar* noted last in 17.3.

**28-Vs. 6: and a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment and strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.**

The verse at hand is a continuation of vs. 5 and hence involves "in that day" which, in addition to the crown and diadem, will include a "spirit" (*ruach*, cf. 27.8) of "justice" (*mishpat*, cf. 26.9). All three—crown, diadem and spirit—are prefaced with the preposition *l-*, literally as "to" each of them which indicates a direct, one-on-one relationship.

The noun "judgment" is the same as *mishpat* and is prefaced with the preposition *hal-* or literally "upon judgment" which ties in with the act of sitting (prefaced with *l-*). In addition to this second *mishpat* is *gevurah* (cf. 11.2) or "strength." Nothing is said about the person involved; his identity is inferred by use of the phrase "in that day," recognition of which will give insight into its coming.

As noted in vs. 1, Ephraim refers to just before the attack by Assyria which could apply here or to those persons brave enough to have repulsed it. Note the similarity of sound between *shuv yashav* and *shuv* in this verse or "sits" and "turn back." Also the sound "sh" dominates: *mishpat*, *yashav*, *mishpat*, *shuv* and *shahar* (gate).

**28-Vs. 7: These also reel with wine and stagger with strong drink; the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are confused with wine, they stagger with strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in giving judgment.**

The RSV says that vss. 7-10 are directed against Judah and that the priests and prophets are Isaiah's opponents. Note the similarity of drunkenness with that of Ephraim which opened Chapter Twenty-Eight.

The verbs associated with drunkenness are six. With the exception of #6 (*puq*), five are characterized by an "h" sound:

1) “Reel” or *shagah* which more properly means to go astray. “Make me understand how I have erred” [Job 6.24].

2) “Stagger” or *tahah* (cf. 21.4) which connotes wandering.

3) “Reel” or *shagah* a second time

4) “Confused” or *balah*, alternately as swallow up as in 25.8.

5) Err” or the third use of *shagh*.

6) “Stumble” or *puq* which has one other biblical reference, Jer 10.4: “They fasten it (idol) with hammer and nails so that it cannot move.” *Pelyly* is an adjective for “judgment,” not as familiar as *mishpat* and has one other biblical reference, Job 31.28: “This also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges.”

**28-Vs. 8: For all tables are full of vomit, no place is without filthiness.**

Mention of tables suggests not just drunken orgies but the consumption of food to an excess. “Vomit and filthiness:” *qy’* which has two other biblical references, the last mentioned in 19.14 but not noted there, the other being Jer 48.26. *Tso’ah* has four other biblical references, two of which are in Isaiah, the last one being in 4.4 but not noted there.

**28-Vs. 9: "Whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast?"**

This and the next verse are set off in quotes which means they most likely refer to those who are responding in a mocking fashion to Isaiah and his prophecy or his speaking in the name of the Lord. They presume to have acquaintance with “knowledge and message” or *dehah* (cf. 11.9; related closely to the more common *dahath*) and *shemuhah* whose verbal root is *shamah* meaning to listen, to hear. “And it will be sheer terror to understand the message” [vs. 19]. This verse may be said to consist of two rhetorical sentences, the first perhaps being applicable to the unidentified man “who sits in judgment and strength” in vs. 6.

To the former belongs teaching or *yarah* (cf. 2.4) and to the latter, explaining or *byn* (cf. 14.16). Isaiah’s mockers say that mere babes will be the ones suited for such a task.

**28-Vs. 10: For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little."**

This verse brings to an end the mocking of Isaiah. The second question in vs. 9 intimates that Isaiah’s utterance of prophecy was not just childish but worse, like a babbling infant. Perhaps that is why the doubling of words conveys the way an infant would repeat the words of an adult: precept-precept, line-line, here-little.

**28:-Vs. 11: Nay, but by men of strange lips and with an alien tongue the Lord will speak to this people,**

“Nay” or *ky* is rendered something like “so that” in response to the rejection of Isaiah in the last two verses.

Instead of the people of Israel being favored by the Lord, he will turn to others, “strange and alien” or *lahag* and *’acher*. The former is the only use of this adjective in the Bible, its

verbal root meaning to scorn, whereas the latter is the common adjective for another. And so the Lord will make use of these two to “speak” (*davar*) to his people, “this” indicative of a scornful tone.

Vss. 11 and 12 are quoted in 1Cor 14.21: “In the law it is written, ‘By men of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.’”

**28-Vs. 12: to whom he has said, "This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose;" yet they would not hear.**

Obviously the Lord has to get in touch with the non-Israelites who aren't identified though the previous verse comes right after the implied invasion by Assyria. They must have been just as surprised at their election as the Israelites. Instead of communicating something dire or hard to implement, the Lord speaks of “rest” or *menuchah* (cf. 11.10). It is derived from the verb *nuach* (cf. 25.10) used here as “give rest” which implies settling down. Such rest...settling down...applies to those who are “weary,” *hayeph* found in 5.27 but not noted there. This adjective suggests languishing or being left alone for an extended period of time.

“They” who do not hear seem to be the Israelites, not the (implied) Assyrians. The verb *’avah* (cf. 1.19) is used for “would” which suggests willingness.

**28-Vs. 13: Therefore the word of the Lord will be to them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little; that they may go and fall backward and be broken, and snared and taken.**

This verse resembles vs. 10 which speaks in mimicking fashion about precept, line and so forth. In other words, the Israelites reject the Lord and his prophet Isaiah, most likely the people whom the Lord has chosen.

A similarity between “fall backward, be broken, snared and taken:” *kashal* (cf. 8.15 as stumble), *shavar* (cf. 21.9 as shattered) *yaqash* (cf. 8.15) and *lakad* (cf. 8.15 but not noted there, i.e., the same verbal form). Actually 8.15 has all three verbs together.

**28-Vs. 14: Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you scoffers, who rule this people in Jerusalem!**

Isaiah now begins to speak more directly in the name of the Lord, as if the Lord himself were speaking, and directs attention to the rulers who have their seat of government in Jerusalem. When reading these verses addressed to various peoples, it's difficult to determine who is speaking, the Lord or Isaiah. The two are so intertwined it's impossible to make a distinction. Those hearing what is said do not, of course, get it directly from the Lord, so the physical agent is Isaiah whom they must have held in scorn and contempt.

The “scoffers” or rulers are bidden to hear the Lord's “word” or *davar* (cf. 24.3), *latson* being the word used two other times, Prov 1.22 and 29.8. The former is cited here: “the scorners delight in their scorning.” Such persons behave in this cynical fashion to both the Lord and the people making the contrast between *davar* and *latson* all the more at odds with each other.

**28-Vs. 15: Because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have**

**an agreement; when the overwhelming scourge passes through it will not come to us; for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter;”**

Now the Lord throws back into the face of the scoffers or rulers in Jerusalem (vs. 14) what they had just claimed. As noted above, vs. 1 begins with *hoy* or “woe,” the verse at hand being a perfect example of that sentiment.

The last mention of “covenant” (*beryth*) is 24.5, that is, breaking it. Compare this breaking with the making of one as in vs. 15, *karath* (cf. 11.4) which means to cut. *Karath* is an agreement between persons which intimates that both death and Sheol (cf. 14.15) have some kind of personal quality, or at least that’s how the scoffers treated them. In the verse at hand, the scoffers had made an “agreement” with Sheol or *chozeh* which fundamentally means a seer (from the verbal root *chazah*, cf. 26.11). Part and parcel of this covenant and agreement are lies and falsehood which are a “refuge and shelter,” *machseh* (cf. 25.4) and *satar* (a verb, cf. 8.17); a noun derived from *satar* is found in vs. 17.

**28-Vs. 16: therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am laying in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'He who believes will not be in haste.'**

Here the familiar “thus says the Lord God” take on an ominous tone for those whom the Lord is about to address. It is intensified, if you will, by *hineh* or “behold” (cf. vs 2) which is directed to the heart of the Israelite nation, (Mount) Zion. The Lord is laying a “foundation” or *mosad* which has one other biblical reference, 2Chron 8.16: “Thus was accomplished all the work of Solomon from the day the foundation was laid until it was finished.” It is described as being “sure” *yasad* (cf. 14.32) which is the verbal root for *mosad*.

Note three references to the common word for “stone” or *even*: one as related to the foundation, another as “tested” or *bochan* (a noun; only use of this word in the Bible reading literally as ‘a stone of testing’) and one which is a “cornerstone” or *pinah* (cf. 19.13). *Pinah* is incorporated into the foundation and singled out as being “precious,” *yaqar* (verbal root, 13.12).

The two verbs “believes and “be in haste” are opposite to each other, the former being *aman* (cf. 22.25) and the latter being *chush* (cf. 5.19) which implies alarm and fits more into the verse at hand.

**28-Vs. 17: And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet; and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter."**

“Justice and righteousness” = “line and plummet” or *mishpat* (cf. vs. 7) and *tsedeq* (cf. 26.10) = *qav* (cf. 18.27 but not noted there) and *mishqelet* (only use of this term in the Bible).

Hail and waters are two purifying agents sent by the Lord to destroy those scoffers mentioned in vs. 14 by means of *yahah* or “sweep away” (only use of this verb in the Bible) and “overwhelm” or *shataph* (cf. 10.22). These two elements of water pertain to the illusory nature of “refuge and “shelter” or *machseh* (cf. vs. 15) and *seter* (cf. 16.4). Both pertain to hiding or concealing.

**28-Vs. 18: Then your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through you will be beaten down by it.**

This verse hearkens back to the two elements of vs. 15, the covenant with death and Sheol. The first will be “annulled” or *kaphar* (cf. 27.9) which fundamentally means to cover and the second will not “stand” or *qum* (cf. 26.19) which commonly means to rise, to stand up.

Nothing is said about the “scourge” or *shot* which also means a whip and noted last in 10.26 which is “overwhelming” or *shataph* (cf. vs. 17). The verb for “beaten down” is *ramas* (cf. vs. 3) which applies to being trampled.

**28-Vs. 19: As often as it passes through it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass through, by day and by night; and it will be sheer terror to understand the message.**

This verse continues to speak about the “overwhelming scourge” whose alternate meaning as a whip makes a sudden cracking sound. In other words, this scourge will “pass through” or *havar* (cf. 24.5 as ‘transgress’) not just once but for an extended period of time.

“Terror” or *zevahah* has for other biblical references and fundamentally means to shake, to tremble. “And he has made them (Judah and Jerusalem) an object of horror, of astonishment and of hissing” [2Chron 29.8]. Such trembling is the only way the people will be able to “understand” (*byn*, cf. vs. 9) the “message” or *shemuhah*. As pointed out in vs. 9, the noun derives from *shamah* meaning to hear or to listen.

**28-Vs. 20: For the bed is too short to stretch oneself on it, and the covering too narrow to wrap oneself in it.**

This is a proverb relative to the situation at hand which seems to have no solution. The general idea is that the place of rest is too confining and those in it are not the right size.

**28-Vs. 21: For the Lord will rise up as on Mount Perazim, he will be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon; to do his deed—strange is his deed! and to work his work—alien is his work!**

Perazim is the only specific mention in the Bible, but the RSV refers it to Baal-perazim in 2Sam 5.17-21 where King David had defeated the Philistines. Gibeon refers to Joshua’s defeat of five kings in Jos 10.9+. By bringing attention of these two victories Isaiah hopes their memory will rally the people against the threat of invasion from Assyria.

Both victories are called “strange and alien” or *zur*, a verbal form noted last in 25.2 as “alien” and *nakry* noted last in 2.6 as “foreigner.” The first applies to *mahaseh* (cf. 26.12) and the second to *havodah* (cf. 14.3). The former applies to something which is produced whereas the latter involves service and is applicable more to a one-on-one relationship.

**28-Vs. 22: Now therefore do not scoff, lest your bonds be made strong; for I have heard a decree of destruction from the Lord God of hosts upon the whole land.**

Although Isaiah has been uttering these words in the Lord’s name, here we have use of the first person singular. Compare with vss. 16 & 17 where the same applies but with regard to the Lord.

*Luts* is the verb for “scoff” which intimates mocking or scorn found next in 29.20. Compare with *latson* in vs. 14, the noun which has this as a verbal root and applies to the rulers

in Jerusalem. If they continue with their mocking, it will tighten around them as a noose thereby strangling them.

“Decree of destruction:” Isaiah has heard this from the Lord which hearkens back to the “woe” or *hoy* at the beginning of this chapter. *Kalah* is the noun for “destruction” noted last in 10.23 and implies a full end. In the verse at hand, *kalah* is related to *charats* (cf. 10.23), a participle referring to something that has been decided. Thus this phrase can read literally something as “a full end determined.” In the verse at hand, it pertains to the “whole land” or *‘erets* (cf. 26.21).

### **28-Vs. 23: Give ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.**

Three verbs relative to hearing: *‘azan* (1.10), *shamah* (cf. 11.14) with respect to Isaiah’s “voice” or *qol* (cf. 13.4) and *qashav* (cf. 21.7) which pertains to being sharp concerning the act of listening. *Shamah* is used a second time with regard to Isaiah’s “speech” or *‘imrah* (cf. 5.24). And so *shamah* is singled out as pertaining both to the divine voice and speech through the medium of Isaiah. However, he knew that only a few would pay this close attention and follow through with what they have heard.

Vss. 24-25 & 27-28 contain familiar imagery from agriculture. In the verse at hand, the RSV has “continually” (literally, ‘all the day’) twice but occurs once in the Hebrew.

### **28-Vs. 26: For he is instructed aright; his God teaches him.**

*Yatsar* is the verb for “instructed” (cf. 27.11) and implies chastisement and used with *mishpat* or “aright,” a noun which means righteousness as in vs. 17.

*Yarah* or “teaches” is noted last in vs. 9 with respect to God himself. Note the similarity of sound, *yatsar* and *yarah* with regard to being taught.

### **28-Vs. 29: This also comes from the Lord of hosts; he is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom.**

“This” pertains to the last two verses, the common verb *yatsa’* (‘comes’) suggestive more of issuing forth.

“Counsel and wisdom” or *hetsah* (cf. 25.1) and *tushyah* which has the fundamental notion of raising. “He stores up sound wisdom for the upright” [Prov 2.7]. The adjectives pertaining to both are (respectively) *pala’* which is a verb. “And praise the name of the Lord your God who has dealt wondrously with you” [Jl 2.26]. The verb *gadal* (‘excellent;’ cf. 9.3) is suggestive of being great.

## **Chapter Twenty-Nine**

### **29-Vs. 1: Ho Ariel, Ariel, the city where David encamped! Add year to year; let the feasts run their round.**

*Hoy* or “ho” is the same word as “woe” which begins Chapter Twenty-Eight and sets the general tone of that chapter though the one at hand ends positively with Judah’s restoration.

*Hoy* as used with Ariel (mentioned twice) shows the gravity of the situation. According to a footnote in the RSV, Ariel means “mountain of God” or “hero” and by association with David, Jerusalem is implied. Another definition is given in the next verse.

*Qiryah* is the poetic term for “city” (cf. 26.5), the place where David “encamped” or *chanah* which fundamentally means to set oneself down and is found next in vs. 3. *Qiryah* and *chanah* form a paradox of sorts. The former is a settled place whereas the latter pertains to what is temporary. Perhaps when uttering these words Isaiah had in mind 2Sam 7.2: “See now, I (King David) dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.”

Mention of year and feasts in their liturgical context refers to celebrations held on a regularly scheduled basis. By increasing (adding) to them, the people will lose sight of their significance and be concerned only with outward rites.

**29-Vs. 2: Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be moaning and lamentation, and she shall be to me like an Ariel.**

*Tsoq* is the verb for “distress” and is noted last in 26.16 as poured out which is the way the Lord will afflict Ariel followed by “moaning and lamentation” or *ta’anyah* and *’anyah*. Both words have one other reference respectively found in Lam 2.5: “and he has multiplied in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation.”

According to a footnote in the RSV, the alternate mention of Ariel which is used twice here as applied to the underworld much like Sheol, derives from the Babylonian “Arallu,” a word play.

**29-Vs. 3: And I will encamp against you round about, and will besiege you with towers and I will raise siege works against you.**

*Chanah* is the verb for “encamp” which here is very different from Jerusalem where David had encamped as in vs. 1. “Round about” or *dur* is a noun found last in 22.18 but noted there and means a ball. In the verse at hand, the image is one of first strangling Jerusalem and then assaulting it. The imagery is intensified by use of the preposition *hal*, literally “upon you” both here and in conjunction with the next two verbs.

“Besiege and raise” or *tsur* (cf. 21.2 but not noted there) and *qum* (cf. 28.18). *Mutsav* or “towers” pertains to the first verb, this being the only biblical term. *Metsurah* or “siege works” pertains to the second verb and refers to a fortified town. “Zorah, Aijalon and Hebron, fortified cities which are in Judah and in Benjamin” [2Chron 11.10].

**29-Vs. 4: Then deep from the earth you shall speak, from low in the dust your words shall come; your voice shall come from the ground like the voice of a ghost, and your speech shall whisper out of the dust.**

Ariel or Jerusalem as identified with the Babylonian underworld Arallu or the Hebrew Sheol is mirrored by images similar to it. Note the three words pertaining to the ground: *’erets* (‘earth;’ twice; cf. 28.22) and *haphar* (‘dust;’ cf. 26.19 but not noted there).

*Shaphel* is a verb meaning to be brought low or to humble noted last in 26.5 and used with *davar* (‘speak;’ cf. 28.11) which is rendered literally as “you are humbled from the earth you shall speak.”

“Low” is the verb *shachach* (cf. 5.15) and will be the source of Ariel’s words which is the common verb *amar*.

The collective “voice” (*qol*, cf. 28.23) of Ariel will be as a “ghost” or *ov* (cf. 8.19).

*Imrah* (cf. 28.23) is the noun for “speech” and is derived from *amar* found in the verse at hand. It “shall whisper” or *tsaphaph* from the dust, this verb noted last in 10.14 as “chirp;” 8.19 also contains *ov*.

**29-Vs. 5: But the multitude of your foes shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the ruthless like passing chaff. And in an instant, suddenly,**

Isaiah speaks of two types of enemies: “foes” rendered by the participle *zur* (cf. 28.21) and “ruthless” or *haryts* (adjective; cf. 25.5). Both are depicted as a “multitude,” *hamon* or more accurately, a tumult (cf. 17.12). The former is like “dust” or *avaq* which is especially fine (cf. 5.24 but not noted there). Compare with *haphar* (‘dust’) of the previous verse which expresses the frailty of human nature.

In the verse at hand, the already powdery *avaq* is called “small” or *daq*, that which has been beaten into this condition. “Behold, he takes up the isles like fine dust” [40.15]. Compare *daq* with “chaff” or *mots* found last in 17.13 but not noted there. Such chaff is *havar* or “passing” (cf. 28.19) which is suggestive of being blown by the wind.

“Instant and suddenly” or *petah* and *pit’om* both occur in 30.13: “(iniquity) bulging out and about to collapse.” While both are very similar, the former is suggestive of something happening unexpectedly.

**29-Vs. 6: you will be visited by the Lord of hosts with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a devouring fire.**

*Paqad* is the verb for “visited” (cf. 27.3) which has military connotations, that is, something akin to an attack. The weapons for it, if you will are six:

1) “Thunder” or *raham* which has six biblical references. “The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind” [Ps 77.13].

2) “Earthquake” or *rahash*: cf. 14.16.

3) “Noise” which is great or *qol*, usually as voice (cf. vs. 4).

4) “Whirlwind” or *suphah*; cf. 17.13.

5) “Tempest” or *seharah* which connotes violent shaking. “And the tempest carries them off like stubble” [40.24].

6) “Flame” or *lahav* or of a fire which devours, the common verb to eat being used, *akal* (cf. 26.11).

**29-Vs. 7: And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, all that fight against her and her stronghold and distress her, shall be like a dream, a vision of the night.**

Vs. 2 has the Lord causing distress for Ariel, but those listening to these words through the medium of Isaiah haven’t any idea how this will come about. Now they do, and it’s not just Assyria or an alliance between that nation and others but the “multitude” of all the “nations” (*goy*, cf. 25.7), *hamon* connoting a tumult as in vs. 5.

*Tsava’* (used twice) is the verb for “fight” from which the noun (same spelling) for

“hosts” is derived and fundamentally means to go forth (to battle). Note use of the verb and noun in 31.4: “so the Lord of hosts will come down to fight upon Mount Zion and upon its hill.”

*Tsoq* (cf. vs. 2) is the verb for “distress” and has the preposition *l*, literally as “to her.”

Despite the *hamon* by all the nations, it will be as a “dream and vision” or *chalom* and *chazon* (cf. 8.11), the latter belonging to the night and of a different order than associated with prophecy. For the former, cf. Ps 73.20: “They are like a dream when one awakes.”

**29-Vs. 8: As when a hungry man dreams he is eating and awakes with his hunger not satisfied, or as when a thirsty man dreams he is drinking and awakes faint, with his thirst not quenched, so shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against Mount Zion.**

The notion of a dream is central here as creating images that do not correspond with reality. The nations will be fighting Mount Zion or Jerusalem as though they were doing it in a dream which can be a huge advantage for the city’s inhabitants provided they realize what is going on.

**29-Vs. 9: Stupefy yourselves and be in a stupor, blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk, but not with wine; stagger, but not with strong drink!**

This verse can apply to the leaders within Jerusalem who don’t grasp what had been said in the previous verse and thereby jeopardize its inhabitants.

Four words pertaining to this wilful ignorance in the general context of drunkenness: 1) “Stupefy” or *mahah* (used twice) which fundamentally means to linger or delay, “I made haste and did not delay” [Ps 119.60], 2) “blind” or *shahah* (used twice); cf. 6.10, 3) “Be drunk” or *shakar* (cf. 5.22) and 4) “stagger” or *nuah* (cf. 24.20).

**29-Vs. 10: For the Lord has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep and has closed your eyes, the prophets, and covered your heads, the seers.**

Traditionally speaking, prophets and “seers” *chozeh* (cf. 28.15) are those to whom the people would turn naturally in a time of crisis, the latter being derived from a verbal root meaning to see in the sense of behold.

In contrast to the expected guidance is a “spirit of deep sleep” or a *ruach* (cf. 28.6) of *tardemah* which can be associated with drunkenness. Use of *ruach* suggests that such deep sleep will spread quickly over most of the city’s inhabitants. Note, however, a different use of *tardemah* in Gn 2.21 where it’s used by God to create woman from man. If as in the verse at hand this pervasive deep sleep comes from the Lord, eventually it will work out in favor of the people who have been suffering at the hands of their political and religious leaders.

**29-Vs. 11: And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, “Read this,” he says, “I cannot, for it is sealed.”**

Note the parallel between *tardemah* of the previous verse and the image of a book that is sealed. *Chazon* is used for “vision” (cf. vs. 7) here in reference to a book’s contents which cannot be accessed.

Reference to the book (actually a scroll) which is sealed has a certain parallel with Rev

5.2: "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?"

**29-Vs. 12: And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read."**

Keeping in mind reference to Rev 5.2 in the previous verse, it is followed by vs. 4: "and I wept much that no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it."

*Sepher* and *saphar*: "book and read." The former is found next and vs. 18 and the latter found last in 22.10 but not noted there and rendered as "counted." In the verse at hand, the verb is used with *yadah* (cf. 25.1), literally as "know to read."

**29-Vs. 13: And the Lord said: "Because this people draws near with their mouth and honors me with their lips while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men learned by rote;**

Vs. 13 continues into the next one. This is the first time in a while since the words "And the Lord said" (cf. 21.16) are found, words which continue through vs. 14 using the first person singular. Then Isaiah resumes the theme of "woe" or *hoy* which begins this chapter. It is as though the Lord were interrupting Isaiah that he may speak directly to his people. However, the people don't seem capable of making the distinction between Isaiah's role as speaking in the Lord's name and the Lord himself.

A contrast between *nagash* and *rachaq* (cf. 26.15) or "draw near and "far from." For the former, "Let us together draw near for judgment" [41.1]. To the former belong mouth and lips and to the latter, hearts.

*Yir'ah* is the noun for "fear" as a "commandment" belonging to men (*mitsvah*), not true fear or fear of the Lord as in 11.3. "But they were silent and answered him not a word, for the king's command was 'Do not answer him'" [36.21]. "Learned by rote" is the verb *lamad* (26.10).

**29-Vs. 14: therefore, behold, I will again do marvelous things with this people, wonderful and marvelous; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hid."**

"Therefore and "behold" (*hineh*, cf. 28.16) work together in light of the words of vs. 13 in order to prepare the people for what the Lord himself will do. *Pala'* (cf. 28.29) is the verb for "do marvelous things" and used with another verb (*yasaph*, cf. 26.15) which means to increase and reads literally "I will increase to do marvelous things." *Pala'* is used a second time with the noun *pele'* (cf. 25.1) which translates as "marvelous." This verb occurs twice with a noun derived from it along with *yasaph*, all intended to contrast what the Lord will do compared with what amounts to drunkenness as depicted in the previous verses.

*Chakmah* (cf. 11.2) is the noun for "wisdom" from which "wise" or *chakam* (cf. 19.11) is derived. *Bynah* (cf. 27.11) is the noun for "discernment" from which the participle *byn* (28.19) is derived. While the former will perish, the latter will not but become hidden, *satar* (cf. 28.15). The second half of vs. 14 is found in 1Cor 1.19: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart."

**29-Vs. 15: Woe to those who hide deep from the Lord their counsel, whose deeds are in the dark**

**and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?"**

*Hoy* or "woe" is mentioned last in vs. 1 and signals the end of the Lord speaking since vs. 13. It ties in with the verb *satar* used in the previous verse and applies more specifically to covering one's face. *Satar* is described as being "deep," the participle *hamaq* (cf. 7.11) and pertains to "counsel" or *hetsah* (cf. 28.29), most likely belonging to the rulers of the people.

*Machshak* is the noun for "dark" and has six other biblical references one of which is in 42.16: "I will turn the darkness before them into light."

**29-Vs. 16: You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay; that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me;" or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding?"**

*Haphak* is the verb for "turn upside down" noted last in 13.19 which connotes overthrowing or upsetting. Most likely Isaiah attributes this tendency to make things topsy-turvy to the wise men of vs. 14 instead of the people.

Reference to the potter and his creation is echoed in Rom 9.20-1: "But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have you made me thus?'"

*Byn* is a verb for "understanding" (cf. vs. 14).

**29-Vs. 17: Is it not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest?**

Apparently reference to Lebanon means that its forests had become a "fruitful field" or *karmel* which means a cultivated place such as a garden. It is found last in 10.18 but not noted there; 14.8 speaks of Lebanon and its cedars. Despite the shift from forest to garden, if you will, this same garden will be "regarded" (*chashav*, cf. 10.7) as a forest. Those doing the *chashav* aren't specified but most likely applies to the Israelites to the south as they look north toward Lebanon.

**29-Vs. 18: In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.**

"In that day" is noted last in 28.5 and as applied here suggests that the Lord will give special attention to the deaf and blind. Hearing a "book" or *sepher* (cf. vs. 12) refers to a scroll and was very common among people who were illiterate.

"Gloom and darkness" or *'ophel* and *choshek* (cf. 9.2). The former is a poetic word as in Ps 91.6: "(You will not fear) the pestilence that stalks in darkness" [Ps 91.6]. A word similar to *'ophel* (*'aphelah*) is noted in 8.22 with reference to the darkness of the ninth plague which had enveloped the Egyptians, that is, a darkness that could be felt.

**29-Vs. 19: The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.**

*Hanav* is the adjective for "meek" noted last in 11.4 and similar to *hany* (cf. 26.6). In the

verse at hand these will “obtain” or *yasaph* (cf. vs. 14) which connotes that which is ongoing) “fresh joy,” a single noun (*simchah*, cf. 22.13) in the Lord.

As for the “poor” or *‘evyon* (cf. 25.4), they are “among men” or *‘adam* where the preposition is lacking. Their location, as it were, among men distinguish them from the meek who aren’t necessarily needy.

Both the meek and poor shall “exult” or *gyl* (cf. 25.9) in the “Holy One of Israel” is noted last in 17.7. This verb suggests leaping or dancing in a circle.

**29-Vs. 20: For the ruthless shall come to nought and the scoffer cease, and all who watch to do evil shall be cut off,**

This verse continues seamlessly into the next and singles out three types of people:

1) “Ruthless” or *haryts* (cf. vs. 5) with the verb *yasaph* as in the last verse. The idea seems to be that they will increase...continue...to be as such.

2) “Scoffer” or *luts* (cf. 28.22), a verb found next in vs. 22. They will “cease” or *kalah* which as noted last in 16.4 means coming to a full or complete end.

3) Those who “do evil” or *‘aven* (cf. 1.13) or more accurately, those who “watch” for it, *shaqad*. This verb implies laying in wait as well as being sleepless. “You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it” [Jer 1.12]. In the verse at hand, the verb *karath* translates as “cut off” (cf. 28.15).

**29-Vs. 21: who by a word make a man out to be an offender and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate and with an empty plea turn aside him who is in the right.**

Because this verse continues from the previous one, the verb *karath* (‘cut off’) applies to the situation at hand.

*Chata’* (cf. 1.4) is the verb for “make (a man) out to be an offender” and means to sin or more fundamentally, to miss the mark. Here this offense/sin is effected by a “word” or *davar* (cf. 28.14) which is prefaced with the preposition *b-*, literally as “in the word.”

*Qosh* is the verb for “lay a snare,” the only one in the Bible, with regard to what could be a judge sitting in the city gate giving judgment, hence reproving or *yakach* (cf. 11.4).

*Tohu* is the noun for “empty plea” noted last as “chaos” and refers to the formless waste from which God had created the world. It contrasts sharply with the adjective *tsadyq*, “right” (cf. 26.2).

**29-Vs. 22: Therefore thus says the Lord who redeemed Abraham concerning the house of Jacob: "Jacob shall no more be ashamed, no more shall his face grow pale.**

While Isaiah is uttering his prophecy in the Lord’s name throughout Chapter Twenty-Nine, occasionally as here the Lord breaks in directly (‘thus says the Lord’) which must be a more intense experience for the prophet. The Lord continues to speak for the rest of this chapter. Chances are the people couldn’t make the distinction Isaiah and the Lord which was a kind of love-hate relationship for them.

The Lord appeals directly to Israel’s father, if you will, the patriarch Abraham and his redemption (*padah*, cf. 1.27), which connotes freeing from captivity. Usually redemption applies to Israel’s release from the bondage in Egypt (i.e., the Exodus), but Abram (as he was known

then) prefigures this by being called from his homeland: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you" [Gn 12.1].

Being ashamed and growing pale are equivalent here, *bosh* (cf. 26.11) and *chor*, this being the only word in the Bible.

**29-Vs. 23: For when he sees his children, the work of my hands, in his midst, they will sanctify my name; they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.**

The Lord has in mind Abraham having foreseen his descendants as numerous as the stars in heaven: "So shall your descendants be" [Gn 15.5]. They will be in the "midst" of Abraham or *qerev* (cf. 26.9) or in his very center, if you will. There Abraham's offspring will "sanctify" the Lord's name, *qadash* (cf., 8.,13). This verb is used a second time along with the adjective *qadosh* (cf. 6.3) derived from it or "Holy One."

The verb *qadash* fundamentally means to stand or to place apart, the sacred from the profane, and is not unlike the verb *harats* (cf. 8.13) or "stand in awe" which involves the sense of dread.

**29-Vs. 24: And those who err in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmur will accept instruction."**

The Lord concludes on a note of hope with two pairs:

1) "Err" or *tahah* (cf. 27.7) with regard to "spirit" (*ruach*, cf. vs. 10) vs. "come to understanding" which is rendered such by the common verb for "to know," *yadah* (cf. 29.12) along with the noun *bynah* (cf. vs. 14).

2) "Murmur" or *ragan* vs. "accept instruction" which has the verb for teaching or *lamad* (cf. vs. 13) along with the noun *leqach* derived from the common verbal root meaning to take. "The wise man also may hear and increase in learning" [Prov 1.5]. *Ragan* has two other biblical references, Dt 1.27 and Ps 106.25, the latter being quoted here: "They murmured in their tents and did not obey the voice of the Lord."

## Chapter Thirty

**30-Vs. 1: "Woe to the rebellious children," says the Lord, "who carry out a plan but not mine; and who make a league but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin;**

As with the previous chapter, this one begins with *hoy* or "woe" (cf. 29.15) and sets the tone for what is to come.

"Plan and league" or *hetsah* (cf. 29.15) and *masekah*: the latter means that which is molten as an image as well as something hidden. It's best known example is the golden calf: "And he (Aaron) received the gold at their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a molten calf" [Ex 32.4]. No small wonder this *masekah* is not of the Lord's "spirit" or *ruach* (cf. 29.24). Its fabrication is akin to the adding of sin to sin, *yasaph* being the verb which is indicative of continuous growth or increase (cf. 29.20).

**30-Vs. 2: who set out to go down to Egypt, without asking for my counsel, to take refuge in the**

### protection of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!

The going down to Egypt in vs. 2 is, of course, the exact opposite of the Exodus from that country in which Israel had resided some four hundred years. While commonly associated with oppression, no mention of this is made until the Pharaoh who laid burdens upon the Israelites. It may have been acceptable if Israel descended to Egypt with the Lord's "counsel," but they failed to do so. The text reads literally "the did not ask (*sha'al*, cf. 7.11) my mouth."

"Refuge and protection" or *hazaz* and *mahoz* (cf. 27.5), the latter being derived from the former. As for *hazaz*, "when he established the fountains of the deep" (Prov 8.28: the RSV has a footnote here, 'The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain').

"Seek shelter:" the verb "seek" is not in the Hebrew but rendered as *chasah* (cf. 14.32). This *chasah* is not so much in Egypt proper but its shadow, implying that it has a long reach beyond its borders.

### 30-Vs. 3: Therefore shall the protection of Pharaoh turn to your shame, and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt to your humiliation.

Two pairs of opposites:

1) "Protection and shame" or *mahoz* (cf. vs. 2) and *bosheth*, the latter being found next in vs. 5.

2) "Shelter and humiliation" or *chasuth* (only use of this term in the Bible) and *kelimah* which also applies to shame. "The makers of idols go in confusion together" [45.16]. As intimated in the previous verse, the shadow represents the long reach of Egypt whereas Pharaoh, the shorter or more immediate influence of its ruler.

### 30-Vs. 4: For though his officials are at Zoan and his envoys reach Hanes,

"Officials and envoys" or *sar* (cf. 10.8) and *mal'ak* (cf. 18.2). The RSV puts the historical context of this verse in light of Ezk 30.13-19.

### 30-Vs. 5: every one comes to shame through a people that cannot profit them, that brings neither help nor profit, but shame and disgrace."

The people spoken of here can refer to the Egyptians to whom the rebellious children (cf. vs. 1) had fled.

A parallel between "help and profit" and "shame and disgrace." The first pair is *hezer* and *yahal*. "May he send you help from the sanctuary" [Ps 20.2]. "Who fashions a god or casts an image that is profitable for nothing" [44.10]? The second pair is *bosheth* (cf. vs. 3) and *cherpah* (cf. 25.8).

Most words in this verse begin with the letter lamed or "l" which conveys a sense of direct-ness emphasizing the ruinous course of action on the part of Israel.

### 30-Vs. 6: An oracle on the beasts of the Negeb. Through a land of trouble and anguish from where come the lioness and the lion, the viper and the flying serpent, they carry their riches on the backs of asses and their treasures on the humps of camels to a people that cannot profit them.

The last time *masa'* or "oracle" occurs is in 23.1 with regard to Tyre, and the next time is 46.1 with regard to weary beasts. This noun primarily means a burden (as the latter), being derived from the verbal root *nasa'* (cf. 19.13) which means to bear, to carry. The *masa'* here lasts for one verse only. The idea seems to be that an oracle is a burden or responsibility laid upon the prophet. With regard to this, the RSV has a note saying "Obscure, perhaps emend to read, "They carry through the heat of the Negeb."

Negeb is the desert region just south of Israel where apparently wild beasts dwell. It contains "trouble and anguish" associated with these beasts, *tsarah* and *tsuqah* (two similar sounding words noted together in 8.22) and has one other biblical reference, Prov 1.27. The treasures which the Israelites carry through the desert are destined for a people which won't "profit" them, *yahal* as used in the previous verse.

### **30-Vs. 7: For Egypt's help is worthless and empty, therefore I have called her "Rahab who sits still."**

Egypt is mentioned again, the last time being vs. 3. Though not outright hostile, the verses above say that it will be of no help to Israel, the verb *hazar* being used for "help." "Everyone helps his neighbor" [41.6]. In the verse at hand, *hazar* is "worthless and empty" or *hevel* and *ryq*. The first is a noun and the second an adjective, both found in 49.4: "I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity." *Hevel* also means a breath or exhalation.

*Rahab* is a mythological sea serpent killed in a struggle of cosmic proportions previously mentioned as Leviathan in 27.1, and Egypt is destined to be this Rahab. *Sheveth* is a noun for "sits still" and has two other biblical references, Ex 21.19 and Prov 20.3, the latter being "It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling." The RSV has a note saying "Obscure, perhaps emended to read, 'Rahab who shall be destroyed.'"

### **30-Vs. 8: And now go, write it before them on a tablet and inscribe it in a book that it may be for the time to come as a witness forever.**

The Lord speaks directly to Isaiah that he write in both a "tablet and book" or *luach* and *sepher* (cf. 29.18). The former is composed of wax onto which words are inscribed and the latter, a scroll where a pen is employed. "It (sin of Judah) is engraved on the tablet of their heart" [Jer 17.1]. To the former applies the verb "write" or *katav* (cf. 10.1 and fundamentally means to cut) and to the latter applies the verb "inscribe" or *chaqqaq* noted last in 10.1 as "decree" implying a cutting or hacking as well as carving.

Both the tablet and book are to be a "witness" or *had* (cf. 19.20) which is part of the same word for "forever" or *had-halom* or literally "unto forever." While the time at hand will come and then go, the two will remain as a kind of everlasting memorial.

### **30-Vs. 9: For they are a rebellious people, lying sons, sons who will not hear the instruction of the Lord;**

The small word "for" or *ky* plays an important role here because it serves to connect the unpleasant but true words along with the writing upon the tablet and book of the previous verse.

“Rebellious” or *mery*: compare with vs. 1 or *sarar* (not noted) which connotes stubbornness. “They are a rebellious house” [Ezk 2.5].

“Lying” or *kachash* connotes denial and feigning. “Transgressing and denying the Lord” [59.13].

Both *mery* and *kachash* are the exact opposite of not willing to “hear” (*shamah*, cf. 28.23) the Lord’s “instruction” or *torah* (cf. 8.20), this word being more significant in that obviously it infers the Torah.

### **30-Vs. 10: who say to the seers, "See not;" and to the prophets, "Prophecy not to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions,**

The rebellious Israelites make matters worse by consulting “seers and prophets,” the former term being the participle *ra’ah* which here also translates as “see” (not). “Prophets” or *chozeh* is found last in 29.10 along with “seers.” The verbal root is more specific to prophetic vision compare with the more common *ra’ah* or seeing which belongs to seers, at least according to their definition.

Instead of what is “right” or *nakoach* (cf. 26.10), suggestive of that which is or in front, the rebellious people wish the prophets to speak “smooth things and illusions” (the verb *chazah* noted last in 26.11 is used for ‘prophesy’). The former term is *chelqah* which fundamentally means a portion as well as flattery. “May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts” [Ps 12.3].

### **30-Vs. 11: leave the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more of the Holy One of Israel."**

Two words representative of living in accord with the Lord, “way and path” or *derek* and *’orach*. The former is found more frequently in Isaiah (cf. 9.1) the latter in 26.8 as a more poetical form. The verbs *sur* and *natah* (cf. 17.1 and 23.11).

The verb *shavath* (verbal root of Sabbath), together with *peny*, translates as “let us hear no more” and is rendered literally as “let cease (or rest) from our face.” In other words, the people don’t want the Lord to be present to them through the medium of hearing which implies the medium of the prophet Isaiah. The verb is found last in 21.2 but not noted there.

### **30-Vs. 12: Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel, "Because you despise this word and trust in oppression and perverseness and rely on them;**

The two words “therefore thus” (*laken koh*) are pretty much the same and for the most part are found individually. However, when combined as here, they serve to grab one’s attention to something important about to happen. Besides, it adds to the drama at hand where the Lord continues to speak through vs. 14.

*Ma’as* is the verb for “despise” which also means to refuse with respect to the *davar* (cf. 29.21) or “word” which hearkens back to vs. 8 when the Lord himself speaks.

“Trust and rely” or *batach* (cf. 26.4) *shahan* (cf. 10.20), the latter suggestive of leaning upon. Both pertain to “oppression and perverseness” or *hosheq* and *luts* (cf. 29.20). The former connotes violence and injury whereas the latter, scoffing. “You shall be far from oppression (*hosheq*), for you shall not fear” [54.14].

**30-Vs. 13: therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a break in a high wall, bulging out and about to collapse whose crash comes suddenly, in an instant;**

A second use of “therefore” or *laken* which is similar in sound to *lakem* (‘to you’). The crash at hand will happen “suddenly and in an instant” or *pit’om* and *petah*, both found in 29.5.

**30-Vs. 14: and its breaking is like that of a potter's vessel which is smashed so ruthlessly that among its fragments not a sherd is found with which to take fire from the hearth or to dip up water out of the cistern.”**

*Perets* is the noun for “breaking” verse and connotes a scattering or dispersal. It is found in 28.21 as the proper name of Mount Perazim. Compare this noun with *shever* (cf. 15.5) in the verse at hand which suggests a breaking into small pieces.

“Ruthlessly” consists of the verb *chamal* (cf. 9.19) which means to take pity along with *lo’* or “not”...will not take pity.

**30-Vs. 15: For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength." And you would not,**

*Ky* (cf. vs. 9) or “thus” serves to introduce the Lord speaking in a different tone of voice. He likes to use his full, formal title as in vss. 11 and 12, more to make an impression.

Two pairs, each with one result:

1) “Returning and rest” or *shuv* (cf. 28.6) and *nachath* have as their goal being “saved” or *yashah* (cf. 25.9). As for *nachath*, cf. vs. 30: “the descending blow of his arm to be seen.”

2) “Quietness and trust” or *shaqat* (cf. 18.4) and *bitchah*, the only use of this word in the Bible which derives from *batach* as in vs. 12. They have as their goal the “strength” of the people, *gevurah* (cf. 28.6).

**30-Vs. 16: but you said, "No! We will speed upon horses," therefore you shall speed away; and, "We will ride upon swift steeds," therefore your pursuers shall be swift.**

The Lord is mimicking the people he wishes to save which, if they pay attention, could have a greater effect than any divine exhortation. Their refusal is conveyed by the sound of the two pairs “horses and speed away” and “swift and shall be swift” or *sus* and *nus* (cf. 10.3) and *qal* (cf. 19.1) and *qalal* (cf. 23.9 as ‘dishonor’). The verb *qalal* conveys both a sense of lightness or swiftness together with being despised.

**30-Vs. 17: A thousand shall flee at the threat of one, at the threat of five you shall flee, until you are left like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain, like a signal on a hill.**

The noun for “threat” is *geharah* (cf. 50.2) which also means a rebuke, here coming from both one person and five.

The Lord continues to mock the people by comparing them to two banners, possibly of a military nature, which they abandoned in haste. “Flagstaff and signal” or *toren* and *nes* (cf.

18.3): the former has two other references (Ezk 27.5 and 33.23) while the latter is cited here: “Your tackle hangs loose; it cannot hold the mast firm in its place.”

**30-Vs. 18: Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you; therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.**

The verb *chakah* or “wait” is found last in 8.17 where it has the idea of tying or binding. While the people had scattered (cf. previous verse), the Lord nevertheless remained in order to receive them graciously. The verb *chanan* (cf. 27.11) is used. First it is applied to the Lord and then to those who wait for him or more specifically, those who by their very act of waiting are “blessed,” *‘ashrey*. “Happy are you who sow beside all waters” [32.20]. This adjective is derived from the verbal root *‘ashar* (to be straight) from which comes the relative pronouns “who, which, that.” As noted in 1.17, the verbal root to this adjective suggests forward unceasing movement.

With regard to the first *chanan*, the Lord “exalts” himself or *rum* (cf. 26.11) or lifts himself, as it were, above the confusion suggested by the last verse so that the people may have a clear view of him.

The second sentence calls the Lord a God of “justice” or *mishpat* (28.26) which is closely bound up with waiting for him.

**30-Vs. 19: Yea, O people in Zion who dwell at Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when he hears it, he will answer you.**

Two pairs of words: “weep and be gracious,” *bakah* (cf. 16.9 but not noted there) and *chanan* (cf. last verse). Both are doubled, if you will, for emphasis and come off something like “weep (not) weep” and “be gracious graciously.” In both instances the Lord is concerned with Zion and Jerusalem, one and the same; perhaps by the former he has in mind the temple.

“Voice and cry” or *qol* (cf. vs. 6) and *zahaq* (cf. 15.5). The former is more general whereas the latter is a more poignant or intensification of *qol*.

*Shamah* is the common verb for “hears” (cf. vs. 9) along with *hanah* (cf. 27.2) which means “answer.” The words at hand read more literally, “as he hears,” *ky* (‘as,’ cf. vs. 15) which suggests that as soon as this happens, the Lord will answer.

**30-Vs. 20: And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself any more, but your eyes shall see your Teacher.**

The two most basic forms of nourishment, bread and water, are symbolized by “adversity and affliction” (*tsar* and *lachats*) which the people must consume. The first word is found last in 26.16 but not noted there. The second word connotes oppression as in Ps 42.9: “Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?”

The participle *yarah* (cf. 28.26) translates as “Teacher” who up to this point has remained hidden, deliberately so, but will allow himself to be seen. Actually it was the behavior of the people that had blinded them willingly up to now.

**30-Vs. 21: And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.**

This is the second verse in a row where the conjunctive *v-* ('and') is found which unites first the seeing of the Lord as Teacher and now the hearing of him. The latter concerns a "word" or *davar* (cf. vs. 12) which is not in front of the people as they might expect but behind them. This *davar* speaks of a "way" or *derek* (cf. vs. 11). Such hearing will be a guide regardless of turning left or right, this turning being for the people to decide. And so they must choose either direction while all the while being aware of the *davar* behind them as it continues to speak. The people will have to keep their ears carefully tuned so as to be aligned with the way they must walk. Even the slightest disregard of it can cause them to err.

**30-Vs. 22: Then you will defile your silver-covered graven images and your gold-plated molten images. You will scatter them as unclean things; you will say to them, "Begone!"**

The conjunctive *v-* is used as "then" though it conveys a different sense than the last two instances.

*Tame'* (cf. 6.5) is the verb "defile" which has two objects with two types of coverings, "images and molten images:" *pesylym* (cf. 21.9) and *masekah* (cf. vs. 1).

*Zarah* is the verb for "scatter" which has the connotation of dust. "You shall winnow them and the wind shall carry them away, and the tempest shall scatter them" [41.16].

*Daveh* is the noun for "unclean thing" which connotes being faithful and has four other biblical references as related to a woman's menstrual condition. "If a man lies with a woman having her sickness...both of them shall be cut off from among their people" [Lev 20.18].

**30-Vs. 23: And he will give rain for the seed with which you sow the ground and grain, the produce of the ground, which will be rich and plenteous. In that day your cattle will graze in large pastures;**

A key word in this verse is "produce" or *tevu'ah* which can apply to gain or profit and noted last in 23.3 as "revenue" but not noted there. Through the God-given rain it will be both "rich and plenteous" or *dashen* and *shamen*. The former connotes fatness and has two other biblical references, Pss 22.29 and 92.14, the latter being cited here: "They still bring forth fruit in old age, they are ever full of sap and green."

Note use of the phrase "in that day" found last in 29.18 and here with reference to cattle, a vital part of Israel's economy. Most likely the first sentence of the verse at hand is included within this special time frame which includes something important in store for the Lord's people. "In that day" carries over to the next verse (24, not included here) which mentions two other important types of livestock, oxen and asses.

**30-Vs. 25: And upon every lofty mountain and every high hill there will be brooks running with water in the day of the great slaughter when the towers fall.**

The previous verse has "in that day" whereas the one at hand has "in the day" with reference to a great "slaughter" or *hereg* found last in 27.7 but not noted there, a verse which also contains its verbal root. Compare with 34.2 where the Lord hands over the nations for "slaughter" or *tevach*, a term often applied to execution or an executioner.

Water flowing on the mountains seem to be a symbol of paradise and may be compared

with 41.18: “I will open rivers on the bare heights and fountains in the midst of the valleys.” Also compare the lofty mountains and high hill with the towers, the latter which can compare with the tower of Babel.

**30-Vs. 26: Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold as the light of seven days in the day when the Lord binds up the hurt of his people and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow.**

The conjunctive *v-* is used for “moreover.”

*Or* is the noun for “light” (cf. 10.17) mentioned four times: moon->sun->seven days. This transition from brightness to brightness will occur “in the day,” a phrase found in the previous verse. The number seven derives from the verbal root *shavah* (cf. 19.18) which means to swear an oath and is considered sacred, a day of rest (cf. Gn 2.2).

The day at hand will be one of healing with regard to “hurt and wounds” or *shever* (cf. vs. 14) and *machats*, the only use of this noun in the Bible from a verbal root meaning to smite. To the former the Lord “binds up” and to the latter, “heals:” *chavash* (cf. 3.7) and *rapha’* (cf. 19.22).

**30-Vs. 27: Behold, the name of the Lord comes from far, burning with his anger and in thick rising smoke; his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue is like a devouring fire;**

As noted elsewhere, *hineh* or “behold” (cf. 29.14) serves to grab the attention of those to whom the Lord is speaking, appropriate here for the Lord’s “name” (*shem*) is coming, not the Lord himself. Furthermore, this *shem* comes “from afar” or *merchaq* (cf. 13.5). Note the preposition *min-* or *m-* being prefaced to *merchaq*, *mmimerchaq*, which intimates a vast distance between the Lord’s name and those to whom it is coming. Because of this distance a herald is required, that is, the divine *shem* which proclaims in advance the coming of an important person who happens to be the Lord.

The coming of the Lord is reminiscent of Ps 18.8 (and hence, Mount Sinai): “Smoke went up from his nostrils and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him.” Mention of lips indicates not so much that people have seen the Lord but could feel his “indignation” (*zaham*, cf. 26.20) about to break forth from these lips in the form of burning anger and thick smoke. The same holds true with regard to the Lord’s tongue; he isn’t speaking but on the verge of doing so.

**30-Vs. 28: his breath is like an overflowing stream that reaches up to the neck; to sift the nations with the sieve of destruction and to place on the jaws of the peoples a bridle that leads astray.**

Mention of the Lord’s “breath” (*ruach*, cf. 30.1) is just as appropriate here as in the context of the previous verse. Of all the divine attributes, *ruach* can make its presence felt...blown...across great distances which is why it’s compared to an overflowing stream, *shataph* being the verb (cf. 28.18).

*Chatsah* is the verb for “sift” and fundamentally means to divide and distribute. “And he (Jacob) divided the people that were with him” [Gn 32.7]. Mention of a sieve suggests straining the people with “destruction” or *shav’* (cf. 5.18), this word also meaning vanity or falsehood.

Not unlike this *shav'* is a bridle that function opposite of what it's supposed to do, namely, to lead astray or *tahah* (cf. 29.24).

**30-Vs. 29: You shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one sets out to the sound of the flute to go to the mountain of the Lord, to the Rock of Israel.**

The first few words run more literally as “the song will be to you as night” and can refer to celebration of the Passover, a “feast” or *chag* which also can refer to a sacrifice (cf. 29.1 but not noted there). *Qadash* (cf. 29.23) is a verb meaning to keep holy or to keep apart.

*Simchah* (cf. 29.19) as “gladness” pertains to the “heart” or *levav* (cf. 21.9), this form being used which is similar to the more common *lev*.

“Sets out and to go” or *halak* and *bo'*: two common verbs, the former suggestive of coming and the latter suggestive of coming with regard to entering. Such a twofold setting out, as it were, is done at the *qol* or “sound” of the flute, this word also meaning voice.

*Har* (cf. 13.4) and *tsur* (cf. 26.4) or “mountain and rock:” although the former is larger, the latter is more important because it is associated with Israel and hence Mount Zion. “And have not remembered the Rock of your refuge” [17.10].

**30-Vs. 30: And the Lord will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire with a cloudburst and tempest and hailstones.**

The Lord's voice is “majestic” or *hod*, this being a noun making it to read “the majesty of his voice.” “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth” [Ps 8.1]! In the verse at hand, this divine voice is not to be heard (*shamah*, cf. vs. 19) but more accurately, caused to be heard; the same applicable to the verb *ra'ah* (cf. vs. 10). Both forms suggest an indirect type of action which has a certain parallel with remarks concerning the “name of the Lord” in vs. 27 coming, not the Lord himself. The imagery here is suggestive of vs. 27 as well as Ps 18.8.

**30-Vs. 31: The Assyrians will be terror-stricken at the voice of the Lord when he smites with his rod.**

This is the first time the Assyrians are mentioned in Chapter Thirty though implied in vss. 8-17 concerning to Israel's alliance with Egypt. *Chatat* (cf. 9.4) as “terror-stricken” implies being broken into pieces at the Lord's (majestic) “voice” or *qol* (cf. vs. 29). Simultaneously with this will be a smiting or *nakah* (cf. 27.7) not just with a rod but literally “in (*b-*) a rod,” *shevet* (cf. 14.29).

**30-Vs. 32: And every stroke of the staff of punishment which the Lord lays upon them will be to the sound of timbrels and lyres; battling with brandished arm he will fight with them.**

Compare the “staff” or *mateh* mentioned in 14.5 along with *shevet*, here associated with “punishment” or *mosadah*. It has one other biblical reference with the alternate meaning of foundation, Ezk 41.8: “the foundation of the side chambers.” *Nuach* (cf. 28.12) is the verb for “lays upon” and suggests a resting upon in a permanent fashion. This will be effected to the

sound (not in the Hebrew text) of timbrels and lyres.

*Tenuphah* (cf. 19.16 but not noted there) is a noun for “brandished arm” which also means a waving or shaking of the hand and can apply to a particular kind of waving as when offering a sacrifice: “a wave offering before the Lord” [Ex 20.24].

The verb “will fight” or *lacham* (cf. 7.1) has the preposition *b-*, literally as “in them.”

**30-Vs. 33: For a burning place has long been prepared; yea, for the king it is made ready, its pyre made deep and wide with fire and wood in abundance; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it.**

“Burning place” or *taphtah*, the only use of this word in the Bible and most likely refers to a place outside Jerusalem where children were sacrificed to Molech, god of the Ammonites. It has been “long prepared” or literally “prepared from yesterday,” *harak* being the verb (cf. 21.5) usually pertaining to the setting of a table. Compare with the verb *kun* or “made ready” (cf. 9.7) which refers to setting up or establishing, here as it pertains to the king which the **RSV** identifies as the god Molech.

The Lord himself will set afire both the burning place and pyre through his “breath” or *neshamah* (cf. 2.22) which intimates the mortality of a living creature compared with the spiritual nature of *ruach* or spirit. “Brimstone” or *gaphryth* (cf. 1.9) evokes the image of the destruction of Sodom of Gomorrah (cf. Gn 19.24). In the verse at hand, not just the image of brimstone is used but it being like a stream, a continuous flow from the Lord’s *neshamah*. The verb “kindles” or *bahar* (cf. 19.11) is used with the preposition *b-*, literally as “kindles in it.”