

Chapter Fifty-Three

53-Vs. 1: Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Isaiah seems to be speaking in a collective manner, that is, giving voice not just to Israel's astonishment but to that of other nations (cf. 52.15). Still, that mysterious servant moving among the people is not identified which adds to the mystery the more we hear of him. Even though he had created such a stir—and we don't have precise information as to the reason—the Lord is behind it all. That's why Isaiah asks these two rhetorical questions centered around belief and revelation, the two verbs being *'aman* (cf. 49.7) and *ga'al* (cf. 52.9).

52-Vs. 2: For he grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

Yoneq is the noun for “young plant,” the only use of this term in the Bible which derives from a verbal root meaning to suck. Mention of dry ground intimates not so much a desert environment but a way of describing Israel at the time. Because of this, the people were not disposed to recognize him.

The servant (again, nothing is said of this man's identity) lacks “form, comeliness and beauty” or *to'ar* (cf. 52.15), *hadar* (cf. 35.2) and *mar'eh* (cf. 52.14 as ‘appearance’). The third verb has as its root the common verb to see or *ra'ah* which is used in conjunction with it. *Chamad* is the verb for “desire” noted last in 44.9.

53-Vs. 3: He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Bazah (mentioned twice; cf. 49.7) and *chadal* (cf. 2.22) or “despised and rejected,” the reasons for which are not given and as noted in vs. 1, adds to the mystery surrounding this servant.

Mak'ov and *choly* or “sorrows and grief.” The former is found in the next verse and the latter connoting sickness and found last in 38.9 but not noted there.

Hiding one's face and esteeming are pretty much the same in this context, the verb for the latter being *chashav* (cf. 40.17).

53-Vs. 4: Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.

This verse, like the others pertaining to the servant, are observations after the fact, if you will. Both Isaiah and the people engaged in a long process of reflection about him who was both familiar in that he grew up with them yet remained unknown.

Nasa' (cf. 52.13) and *saval* (cf. 46.4) or “borne and carried.” The former also means to lift up and the latter often applies to heavy burdens.

Nagah (cf. 26.5), *makah* (cf. 14.6) and *hanah* (cf. 51.21) or “stricken, smitten and afflicted.” Note that the verb *makah* is associated specifically with God.

Mt 8.17 has part of this verse: “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.” Also 1Pt 2.21-25 echoes this verse as well as those which follow.

53-Vs. 5: But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

Chalal (cf. 48.11) which fundamentally means to be perforated pertains to “transgressions or *peshah* (cf. 50.1). Note the plural “our” here as well as with the next verb, *daka’*. In other words, the servant’s afflictions reflect those of the people although the people do not yet realize they are being reflected, as it were, in this man’s afflictions.

Daka’ noted last in 3.15 as “crushing” and translates as “bruised” with respect to “iniquities” or *havon* found last in 50.1 but not noted there.

Musar or the “chastisement” (cf. 26.16) upon the servant suggests that he had suffered condemnation for undisclosed sin or fault. This indirect way of speaking of such chastisement, along with the servant’s other afflictions, is intended by the Lord to have the people reflect upon their own iniquity which finally is beginning to dawn upon them. The *musar* at hand thus has as its goal the making “whole” of the people, *shalam* being the verb noted last in 44.28 with its connotation of fulfilment (*shalom* is derived from it).

Chaburah is the noun for “stripes” which is found last in 1.6 and has four other biblical references. They are intended to heal the people (‘us’ is a direct way of speaking to them), *rapha’* (cf. 30.26). This verb often refers to more physical healing whereas *shalam* is a making whole or complete.

53-Vs. 6: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Tahah (cf. 47.14) or “go astray” connotes wandering through the image of sheep and hence having no shepherd who could be the unidentified servant. Such *tahah* is the same as each person going his own “way” (*derek*, cf. 51.10) which is a kind of fracturing of the nation of Israel.

Pagah or “laid up” is found last in 47.3 as “take vengeance,” and in the verse at hand has the preposition *b-* (in) reading literally “laid in him” which is not far from the mark when describing the sufferings of this servant. The object is a collective “iniquity” or *havon* (cf. vs. 5).

53-Vs. 7: He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

Nagas (cf. 14.4) and *hanah* (cf. vs. 4) or “oppressed and afflicted” form a pair pertaining to the servant who remains silent throughout. The verb *’alam* or “dumb” is a more forceful way of expressing this silence which must have infuriated those who were causing it. “I was dumb and silent, I held my peace to no avail” [Ps 39.2].

53-Vs. 8: By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who

considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

Hotser and *mishpat* (cf. 50.8) or “oppression and judgment” form a pair where the servant is “taken away,” the common verb *laqach*, but is more along the lines of being whisked away. The first noun has two other biblical references, Ps 107.39 and Prov 30.16, the former being cited here: “When they are diminished and brought low through oppression, trouble and sorrow.”

Apparently the generation to which the servant belonged was not just ignorant of his plight but was indifferent to it, hence the reason for Isaiah’s rhetorical question which rings with greater clarity by the phrase “my people.” *Syach* as “considered” applies to meditating or speaking with oneself. “I muse on the work of your hands” [Ps 143.5].

In the verse at hand, *syach* has as two objects:

1) That the servant is “cut off” or *gazar* from the land of the living, this verb found last in 9.20 as “snatch” which connotes a cutting as with wood.

2) That he is “stricken” (*negah*) for a “transgression” or *peshah* (cf. vs. 5). *Negah* is a noun which applies to a plague and here reads literally, “the stroke of the transgression.” *Negah* is used frequently with regard to leprosy in the Book of Leviticus as in 13.2: “When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling or an eruption or a spot, and it turns into a leprous disease on the skin of the body.”

53-Vs. 9: And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Nothing is said about the identity of “they” but most likely refers to the people of Israel, again, not specified, but perhaps her religious leaders.

The last verse is a rhetorical question as to the fate of the servant while the one at hand begins with the conjunctive *v-*, “and.” That is to say, it continues this question or more precisely, that the servant is buried with the “wicked” or *rashah* (cf. 50.9) which is similar in sound to *hashyr* or the “rich man.” No information is given as to the place where the servant is buried.

Chamas means “violence” and found next in 59.6: “Their works are works of iniquity, and deeds of violence are in their hands.” *Mirmah* is the noun for “deceit:” “The Lord abhors bloodthirsty and deceitful men” [Ps 5.6].

53-Vs. 10: Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand;

As with the previous verse, the one at hand begins with the conjunctive *v-* or “yet,” indicative of continuing action.

Chaphets (cf. 42.21) is a verb for the English noun “will” which reads literally, “It pleased the Lord” which here is to “bruise” or *daka*’ the servant. This verse is found in vs. 5 but has no mention of the Lord as doing this bruising. Also in that verse is the verb *chahal* which translates as “put to grief.”

Without the people knowing it, the servant takes it on himself to become an “offering”

for sin, *'asham*, with *nephesh* (cf. 51.23 and literally as soul; also cf. vs. 11). “But God will shatter the heads of his enemies, the hairy crown of him who talks in his guilty ways” [Ps 68.21].

Although the verse at hand doesn't speak of the servant's death—it's implied as connected with vs. 9—the servant will see his children and length of days. In other words, the divine *chaphets* (second mention) will make him “prosper,” *tsaleach* (cf. 48.15) which connotes a going over or through. More specifically, this *tsaleach* will be in the Lord's hand which is indicative of future action, possibly even beyond death.

53-Vs. 11: he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities.

Hamal or “travail” (cf. 10.1) pertains to what is heavy and used without the English “fruit.” Seeing (*ra'ah*, cf. vs. 2) this travail...heaviness...will satisfy the servant, *savah* (cf. 9.20). Apparently it will happen once the servant dies and returns to life, the means by which this happens is not being spelled out here.

The servant is called “righteous one” or *tsadyq* (cf. 49.24) used with the verb *tsadaq* (cf. 50.8), “be accounted righteous.” In other words, he will possess a kind of “knowledge” or *dahath* (cf. 47.10) which will take from his *tsadyq* and transfer it to other persons. Nevertheless, he will continue to suffer on behalf of these people, bearing (*saval*, cf. 53.4) their “iniquities” or *havon* (cf. vs. 6).

53-Vs. 12: Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

Chalaq (cf. 34.17) is the verb for “divide...portion” used twice, that is, with those who are chosen by the Lord and have endured the same sufferings as the servant.

Harah means “poured” found last in 32.15 and has the alternate meaning of “uncovered.” Thus it could be said that the servant uncovers his *nephesh* or “soul” to an ignominious death and “made intercession” (*pagah*, cf. vs. 6) for “transgressors” (*pashah*, cf. 48.8), a term which connotes rebels. *Manah* or “numbered” suggests being chosen or destined beforehand (cf. 65.12).

Note that the singular “sin” is used, *chet'* found last in 31.7.

Chapter Fifty-Four

54-Vs. 1: "Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in travail! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her that is married, says the Lord.

The familiar “says the Lord” occurs at the end of the verse, not at the beginning. It is as though the Lord were more intent in uttering these words of encouragement, and that the customary attribution were an after-thought.

Ranan (cf. 52.9) is the verb for “sing” in conjunction with Israel who is called the “barren

one” or *haqarah* whose verbal root *haqar* means to root up. “A time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted” [Eccl 3.2]. *Ranan* is used a second time with the verb *patsach* as in 52.9 along with *tsahal* (cf. 24.14).

Jerusalem can be the “desolate one” (*shamam*, cf. 52.14) who, despite her plight (of exile), is better off than the married woman which could be a reference to the nation (Babylon) holding Israel in bondage.

Gal 4.27 quotes this verse which runs as follows: “Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in travail; for the children of the desolate one are many more than the children of her that is married.”

54-Vs. 2: Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; hold not back, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes.

An obvious reference to the pitching of a tent, most likely Israel returning home from exile. Note the verbs relative to this: “enlarge, be stretched out and lengthen:” *rachav* (cf. 5.14), *natah* (cf. 44.24) and *arak* (cf. 48.9).

54-Vs. 3: For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your descendants will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.

Parats (cf. 5.5) or “spread” will happen once Israel returns home, this to the right and left, a further extension of the image of a tent in the previous verse. *Yarash* connotes inheriting (cf. 34.17 but not noted there) and *yashav* (cf. 40.22) or “possess and people.”

54-Vs. 4: "Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.

The divine command not to fear is tied up with the faculty of remembrance (*zakar*, cf. 49.1 and the root for ‘descendants’ as in vs. 3). This results in no shame (*bosh*, cf. 50.7), of not being confounded (*kalam*, cf. 50.7), of being put to shame (*chapher*, cf. 33.9), forgetting shame (*bosheth*, cf. 30.5; a variation of *bosh*) and reproach (*cherpah*, cf. 51.7).

54-Vs. 5: For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called.

Hasah is the verb for “Maker” as in 51.13 who in the verse at hand is equivalent to Israel’s “husband” or the participle *bahal* (cf. 50.8 with the alternate meaning).

Qedosh (cf. 41.14) or “Holy One” is equivalent to the participle *ga'al* (cf. 53.1), “Redeemer.”

The words “is called” (*qara'*, cf. 49.1) suggests that the earth’s inhabitants recognize the Lord’s actions.

54-Vs. 6: For the Lord has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God.

Here Israel is depicted as a wife “forsaken and grieved” or *hazav* (cf. 49.14) and *hatsav*, a reference to the latter being in 63.10: “But they rebelled and grieved his holy Spirit.” The latter term is connected with “spirit” or *ruach* (cf. 48.16).

54-Vs. 7: For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you.

Regah or “moment” (cf. 47.9) is unspecified and can be translated as suddenly during which the Lord “forsook” Israel, *hazav* (cf. vs. 6). Within this same *regah*—and the tense is future—the Lord will “gather” Israel (*qavats*, cf. 49.18) with a “compassion” that is great, *rachamym* being found last in 47.6 but not noted there.

54-Vs. 8: In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer.

This is the second consecutive instance of *regah* or “moment” which contains not just “wrath” or *qetseph* (cf. 34.2) but one which is “overflowing” or *shetseph*, the only use of this word (noun) in the Bible. While this divine wrath was being experienced—and it must have seemed long though the Lord claims it to be a *regah*—he “hid” his face, the verb *satar* which connotes a veiling as in 45.15.

In contrast to *regah* is *holam* (cf. 51.11 but not noted there) or “everlasting” which here describes the Lord’s “love” or *chesed* (cf. 40.6 as ‘beauty’). Thus after the *regah* of distress comes the *holam* of “compassion,” *racham* (cf. 49.15).

54-Vs. 9: "For this is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you.

The recalling the days of Noah is a divine example of *regah* in that for the Lord no temporal gap exists between then and the present. In both instances he swears (*shavah*, cf. 48.1) that waters will not cover the earth. “Neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done” [Gn 8.21]. In this instance the Lord doesn’t use the verb *shavah* but the words (also in vs. 1) “said in his heart.” Such an eruption hearkens back to the waters of 1.2 over which the Spirit was hovering.

To those listening to the words in the verse at hand, the waters of the primeval chaos are equivalent to the Lord’s anger, rebuke, *qetseph* (cf. vs. 8) and *gahar* (cf. 17.13).

54-Vs. 10: For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord who has compassion on you.

Mush (cf. 46.7 but not noted there) and *mut* or “depart and removed” (cf. 24.19) stand in sharp contrast to the Lord’s *chesed* (cf. vs. 8) which will not “depart” from Israel.

Mut is used a second time with regard to the Lord’s covenant of “peace” (*shalom*, cf. 52.7). Compare *chesed* with *racham* as “compassion” (cf. vs. 8). The former is difficult to translate while at the same time more comprehensive whereas the latter is more specific, literally in the bowels.

54-Vs. 11: "O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted, behold, I will set your stones in antimony and lay your foundations with sapphires.

Hany (cf. 42.17), *sahar* and *nacham* (cf. 52.9) or "afflicted one, storm-tossed and (not) comforted." A reference for the second verb is Jon 1.11: "For the sea grew more and more tempestuous."

These stones are reminiscent of the heavenly Jerusalem with its walls and foundations in Rev 21.16-21.

54-Vs. 12: I will make your pinnacles of agate, your gates of carbuncles and all your wall of precious stones.

This verse is more or less a continuation of the previous one where the walls of Jerusalem will be of stones which are "precious" or *chephets* (cf. 48.14). The word for "wall" is *gevul* (cf. 15.8; fundamentally it means a border). The verse at hand reads literally as "stones of delight."

54-Vs. 13: All your sons shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the prosperity of your sons.

Lamad is the verb for "taught" (cf. 50.4) and connotes being chastised or made accustomed to and hence to become a disciple. The Hebrew text doesn't have the preposition "by" and reads literally, "they shall be taught the Lord." *Shalom* (cf. vs. 10) translates here as "prosperity."

Jesus quotes part of this verse in his words about being the bread of life: "And they shall all be taught by God" [Jn 6.45].

54-Vs. 14: In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.

Tsedaqah (cf. 51.8) or "righteousness" in which the people will be "established" or *kun* (cf. 45.18). Such establishment will make the people far from both "oppression and terror" or *hosheq* (cf. 30.12) and *mechitah*, the latter connoting ruin as in Ps 89.40: "You have breached all his walls; you have laid his strongholds in ruins."

54-Vs. 15: If any one stirs up strife, it is not from me; whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you.

Gur occurs three times and translates as "stirs up strife" and fundamentally means to sojourn as in 52.5.

54-Vs. 16: Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy;

The Lord speaks not so much to Israel but to any would-be oppressor which is why he

begins with *hen* (cf. 50.11) or “behold” so as to grab the people’s attention. Also the Lord has in store an unidentified “ravager” or the participle *shachat* (cf. 11.9). His task will be to “destroy,” *chaval* (cf. 13.5).

54-Vs. 17: no weapon that is fashioned against you shall prosper, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from me, says the Lord."

The quotation marks as in the RSV which close here begin with vs. 11 although the Lord is speaking throughout Chapter Fifty-Four.

Israel will not fear any assault or tongue that seeks “judgment” or *mishpat* (cf. 53.8). Such is both her “heritage and vindication” or *nachalah* (cf. 19.25) and *tsedaqah* (cf. vs. 14).

Chapter Fifty-Five

55-Vs. 1: "Ho, every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Hoy or “ho” is noted last in 45.9 as “woe.” The Lord is offering free food and drink, possibly tied in with the recent experience of the people having been in exile when such basic commodities were at a premium.

55-Vs. 2: Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Harken diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in fatness.

Savah is the verb for “satisfy” (cf. 53.11) used with regard to throwing one’s resources away for food and work exchanged in a kind of black market during Israel’s exile.

Shamah: occurs twice (cf. 52.7), as often is the case with a verb to drive home a point, that is, “hearken diligently.”

Hanag (cf. 47.1) is the verb for “delight” and connotes living softly or delicately. In the verse at hand, it is “fatness” or *deshen* in conjunction with *nephesh* (soul; cf. 53.12) for “yourselves.” “They feast on the abundance of your house” [Ps 36.8].

55-Vs. 3: Incline your ear and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

Natah (cf. 54.2) is the verb for “incline” which connotes a spreading out and is a positive response to the “double *shamah*” of the previous verse. Such hearing-inclining results in the collective *nephesh* of Israel to be alive.

Holam (cf. 54.8), *chesed* (cf. 54.10) and *emunah* (cf 33.6) or “everlasting, love which, in addition to being “steadfast,” is “sure.”

“Covenant” or *beryth* is noted last in 49.8.

55-Vs. 4: Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.

The first of two examples of *hen* or “behold,” the first one serving to shift attention of the people to the unidentified servant.

Hed (cf. 44.9), *nagyd* and *tsavah* (verb; cf. 45.12) or “witness, leader and commander.” A reference to the second is Ps 76.12: “who cuts off the spirit of princes.”

55-Vs. 5: Behold, you shall call nations that you know not, and nations that knew you not shall run to you because of the Lord your God and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

The second example of *hen* which serves to shift the people’s attention away from the Lord speaking about the servant. Israel hasn’t a clue how to “call” (*qara’*, cf. 54.5) nations whom she doesn’t “know” (*yadah* as intimate knowledge, cf. 52.6) yet is bidden by the Lord to do so. The same applies to the manner by which she will do this. The only thing Israel knows is that because the Lord has “glorified” her—*pa’ar* (cf. 49.3) fundamentally means to adorn or beautify—nations will run to her. Thus an intimate connection exists between this *pa’ar* and *qara’*.

55-Vs. 6: "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;

Darash (cf. 34.16) is the verb “seek” with regard to the Lord along with *matsa’* (cf. 65.1) or “may be found” suggesting his proximity, just over the horizon, if you will. The same applies to *qara’/qarov*, “call/near.”

55-Vs. 7: let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord that he may have mercy on him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

The verb *hazav* (cf. 54.7) or “forsake” has two objects: *derek* (cf. 53.6) and *machasheveth*, the latter from the verbal root *chashav* (cf. 53.3) and found in the next verse. “He frustrates the plans of the peoples” [Ps 33.10].

The former is with regard to *rashah* or the “wicked” (cf. 53.9) and the latter with regard to *’ysh ’even* which reads literally as “man iniquity.” *’Even* occurs last in 41.29 but not noted there.

Although the first part of this verse speaks of two types of persons, the second half speaks of one (‘him’) who is to “return” or *shuv* (cf. 49.6), this *shuv* which has two results: *racham* (cf. 54.10) and *salach* used with *ravah* (cf. 9.3). The last two read literally, “will multiply to pardon.” A reference to *salach* is Ps 25.11: “O Lord, pardon my iniquity.”

55-Vs. 8: For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

Two types of “thoughts and “ways” or *machasheveth* and *derek*, both found in the previous verse.

55-Vs. 9: For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

A third use of *machasheveth* and *derek* under the image of height, *gavah* (cf. 52.13).

55-Vs. 10: "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

Yarad (cf. 47.1) is the verb for "come down" and the opposite of *gavah* in the previous verse which is one way, "return not," *shuv* (cf. vs. 7).

55-Vs. 11: so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

The Lord's *davar* or "word" (cf. 51.16) "goes forth" or *yatsa'* (cf. 51.5), this verb not having specific connotations of up or down or heaven and earth as with the last two verses. That is to say, this *davar* goes forth continuously as echoing out from the center of a circle. Despite this, the *davar* returns after having accomplished the Lord's purpose and having prospered in its mission. What it brings back to the Lord is known only to him.

The verbs for "accomplish and purposed" are *hasah* (cf. 54.5) and *chaphets* (cf. 53.10).

55-Vs. 12: "For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Yatsa' (cf. vs. 11) and *yaval* (cf. 53.7 but not noted there) or "go out and be led forth," the latter connotes flowing. To the former belongs *simchah* (cf. 51.11) and the latter, *shalom* (cf. 54.13).

Note the two similar verbs or at least similar in this verse, *patsach* (cf. 54.1) and *macha'* or "clap," the latter having two other biblical references which are Ps 98.8 and Ezk 25.6. The former is cited here: "Let the waters clap their hands."

55-Vs. 13: Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off."

Both cypress and myrtle are found in 41.19 which in the verse at hand are to be a "memorial" or *shem* (cf. 30.27) which more fundamentally means a name. The text reads literally "to (*I*) the Lord to (*I*) name." The same applies to 'oth or "sign" (cf. 44.25). Both this memorial and sign won't be "cut off," *karath* (cf. 48.19).

Chapter Fifty-Six

56-Vs. 1: Thus says the Lord: "Keep justice and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come and my deliverance be revealed.

Note that in this chapter as elsewhere the RSV has quotation marks setting off words of the Lord or when he speaks. This happens frequently even though it seems the Lord is speaking throughout.

Chapter Fifty-Six begins with the first of three “thus says the Lord” (vss. 4 & 8) which, as has been pointed out, is intended to grab the attention of the people.

Shamar (cf. 42.20) is the verb for “keep” which has as its object “justice” (*mishpat*, cf. 54.17) followed by the command to “do righteousness” or *hasah* (cf. 55.11) and *tsedaqah* (cf. 54.17).

If both are carried out, two events are to follow:

- 1) The Lord’s “salvation” or *yeshuah* (cf. 52.10) will arrive “soon” or *qarov* (cf. 50.8) which usually applies to being near.
- 2) “Deliverance” or *tsedaqah* will be “revealed,” *galah* (cf. 49.21 with its alternate meaning), the noun being used in the verse at hand as “righteousness.”

56-Vs. 2: Blessed is the man who does this and the son of man who holds it fast, who keeps the sabbath, not profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.”

Ashrey (cf. 32.20) also means to be happy, here with reference to those who follow what is commanded in vs. 1, that is, holding fast to it or *chazaq* (cf. 51.18).

Two other commands are involved here:

- 1) Keeping (*shamar*, cf. vs. 1) the sabbath which involves not “profaning” it, *chahal* (cf. 53.10).
- 2) A second use of *shamar*, here with regard to doing “evil” (*rah*, cf. 32.7).

56-Vs. 3: Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, “The Lord will surely separate me from his people;” and let not the eunuch say, “Behold, I am a dry tree.”

Reference to two types of people who are not usually considered part of Israel:

- 1) “foreigner,” of course, or *nekar* which is found in vs. 6. The text reads literally as “so of foreigner.” Despite not being an Israelite, this person has “joined” himself to the Lord or *lavah* (cf. 14.1). Opposite to this *lavah* is the fear of separation, *badal*: “but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God” [59.2].
- 2) The “eunuch” or *sarys* (cf. 39.7 but not noted there) whose enforced castration is associated with being dried up.

56-Vs. 4: For thus says the Lord: “To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant,

This is the second of three “Thus says the Lord” as noted in vs. 1 and pertains to eunuchs with regard to three observances:

- 1) Keeping (*shamar*, cf. vs. 2) the Lord’s sabbaths which is plural compared with the singular in vs. 2.
- 2) Choosing what pleases the Lord, *chaphets* (cf. 55.11).
- 3) Holding fast or *chazaq* (cf. vs. 2) to the divine “covenant” or *beryth* (cf. 55.3).

56-Vs. 5: I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which shall not be cut off.

Reference to house and walls suggests not just Jerusalem but the temple located there. “Monument and name” or *yad* and *shem* (cf. 55.13), the first meaning literally “hand.” Both will

surpass any children. *Shem* is used as second time which is “everlasting” or *holam* (cf. 55.3) and will not be “cut off” (*karath*, cf. 55.13).

56-Vs. 6: "And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord and to be his servants, every one who keeps the sabbath and does not profane it and holds fast my covenant—

After speaking of the eunuch, the Lord turns attention to the foreigner, again the verb *lavah* as joining (cf. vs. 3) to the Lord. Three other things follow:

- 1) “Minister” or *sharath* which connotes a waiting upon. “The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you” [60.7].
- 2) “Love or *’ahav* (cf. 48.14) not the Lord but his “name” or *shem*.
- 3) Being the Lord’s servants.

All three relate to keeping the sabbath (*shamar*, cf. vs. 4), not profaning it (*chahal*, cf. vs. 2) and holding fast or *chazaq* to the Lord’s “covenant,” both noted together in vs. 4.

56-Vs. 7: these I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

The RSV has a set of quotation marks beginning in vs. 6 and most likely contains “these” (the foreigners and eunuchs) whom he will bring to his holy mountain, the temple at Jerusalem. There he will make them “joyful” or *samach* (cf. 39.2) in that house which is one of “prayer” or *tephilah* (cf. 38.5). Not only will this place be for the foreigners and eunuchs but for all peoples.

56-Vs. 8: Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.”

This is the third and final “Thus says the Lord” and pertains to “outcasts” belonging to Israel, *nadach* (cf. 16.4). *Qavats* or “gathers” is the verb for these people, the nature of their banishment not being specified but perhaps similar to that of the foreigners and eunuchs. *Qavats* is used two other times in the verse at hand pertaining to others and those already gathered.

56-Vs. 9: All you beasts of the field, come to devour—all you beasts in the forest.

The beasts may refer to nations whose habitant is the forest, not in cities as with civilized people.

56-Vs. 10: His watchmen are blind, they are all without knowledge; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber.

The participle *tsaphah* (cf. 52.8) is the word for “watchmen.” Because they do not have “knowledge” (the verb *yadah*, cf. 55.5) they resemble dogs who are asleep instead of being awake on the city walls functioning as watchmen.

56-Vs. 11: The dogs have a mighty appetite; they never have enough. The shepherds also have no understanding; they have all turned to their own way, each to his own gain, one and all.

In the previous verse watchmen are like slumbering, lazy dogs whereas here the same image applies to shepherds or leads of Israel lacking “understanding” or *byn* (cf. 52.15). At the same time these shepherds are not lazy but zealous for their own “way and gain” or *derek* (cf. 55.9) and *betsah* or covertness (cf. 33.15 but not noted there).

56-Vs. 12: "Come," they say, "let us get wine, let us fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow will be like this day, great beyond measure."

This verse resembles Lk 12.19: “And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.”

Reference to tomorrow and this day intimates that the shepherds know their fate, *yeter me'od* or “beyond measure” reads literally “a residue (*yeter*, cf. 44.19 but not mentioned there) exceedingly.”

Chapter Fifty-Seven

This chapter contains divine complaints against Israel’s idolatry, sexual immorality and so forth. Because of this, brief notations follow the verses. Chapter Forty-Seven is the last time this approach has been taken.

1: The righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart; devout men are taken away while no one understands. For the righteous man is taken away from calamity, 2. he enters into peace; they rest in their beds who walk in their uprightness. 3. But you, draw near hither, sons of the sorceress, offspring of the adulterer and the harlot. 4. Of whom are you making sport? Against whom do you open your mouth wide and put out your tongue? Are you not children of transgression, the offspring of deceit, 5. you who burn with lust among the oaks, under every green tree; who slay your children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks? 6. Among the smooth stones of the valley is your portion; they, they, are your lot; to them you have poured out a drink offering, you have brought a cereal offering. Shall I be appeased for these things? 7. Upon a high and lofty mountain you have set your bed, and thither you went up to offer sacrifice. 8. Behind the door and the doorpost you have set up your symbol; for, deserting me, you have uncovered your bed, you have gone up to it, you have made it wide; and you have made a bargain for yourself with them, you have loved their bed, you have looked on nakedness. 9. You journeyed to Molech with oil and multiplied your perfumes; you sent your envoys far off, and sent down even to Sheol. 10. You were wearied with the length of your way, but you did not say, "It is hopeless;" you found new life for your strength, and so you were not faint. 11. Whom did you dread and fear, so that you lied, and did not remember me, did not give me a thought? Have I not held my peace, even for a long time, and so you do not fear me? 12. I will tell of your righteousness and your doings, but they will not help you. 13. When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you! The wind will carry them off, a breath will take them away. But he who takes refuge in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain. 14.

And it shall be said, "Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstruction from my people's way." 15. For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite. 16. For I will not contend for ever, nor will I always be angry; for from me proceeds the spirit, and I have made the breath of life. 17. Because of the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry, I smote him, I hid my face and was angry; but he went on backsliding in the way of his own heart. 18. I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and requite him with comfort, creating for his mourners the fruit of the lips. 19. Peace, peace, to the far and to the near, says the Lord; and I will heal him. 20. But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. 21. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked."

This new chapter begins with the fate of both the *tsadyq* (cf. 53.11) and *'anshey-hesed* or "righteous man and devout men," the singular and the plural. The second contains the noun *chesed* found last in 55.3. With regard to both, the people don't care which is expressed by "lays to heart and understands." The first reads literally as "place on heart" (*lev*, cf. 52.7) and the second as *byn* (cf. 56.11).

Despite disregard for the two types of men just noted, the former is singled out by being removed from "calamity" or *raha* (cf. 47.11) or literally as "from the face of calamity."

Vs. 2 continues to speak of the singular *tsadyq* of him entering into "peace" or *shalom* (cf. 55.12). In addition to this, those who walk in "uprightness" or *nakoach* (cf. 30.10; an adjective) are able to have an uninterrupted night's sleep.

Vs. 3 speaks of the offspring of three undesirable types, the first being sons of a "sorceress" which is the most threatening of them all because such woman engage in divinization. *Hanan* is a participle for this term found in 2.6 as "soothsayers."

Vs. 4 has the Lord addressing the children of the three groups in vs. 3 asking about those whom they are making sport of, *hanag* (cf. 55.2) connoting taking delight in this perverse action. The same applies to their misuse of speech. Also the Lord calls them children of "transgression" or *peshah* (cf. 53.8) as well as offspring of "deceit" or *sheqer* (cf. 44.20).

In vs. 5 the Lord embarrasses the sons of the sorceress, adulterer and harlot by knowing their tendency to commit fornication, perhaps in a ritual fashion to their false gods, as they "burn with lust" or *chamam* as found in 44.14 but not noted there. That reference has worshipers burning their idols to keep themselves warm or *chamam*.

The same hidden shameful practices of vs. 5 are continued in vs. 6 only now in valleys which are more hidden than under any tree. *Cheleq* (cf. 17.14) is the noun for "smooth stones" as well as "portion" and refers to drink and cereal libations. *Goral* or "lot" is similar to *cheleq* and suggests the idea of casting lots as in 34.17. Double use of "they" is a means by which the Lord attributes full responsibility upon the worshipers, thereby putting a greater distance between him and them.

After making these observations clearly intended to cause shame, the Lord asks a rhetorical question which cannot be answered. That is to say, he cannot be "appeased" by them, *nacham* (cf. 55.11).

After mentioning oaks and the like along with valleys, the Lord addresses perhaps the same offspring of the three groups (sorcerers, adulterers and harlots) who set their beds on mountain tops, beds being suggestive of intercourse with temple harlots or the like. There they offer sacrifice which could be the offspring of illicit unions conceived there.

Vs. 8 shifts attention to being indoors compared with the various examples of illicit activity committed outdoors. It is within the supposedly secret place of their homes that they set up their “symbol” or *zikaron* which also means a memorial, the nature of which is not identified but suggested. For another use, “This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord” [Ex 12.14].

In this same verse the Lord uses strong language, saying that those being addressed have “deserted” him, *galah* (cf. 56.1), a verb which fundamentally means to reveal as well as to go into exile. The Lord continues speaking of the bed set up in vs. 7, that is, on a mountain top. Exposure of that place and the supposed hiddenness of being indoors makes no difference in his eyes.

In vs. 9 the Lord gets more specific as to the object of false worship, that is, Molech, which the Hebrew text has as “king” (*melek*). Also involved are envoys sent to Sheol or the underworld, thereby suggesting human victims of sacrifice.

Yagah is the verb in vs. 10 for “wearied” noted last in 49.4 as having engaged in vain labor. Here this weariness seems applicable to a pilgrimage journey of sorts, hence “way” or *derek* (cf. 56.11) or more specifically, its “length” or *rav* (cf. 13.4) which also can apply to quantity. Nevertheless, the worshipers were not troubled nor were they “faint” or *chalah* (cf. 33.24).

Again in vs. 11 the Lord presents three complaints in the form of a rhetorical question which pertain to dread, fear, lying not remembering him nor giving him a thought. That last two are more serious, if you will, *zakar* (cf. 54.4) being the verbal root for *zikaron* in vs. 8, that “symbol” which is a false remembrance. The second is rendered literally as (not) “placed on your heart (*lev*, cf. vs. 1).” *Chashah* (cf. 42.14) means “held (my) peace” which caused the people not to “fear” the Lord, *yare’* (cf. 51.7).

The “righteousness” or *tsedaqah* (cf. 56.1) at hand does not come from the Lord as is the case with most other uses of this word but is more akin to self-righteousness.

Vs. 13 contains a statement of clear-cut disgust concerning not just idols but a “collection” of them, *qibuts* being the only use of this word in the Bible (‘idols’ proper is lacking in the Hebrew text). The image can be one of a whole series of these idols arranged outdoors or inside a house not unlike decorations. *Natsal* (cf. 50.2) is the verb for “deliver” and connotes redemption.

Note the use of “wind and breath” in vs. 13, *ruach* (cf. 54.6) and *hevel* (cf. 49.4), the latter suggestive of vanity.

After having railed against idol worship and the immoral behavior associated with it, vs. 14 shifts attention upon the people, that is their “way” or *derek* (cf. vs. 10). The Lord himself doesn’t say this; the passive can be taken as an editorial insert by Isaiah, if you will. The exhortation is to “build up (twice for emphasis) and prepare (*panah*, cf. 45.22)” or *salal* which also means to extol. “Go through, go through the gates, prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway” [62.10]. *Makshelah* is the noun for “obstruction” which has one other biblical reference, Zeph 1.3: “I will overthrow the wicked” (i.e., in the Hebrew text the noun is the verb).

Rum (cf. 52.13) and *nasa’* (cf. 53.4) are participles for “high and lofty” in vs. 15. These two attributes stand in contrast to the self-exultation already described and comes right after the emphasis on the correct form of exultation through *salal* and *panah* in the previous verse.

Shakan (cf. 33.24) is the verb for “inhabits” in vs. 15 which connotes a settling down which here is for “eternity” or *had* as in 45.17 but not noted there. This verb is also used with

the “place” or *maqom* (cf. 49.20) which is both “high and holy,” *marom* (cf. 38.14) and *qadosh* (cf. 49.7).

Quite remarkably, the *shakan* of vs. 15 is located within a person who has a “spirit” (*ruach*, cf. vs. 13) which is both “contrite and humble” or *daka’* and *shaphal*. The former has two other biblical references, Ps 34.18 and 90.3, the first being cited here: “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted.” As for the latter, cf. Ps 138.6: “For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly.”

The purpose for this unique *shakan* by the Lord is to revive the *ruach* and *lev* (cf. vs. 11) or “spirit and heart” of the “humble and contrite” or those who are *shaphal* (cf. Ps 138.6 just above) and *daka’* (cf. this adjective just above).

Ryv (cf. 51.22) and *qatsaph* (cf. 47.6) or “contend and be angry” in vs. 16: the first is “forever” or *halom* and the second is “always” or *netsach* (cf. 13.20). Both are expressions of action sustained for two different yet similar durations: the former suggests constancy and the latter, perpetuity.

Vs. 16 speaks of the Lord’s “spirit and breath” or *ruach* (cf. vs. 15) and *neshamah* (cf. 42.14). The former “proceeds” from the Lord (*hataph*) and connotes failing or being overwhelmed whereas the latter is “made” or *hasah* (cf. 56.1).

Vs. 17 speaks of what seems to be Israel as third person singular, that is, in reference to the “iniquity” or *havon* (cf. 53.11) belonging to his “covetousness,” *betsah* (cf. 56.11). The verb *qatsaph* (cf. vs. 16) or to be angry is found here twice. However, he...Israel...continues to backslide or *shuv* (cf. 55.10 where it connotes returning) not just in his “heart” (*lev*, cf. vs. 15) but in the “way” or *derek* (cf. vs. 14) of this heart which suggests Israel is constant in its irregular behavior.

Vs. 17 mentions the “way of his own heart” whereas vs. 18 has the Lord speaking of this same *derek* which he has observed yet intends to “heal,” *rapha’* (cf. 53.5). Once this person representative of Israel is healed, the Lord will “lead and requite” him, *nachah* (cf. 58.11) and *shalam* (cf. 53.5). Both have as their aim Israel’s comforting or *nichumym*, a noun with two other biblical references (Hos 11.8 and Zec 1.13), the former being cited here: “my compassion grows warm and tender.”

Vs. 19 in the Hebrew text speaks of the fruit of lips belonging to those who mourn (*aval*, cf. 33.9) after which the Lord cries out twice *shalom shalom*, both intended for those who are far and those who are near. He says yet again that he will “heal” Israel, *rapha’* as in vs. 18.

Rashah (cf. 55.7) and *garash* or “wicked and tossing” (used twice) are in vs. 20, the latter also meaning to divorce. “You have driven me out” [Gn 4.14].

Chapter Fifty-Seven concludes with the unfortunate statement by God in vs. 21 that the “wicked” (*rashash*, cf. vs. 20) have no “peace” or *shalom* (cf. vs. 19).

Chapter Fifty-Eight

58-Vs. 1: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins.

This chapter begins not just with a cry or *qara’* (cf. 55.5) but one which is “aloud” or coming from the throat or *garon* (cf. 3.16 but not mentioned there). Such crying is to be constant, hence the command not to “spare” or *chasak* (cf. 14.6).

Also Israel is to raise her voice like a trumpet or *shophar* (cf. 27.13), an instrument often for sounding an alarm which here is not an enemy invasion but something more personal, “transgression” or *peshah* (cf. 57.4) as well as “sins,” *chata’* (cf. 29.21).

58-Vs. 2: Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

At first glance the tone of this verse seems positive, but the words “as if” or *k-* prefaced to *goy* (cf. 40.17) or “nation” makes it turn out to be otherwise. The Lord hopes to point out Israel’s inconsistency in her search and delight or *darash* (cf. 55.6) and *chaphets* (cf. 56.4). At the same time Israel hasn’t a clue as to the “ways” or *derek* (cf. 57.17) of the Lord, let alone “righteousness” (*tsedaqah*, cf. 57.12) and “ordinances” (*mishpat*, cf. 56.1).

When the Lord observes that Israel asks him about “righteous judgments” or *misphat* with *tsedeq* (cf. 51.7), the people take delight or *chaphets* in drawing near (*qarav*, cf. 51.5) to him. However, they will be in for a rude awakening because of their insincerity.

58-Vs. 3: ‘Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?’ Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure and oppress all your workers.

Now the Lord gets to the matter at hand, fasting and being humble without having “knowledge” of both, the verb *yadah* (cf. 56.10) being used. This lack of intimate knowledge leads Israel not just to seek personal “pleasure” (*chephets*, cf. 54.12) but worse, to “oppress” or *nagas* (cf. 53.7) “workers” or *hatsev*, the only use of this term in the Bible which more specifically means grief. The Lord uses *hen* (cf. 55.5) or “behold” to make people aware of this. Thus *nagas* and *hatsev* are quite similar, the one doing oppression and the one receiving it.

58-Vs. 4: Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high.

The second use of *hen* (‘behold,’ cf. vs. 3) shows that the Lord sees through Israel’s fasting, that is, as a means to “quarrel and fight” or *ryv* (cf. 57.16) and *matsah*. The second has two other biblical references, Prov 13.10 & 17.19, the former being cited here: “By insolence the heedless make strife.”

Note use of “this day” meaning the very time when the Lord is speaking with his people through the mediation of Isaiah.

58-Vs. 5: Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a rush and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast and a day acceptable to the Lord?

This is the third mention of “day” (*yom*, cf. 52.6; a fourth follows in the verse at hand) which intimates the immediacy and importance of what the Lord wishes to communicate. *Yom* is connected with the need for humility, the verb *hanah* (cf. 53.7 with its alternate meaning, for it has several) along with *nephesh* (cf. 55.3), literally as “soul.”

Ratson (cf. 49.8) is a noun for “acceptable” and reads literally as “a day of acceptance.”

58-Vs. 6: "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke?"

The Lord lays out the type of fast he wishes. Note the verbs of undoing, if you will, of setting free: “loose (*patach*, cf. 52.2), undo (*natar*), let go (*shalach*, cf. 50.1) and to break (*nataq*, cf. 5.27 but not noted there).” A reference to *natar* is Ps 10.5.20: “The king sent and released him.”

58-Vs. 7: Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

This is the third rhetorical question (the first as the second sentence in vs. 5) put forth by the Lord who doesn’t expect an answer but wishes to shame the people into repentance.

This verse has echos in Jesus’ parable (Mt 25.31-46) about the great judgment when he identifies himself with various types of afflicted persons. Recognition of him in them is the condition for showing mercy. The chief difference, however, is that the verse and others like it pertain to fellow Israelites.

58-Vs. 8: Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

Here as in the next two verses the small word “then” or ‘*az*’ plays a crucial role, indicative of whether Israel accepts or rejects the Lord’s injunctions which he has laid out in a powerful way. Note the emphasis upon that which is luminous: “light (‘*or*’, cf. 42.6), dawn, spring up (*tsamach*, cf. 45.8; it can be like the dawn), glory (*kavod*, cf. 48.11).”

58-Vs. 9: Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am. "If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness,

The second use of ‘*az*’ or “then” shows the correspondence between two pairs:

- 1) Calling and answering, *qara*’ (cf. vs. 1) and *hanah* (cf. vs 5, again with one of its various meanings).
- 2) Crying (*shavah*, cf. 32.5 but not mentioned there) and saying (the common verb ‘*amar*’ as in 45.19).

The yoke, symbol of oppression, is in the midst of the people which indicates that for a long time they had subjected both fellow citizens and foreigners to their service.

58-Vs. 10: if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.

The third use of ‘*az*’ or “then” which brings to conclusion what the Lord says in essence in vs. 6. Both pouring oneself out and satisfying are essential for allowing Israel’s “light” (‘*or*’, cf. vs. 8) “rise” (*zarach*). “And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you” [60.1]. Until then this

double act of *puk* and *savah* (cf. 55.2) remains in the darkness. As for *puk*, cf. Ps 240.8: “Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked.”

Aphelah or “gloom” (cf. 29.18) is more intense than *choshek* (cf. 47.5) or “darkness” in that it connotes obscurity and thus forgetfulness.

58-Vs. 11: And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire with good things and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

The conjunctive *w-* beginning this verse as well as the next is important in that it functions like *‘az* or “then” showing the positive result of such practices as fasting and almsgiving. If done, three things will follow:

- 1) The Lord will “guide” or *nachah* (cf. 57.17) and “satisfy” (*savah*, cf. vs. 10).
- 2) The Lord will not just “satisfy” or *savah*, (cf. vs. 1) but will do so *tamyd* (cf. 49.16) or “continually.” “Desire” here is *nephesh* (‘soul’) as in vs. 3 with respect to “good things” or *tsachtsachoth*, the only use of this unusual term in the Bible which suggests taking a drought.
- 3) “Make strong” or *chalats* which also applies to arming in the military sense. It is found last in 15.4 but not noted there.

As a result of the three just listed, “you”—again, most likely the nation of Israel taken as a single person—will become as a “watered garden and spring of water.” The first consists of *gan* (cf. 51.3 but not noted there) and *raveh*, the second term being an adjective with two other biblical references (Dt 29.19 & Jer 31.12), the latter being cited here: “their life shall be like a watered garden.” The second has the noun *motsa’* (cf. 41.18) which has unfailing waters, the verb being *kazav* (cf. 57.11 but not noted there) which fundamentally means to lie in the sense of not telling the truth.

58-Vs. 12: And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.

As in the previous verse, the one at hand begins with the conjunctive *v-* to link the two together.

The “you” addressed here is, like vs. 11, the nation of Israel taken as a whole. Note that the terminology pertains to the act of repairing or restoring what had fallen into ruin. In other words, such things had been in existence but were left to decay, chiefly due to forgetfulness of the Lord.

58-Vs. 13: "If you turn back your foot from the sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day and call the sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;

‘Im or “if” is not unlike a conjunctive insofar as it brings to a conclusion what the Lord proposes to Israel in order to restore her fortune. That which is of concern here has more direct religious implications, that is to say, observation of the Sabbath, a “delight and honorable,” *honeg* (cf. 13.22, the only other biblical reference) and *kavad* (cf. 49.5).

The following three prevent proper observation of the Sabbath, not just by external behavior but by moral activity: refrain from going one’s own “ways” (*derek*, cf. 58.2), not

seeking personal “pleasure” (*chephets*, cf. vs. 3) and “taking idly” which consists of the double use of the verb *davar* (cf. 52.6).

58-Vs. 14: then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

This is the four verse acting as a kind of conjunctive, having noted them since vs. 11 as a whole series of rewards and punishments, if you will, with regard to proper moral behavior in light of the Lord's favor.

Hanag or “take delight” occurs last in 57.4 and is the root of *honeg* in the previous verse. Here the verb is used with the preposition *hal-* which reads literally, “upon the Lord.” A second use of *hal-* is with respect to the earth's heights, most likely mountains and high plains.

Nachalah or “heritage” (cf. 54.17) is used with a verb for feeding followed by mention of the Lord's mouth, the means by which such nourishment is taken in. I.e., it is as though his mouth does the feeding, of inserting food, if you will, into the collective mouth of the people.

Chapter Fifty-Nine

59-Vs. 1: Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save or his ear dull that it cannot hear;

Use of *hen* (cf 58.4) or “behold” is a fitting way to begin a new chapter, for it shifts the content of the previous one (i.e., a call for repentance) to a more detailed account of the reasons for it.

Two contrasts, if you will: 1) *qatsar* (cf. 50.2 but not noted there) and *yashah* (cf. 49.26) echoed by a question posed by the Lord in 50.2: “Is my hand shortened that it cannot redeem?” 2) “Dull and hear” or *kavad* (cf. 58.13) and *shamah* (cf. 55.3). The former is a verb meaning to be heavy.

59-Vs. 2: but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you so that he does not hear.

Vs. 2 continues as one sentence from vs. 1 where the Lord is concerned about a “separation” or *badal* (a verb as in 56.3) from him by “iniquities” or *havon* (cf. 57.17). The same image carries over with regard to “sins” or *chata'* (cf. 58.1) and the Lord hiding his face, *satar* (cf. 54.8), the result being that he does not “hear” or *shamah* (cf. vs. 1).

59-Vs. 3: For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue mutters wickedness.

“Defiled, iniquity, lies and wickedness:” *ga'al* (different a word with the same spelling), *havon* (cf. vs. 2), *sheqer* (cf. 57.4) and *havlah*. A reference to *ga'al* is Lam 4.4: “They have polluted themselves.” A reference to *havlah* is Ps 37.1: “Be not envious of wrongdoers!”

59-Vs. 4: No one enters suit justly, no one goes to law honestly; they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies, they conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity.

This verse contains the imagery of a court of law where the following six proceedings are done but not in accord with justice:

- 1) "Enters suit justly" reads literally "calls (*qara'*, cf. 58.9) in righteousness" (*tsedeq*, cf. 58.2).
- 2) "Goes to law honestly" reads literally "being judged (*shaphat*, cf. 51.5) in truth" (*'emunah*, cf. 55.3).
- 3) The pleas at hand are more than "empty" but completely devoid of reality, *tohu* (cf. 51.10), this word being found in Gn 1.2: "The earth was without form and void."
- 4) *Shave'* is the noun for "lies" (cf. 1.13).
- 5) *Hamal* is the noun for "lies" found last in 53.11 as "travail."
- 6) *'Aven* means "iniquity" and as "delusion" in 41.29.

59-Vss. 5 & 6: They hatch adders' eggs, they weave the spider's web; he who eats their eggs dies, and from one which is crushed a viper is hatched. 6. Their webs will not serve as clothing; men will not cover themselves with what they make. Their works are works of iniquity, and deeds of violence are in their hands.

In vss. 5 and 6 the fruit of the just mentioned six unjust actions are compared to a spider and its web. In sum, they are works of "iniquity" (*'aven*, cf. vs. 4) and deeds of violence" (*chamas*, cf. 53.9).

59-Vs. 7: Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, desolation and destruction are in their highways.

Ruts (cf. 40.31) and *mahar* (cf. 49.17) or "run and make haste" are physical expressions of evil intent whereas "thoughts" or *machasheveth* (cf. 55.9) are invisible sources of "iniquity" or *'aven* (cf. vs. 6).

"Highways" or *misilah* (cf. 11.16) pertain to a raised road. By reason of being exposed on them, it is easier for the evildoers to carry out their "desolation and destruction" or *shod* and *shever*, the two being mentioned together in 51.19.

59-Vs. 8: The way of peace they know not, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked, no one who goes in them knows peace.

Vs. 8 takes up the theme of highways as in vs. 7 with three similar terms:

- 1) *Derek* (cf. 58.13) or "way" lacks *shalom* (cf. 57.21) or "peace."
- 2) *Mahgalah* or "paths" connotes a rut in such paths. "My steps have held fast to your paths, my feet have not slipped" [Ps 17.5]. Such paths lack "justice" or *mishpat* (cf. 58.2).
- 3) *Netyvah* (cf. 43.16) or "roads" is suggestive of being trodden by feet. In the verse at hand, they are "crooked" or *haqesh*, a verb with four other biblical references. "He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out" [Prov 10.9]. Also *netyvah* do not offer "peace" or *shalom* for those traveling upon them.

59-Vs. 9: Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we look for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom.

Vs. 9 is a turning point as indicated by “therefore” or *hal-ken*. That is to say, the people now freely and candidly acknowledge their abandonment of the Lord and his commandments. Both “justice and righteousness” or *mishpat* and *tsedaqah* are found together in 58.2. *Nasag* (cf. 51.11) is associated with the latter.

Two pairs, if you will:

- 1) Light and brightness” or *’or* (cf. 58.10) and *nogah* (cf.50.10) which connotes splendor. Both are prefaced with the preposition *l-*, literally as “to light” and “to brightness.”
- 2) “Darkness and gloom” or *choshek* and *’aphelah*, both found together in 58.10.

59-Vs. 10: We grope for the wall like the blind, we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight, among those in full vigor we are like dead men.

“Grope and stumble” are more or less equivalent, *gashash* (the only use of this term in the Bible) and *kashal* (cf. 40.30).

59-Vs. 11: We all growl like bears, we moan and moan like doves; we look for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us.

“Growl and moan” form another similar pair, *hamah* (cf. 16.11) and *hagah* (cf. 33.18). *Qavah* (cf. 51.5) is suggestive of waiting with regard to “justice” or *mishpat* (cf. vs. 9). *Yeshuhah* is the noun for “salvation” (cf. 56.1). Along with *mishpat*, it has the preposition *l-* prefaced to it: “to justice” and “to salvation.”

59-Vs. 12: For our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities:

Note the four types of presence, if you will, between the Lord and “transgressions and iniquities” (*peshah*, cf. 58.1) and *havon* (cf. vs. 3): “multiplied, testify, with us and know” or *ravav* (cf. 47.13 but not noted there), *hanah* (cf. 58.9), literally, *b-* or “in us and *yadah* (cf. 58.3).

59-13: transgressing and denying the Lord and turning away from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words.

These words are a continuation of the previous verse, *pashah* (cf. 48.8) and *kachash* (cf. 30.9). The latter is prefaced with the preposition *b-* though it applies to the former as well, reading literally “transgressing and denying in the Lord.’ Use of this preposition makes all the more poignant the other one, *m-* (*min*), “from after our God.” The verb here is *sug* (cf. 50.5) and connotes a turning backward.

Note three verbs relative to speech: *davar* (cf. 58.13), *harah* (mentioned in 33.11 but not noted there) and *hagah* (cf. vs. 10). The first pertains to “oppression and revolt” or *hosheq* (cf. 54.14) and *sarah* (cf. 31.6). The other two pertain to “words” (*davar*, cf. 55.11) which are “lying” or *sheqer* (cf. vs. 3).

59-Vs. 14: Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth has fallen in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter.

Mishpat and *tsedaqah* or “justice and righteousness” are found together in vs. 9. *Sug* (cf. vs. 13) pr “turned back” pertains to the former and *hamad* (cf. 36.2) or “stands” to the latter.

Emeth (cf. 48.1) and *nakoach* (cf. 57.2) or “truth and uprightness,” both of which are no longer open to public discussion. Note the difference between *tsedaqah* and *nakoach*, the former having broader application such as virtuous living whereas the latter pertains more to nesc.

59-Vs. 15: Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice.

In the previous verse *emeth* or “truth” is no longer in the public square but hidden away whereas here it is “lacking” or *hadar* (cf. 40.26). Conversely, “evil” or *rah* (cf. 56.2) is present in the same public square, if you will. Failure to adhere to this evil makes one a “prey” or *shalal* (cf. 10.6 but not noted there).

Note the similarity between the verb forms *yare’* and *yerah* (‘saw and displeased,’ the latter being *raha* as in 41.23 but not noted there) as relative to “(no) justice” or *mishpat* (cf. vs. 14).

59-Vs. 16: He saw that there was no man and wondered that there was no one to intervene; then his own arm brought him victory, and his righteousness upheld him.

The first part of this verse intimates a certain amount of time during which the Lord is assessing the situation. While he can do this without reference to time or space, putting it such makes the manner of his intervention all the more touching.

Shamam or “wondered” is noted last in 54.1 with its alternate meaning of to be desolate. Here it involves human intervention, the verb being *pagah* (cf. 53.12).

Yashah (cf. vs. 1) is the verb for “brought victory” and usually refers to being saved. In the verse at hand, it is with *samak* (cf. 48.3), “upheld,” which is done by the Lord’s own “righteousness” or *tsedaqah* (cf. vs. 14).

59-Vs. 17: He put on righteousness as a breastplate and a helmet of salvation upon his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing and wrapped himself in fury as a mantle.

The assessment by the Lord in the previous verse takes effect here, that is, he gears-up not unlike a warrior preparing for battle. “Righteousness, salvation, vengeance and fury” or *tsedaqah* (cf. vs. 16), *yeshuhah* (cf. vs. 11), *naqam* (cf. 47.3) and *qin’ah* (cf. 42.13).

59-Vs. 18: According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, requital to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render requital..

The Lord will “replay” or *shalam* (cf. 57.17) what the people have done, *gemul* or “deeds” (cf. 35.4): “wrath, requital render requital:” *chemah*, *gemul* (used two other times). The first is unclear and seems to have one other reference, Job 29.6: “when my steps were washed with

milk," "milk" being the alternative.

59-Vs. 19: So they shall fear the name of the Lord from the west and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream which the wind of the Lord drives.

Two opposite cardinal directions: first the west and second the east or sunset followed by sunrise which seems in accord with how the Sabbath is observed. West = "name" or *shem* (cf. 56.6) and east = "glory" or *kavod* (cf. 58.8).

The divine "wind" or *ruach* (cf. 57.16) will come although the direction is not specified, west and east having been taken up, as it were with name and glory. The verb *nus* (cf. 30.16) is associated with *ruach* and connotes swiftness.

59-Vs. 20: "And he will come to Zion as Redeemer, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression, says the Lord.

The participle *Ga'al* (cf. vs. 3) translates as "Redeemer" which is associated with Zion.

Peshah (cf. vs. 12) is "transgression" from which those in Jacob "turn away from" or *shuv* (cf. 57.17). Both seem to occur simultaneously in the unspecified future.

59-Vs. 21: "And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lord: my spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart out of your mouth or out of the mouth of your children or out of the mouth of your children's children, says the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore."

The conjunctive *v-* or "and as" brings to conclusion this chapter with the Lord having the last word when he speaks of a "covenant" or *beryth* (cf. 56.4). This one will be unlike any before because it will be within the people. That is to say, the Lord observes that already his "spirit" or *ruach* (cf. 19) is already "upon you," *hal-*. As a consequence, he has placed his "words" or *davar* (cf. vs. 13) in their mouths, *b-*. Once there, these *davar* will neither depart from the collective mouth of the people nor from those of their children, etc.

Chapter Sixty

60-Vs. 1: Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

The divine injunction to "arise (*qum*, cf. 49.8) and shine" (*'or*, found in 27.11 but not noted there) fittingly come after the misdeeds detailed in the previous chapter. The noun *'or* or "light" (cf. 59.9) is the same spelling as its verbal root. Such light is similar yet different from the Lord's "glory" or *kavod* (cf. 59.19) which fundamentally connotes heaviness.

The verb "has risen" or *zarach* (cf. 58.10) pertains to the Lord, that his glory has happened already, and that the people are to respond by *qum* and *'or*.

60-Vs. 2: For behold, darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.

“Behold” or *hineh* (cf. 51.22) serves to contrast the light and arising of vs. 1 with “darkness and thick darkness” or *choshek* (cf. 59.9) and *haraphel*. For the latter, cf. Ex 20.21: “Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.” Both are to take place in the indefinite future compared with the past-ness of light in the previous verse. Also both are to “cover” the earth and peoples, *kasah* (found in 59.6 but not noted there).

The conjunctive *v-* or “but” is important here, leading from a picture of gloom to the Lord who will “arise” upon the people, *zarach* (cf. vs. 1) after which his “glory” or *kavod* (cf. vs. 1) will be visible upon the people. That is to say, those who are not of Israel will behold this sight.

60-Vs. 3: And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Goy (cf 58.2) is the noun for “nations” compared with *ham* in the previous verse for “peoples,” the former more intended to set off Israel from others. Also mentioned are kings or rulers of these *goy*.

Note the similarity yet difference with regard to “light and brightness,” *or* and *nogah* (cf. 59.9), the latter connoting splendor. *Nogah* is associated with *zerach* or “rising” and is the only use of this term in the Bible derived from *zarach* as in vs. 2 which connotes scattering or diffusion.

60-Vs. 4: Lift up your eyes round about and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be carried in the arms.

This verse is reminiscent of 49.18: “Lift up your eyes round about and see; they all gather, they come to you. As I live, says the Lord, you shall put them all on as an ornament, you shall bind them on as a bride does.”

Nasa' (cf. 57.15) or “lift up” to the instances of *qum* and *zarach* already mentioned though it is more active and has the sense of elevating, if you will. Such lifting up to see implies that the people had their eyes downcast, were too absorbed by their sins as recounted in Chapter Fifty-Nine. The scene for this can be on the walls of Jerusalem.

Qavats (cf. 56.8) is the verb for “gather” and is applied specifically to sons and daughters of those within...not physically, but as part of the nation of Israel, those who have been taken captive and remained in exile. The arms carrying the daughters are not specified, that is, they could belong to those who had taken them captive and now are returning them, being captive in turn.

60-Vs. 5: Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

In the previous verse the Lord bids the people to lift up their eyes and see whereas here they actually are seeing which makes the “radiant” or *nahar* (cf. 2.2), a verb which fundamentally means to flow as a river, etc. With that in mind, mention of the sea’s “abundance” (*hamon*: cf. 33.3 as ‘tumult’) as coming to the people makes sense as well as the “wealth” or *chayl* (cf. 10.14) of the nations.

60-Vs. 6: A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all

those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

Here and in the next few verses several places are mentioned starting with Midian (cf. 10.26) and Ephah to the south, the latter being the only mention in Isaiah. Sheba is also to the south in Arabia. The gifts of gold and frankincense are not as important as these people coming (to Jerusalem's temple) for praising the Lord, this being the noun *tehilah* (cf. 48.9).

60-Vs. 7: All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on my altar, and I will glorify my glorious house.

Kedar is mentioned last in 42.11 whose flocks will be "gathered" to Israel, the verb *qavats* as in vs. 4 with regard to Israel's sons and daughters. Nebaioth is an Arab tribe (cf. Gn 25.13) which will come with rams for sacrifice and put in terms of ministering to Israel, the verb being *sharath* (cf. 56.6). Hence the explicit mention of altar and these rams as an "acceptance" or *ratson* (cf. 58.5)

As a result of these offerings from afar, the Lord will "glorify" or *pa'ar* (cf. 55.5) his house which is "glorious" in the sense of being beautiful, the noun being *tiph'arah* (cf. 52.1) which reads literally, "house of my beauty I will beautify."

60-Vs. 8: Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows?

A question more with the tone of astonishment at the swiftness with which the sons, daughters and various peoples will stream to Jerusalem. The image used to express this is a cloud and a dove, the latter having a particular fluttering sound while in the air which connotes excitement.

60-Vs. 9: For the coastlands shall wait for me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your sons from far, their silver and gold with them for the name of the Lord your God and for the Holy One of Israel because he has glorified you.

The last mention of coastlands is in 59.18 and Tarshish in 24.14. In other words, those ships coming from Tarshish or Spain at the other end of the Mediterranean Sea will unload on the eastern shore after which their goods will be transported inland. Sons are included which means that some of the exiles had gone to the western extreme of the known world. *Pa'ar* is the verb for "gloried" as in vs. 7.

60-Vs. 10: Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I smote you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you.

The Lord doesn't have to identify "foreigners" because Israel knows them well. This word is rendered as *beney-nekar*, literally "sons of strangers" mentioned last in 56.6 but not noted there. Some of these people may be said to bear Israel's daughters in vs. 4, for example.

Sharath is the verb for "minister" as in vs. 7, here by kings who again don't have to be identified.

"Wrath - smote" and "favor - mercy" or *qetseph* (cf. 54.9) - *nakah* (cf. 30.31) and *ratson*

(cf. vs. 7) - *racham* (cf. 55.7).

60-Vs. 11: Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut; that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations with their kings led in procession.

The gates (of Jerusalem) won't be shut to accommodate all the people, native and foreigner, along with sacrificial offerings which have been described since vs. 3. *Chayl* (cf. vs. 5) or "wealth" belonging to foreigners here as *goy* (cf. vs. 3) or "nations."

Also there will come kings who are "led in procession" or *nahag* (cf. 49.10). In other words, these kings—possibly Israel's earlier oppressors— will be conquered. Compare with kings in the previous verse who can be taken as coming freely to offer worship to the Lord.

60-Vs. 12: For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste.

The unspecified *goy* (cf. previous verse) is the noun for "nation" which, along with kingdom, pertain to non-Israelites or more specifically, those which do not stream toward Jerusalem. "Utterly laid waste" is rendered by a double use of the verb *charav* (cf. 42.15) which fundamentally means to dry up or to wither.

60-Vs. 13: The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

The phrase "glory (*kavod*, cf. vs. 2) of Lebanon" is found in 35.2 which, as noted there, can refer to the cedars which went into the building of the Jerusalem temple. The phrase at hand can imply a re-building of this temple.

Pa'ar is the verb "beautify" as in vs. 9 and pertains more specifically to the Lord's "sanctuary" within the temple rendered as *maqom* (cf. 57.15) *maqom* or literally as "place place." So when the Lord says that he will make the "place" of his feet glorious, he is using this same word. *Kavad* is the verb at hand (cf. 59.1).

60-Vs. 14: The sons of those who oppressed you shall come bending low to you; and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Shachach (cf. 29.4) is the verb for "oppressed" and applies not to those who had done this in the past but their sons or descendants. In other words, the period of oppression lasted more than one generation, perhaps two or more since "sons" can go back further in time.

Na'ats (cf. 52.5) means "despised" with regard to Israel by those unidentified but known aliens who come to Israel. (Mount) Zion refers more to the temple area or place of worship within Jerusalem, the "City of the Lord."

60-Vs. 15: Whereas you have been forsaken and hated with no one passing through, I will make you majestic for ever, a joy from age to age.

Note the two pairs of opposites, of transition from the former into the latter: "forsaken

and hatred” vs. “majestic and joy:” *hazav* (cf. 55.7) and *sane’* (cf. 1.14) vs. *ga’on* (noun; cf. 26.10) and *masus* (cf. 32.14).

60-Vs. 16: You shall suck the milk of nations, you shall suck the breast of kings; and you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

By sucking from the milk of “nations” (*goy*, cf. vs. 12) and kings or those who came to Jerusalem, the Israelites will “know” (*yadah*, cf. 59.12) that the Lord is both “Savior and Redeemer” or the verbs *yashah* (cf. 59.16) and *ga’al* (cf. 59.20). The same terminology is found last in 49.26 along with “Mighty One of Jacob.”

60-Vs. 17: Instead of bronze I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver; instead of wood, bronze, instead of stones, iron. I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness.

The Lord will make four exchanges of common material for precious ones. Note the two pairs: “Overseers and taskmasters” or *pequdah* (cf. 10.3) and *nagas* (cf. 58.3) and “peace and righteousness” or *shalom* (cf. 59.8) and *tsedaqah* (cf. 59.17).

60-Vs. 18: Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.

Chamas (cf. 59.6) or “violence” will no longer be heard in Israel implying that it is on a large scale by reason of being heard. The same applies to both “devastation and destruction” or *shod* and *shever*, both being mentioned together in 59.7. The first is within the land whereas the second within Israel’s “borders” or *gevul* (cf. 54.12).

Walls = “Salvation” (*Yeshuhah*, cf. 59.17) and gates = “Praise” (*Tehilah*, cf. 60.7).

60-Vs. 19: The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.

‘*Or* and *nogah* or “light and brightness” which are both found in 60.3. Note that the Lord will be Israel’s ‘*or* (not *nogah*) as well as *tiph’arah* (‘glory,’ cf. vs. 7). This verse is reminiscent of Rev 21.23: “And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of the Lord is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.”

60-Vs. 20: Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.

Again, Rev 21.23 cited in the verse above applies here. *Shalom* (cf. vs. 17) is the verb for “ended” and aptly applies to the cessation of “mourning” or ‘*evel*. “The oil of gladness instead of mourning” [60.3].

60-Vs. 21: Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land for ever, the shoot of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.

The condition of being “righteous” or *tsadyq* (cf. 57.2) is necessary to “possess” the land, *yarash* (cf. 54.3) suggestive of inheriting. From this inheriting—and that implies being given freely by someone else, the Lord—the “shoot” (*netser* (cf. 14.19) he had planted will come forth. The purpose: that the Lord be “glorified” or *pa’ar* (cf. vs. 13).

60-Vs. 22: The least one shall become a clan and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the Lord; in its time I will hasten it.

“Clan and nation” or *‘eleph* and *goy* (cf. vs. 16). The former is in 37.36 as “thousand” which is this noun’s basic meaning.

This chapter concludes with the Lord saying in an authoritative fashion that he will “hasten” this change, *chush* (cf. 28.16) but only in its “time” or *heth* (cf. 49.8) which is not made known to Israel but kept from her so as not to interfere with this divine action.

Chapter Sixty-One

61-Vs. 1: The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

This chapter begins by taking up again the role of the mysterious unidentified servant, that is, with him speaking directly. Despite being chosen by the Lord and his message of peace and reconciliation, we know nothing of him, and that seems to be how the Lord likes it.

The phrase “Spirit” (*Ruach*) of the Lord” is found last in 40.13 which has “anointed” the servant, *mashach* (cf. 21.5 but not noted there). Such anointing is usually associated with either a king or priest or perhaps both in this instance. The purpose of this anointing is ten-fold (three more being listed in the next verse and three in the verse after that):

- 1) “Bring good tidings” or *basar* (cf. 52.7) - “afflicted” or *hanav* (cf. 29.19).
- 2) “Bind up” or *chavash* (cf. 30.26) - “brokenhearted” or the verb *shavar* (cf. 45.2) with the noun *lev* (cf. 57.17).
- 3) “To proclaim” or *qara’* (cf. 59.4) - “liberty” or *deror* as in Ezk 46.17: “But if he makes a gift out of his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his to the year of liberty.”
- 4) “Opening of the prison” which is rendered as *peqach-qoach*, the other use of this term in the Bible - “bound” or *‘asar* found last in 49.9 but not noted there.

61-Vs. 2: to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

- 5) *Qara’* is the verb for “proclaim” (cf. vs. 1) or more literally, to call, with regard to a year in recognition of the Lord’s “favor” or *ratson* (cf. 60.10).
- 6) Compare this full year with one day of “vengeance” or *naqam* (cf. 59.17). While reference to a year means just that, the notion of a day is more flexible and can be taken more as a *kairos* event or occasion, unspecified but notable by its effect.
- 7) “Comfort and mourn” or *nacham* (cf. 57.5) and *‘aval* (cf. 57.19).

61-Vs. 3: to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

The previous verse lists four tasks the servant is to carry out while the verse at hand includes three others which are relative to persons who “mourn” (*aval*, cf. vs. 2) in Zion:

8) “Garland” or *pe’er*, more generally as beauty and found last in 3.20 but not noted there - “ashes” or *’epher* (cf. 58.5 but not noted there).

9) “Oil of gladness” or *shemen* (cf. 28.1) and *sason* (cf. 51.11) - “mourning” or *’evel* (cf. 60.20).

10) “Mantle of praise” or *mahateh* (the only use of this term in the Bible) and *tehilah* (cf. 60.18) - “faint spirit” or a *ruach* (cf. vs. 1) which is *kehah* found last in 42.3 but not noted there.

Eyly (cf. 1.29) or “oaks” also means mighty and has five other biblical references. Here it pertains to “righteousness” or *tsedeq* (cf. 59.4). “Planting” (*matah*) is found last in 60.21 but not noted there while in the verse at hand it is for the Lord’s glorification, *pa’ar* being the verb as in 60.21.

61-Vs. 4: They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

“They” in the verse at hand refers to those mentioned in the last three verses who form five groups—afflicted, brokenhearted, captives, those who are bound, those who mourn—people highly unlikely to undergo a massive reconstruction project. However, this imagery is deliberate, suggesting building up on a moral and spiritual level.

61-Vs. 5: Aliens shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall be your plowmen and vine dressers;

“Aliens and foreigners” or *zur* (cf. 43.12) and *nekar* (cf. 56.3) which reads literally as “son of foreigner.”

61-Vs. 6: but you shall be called the priests of the Lord, men shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory.

The conjunction *v-* here as “but” serves to contrast the alien and foreigners of vs. 5 with the five groups in vs. 4 who both will be called “priests” or *kohen* (cf. 37.2 but not noted there) and “ministers” or *sharath* (cf. 60.10).

Eating and glorying (*yamar*: the only use of this biblical term) may be considered the same because it involves the *chayl* (cf. 60.11) or “wealth” belonging to *goy* (cf. 60.22) or “nations” and their “riches” or *kavod* which usually applies to glory as in 60.13.

61-Vs. 7: Instead of your shame you shall have a double portion, instead of dishonor you shall rejoice in your lot; therefore in your land you shall possess a double portion; yours shall be everlasting joy.

Tachat or “instead of” has two pairs:

1) “Shame and double portion” or *bosheth* (cf. 54.4) and *mishneh*. The latter literally means second. “And the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before” [Job 42.10].

2) “Dishonor and lot” or *kelimah* (cf. 30.3) and *cheleq* (cf. 57.6), the latter characterized by rejoicing or *ranan* (cf. 54.1) and connotes singing.

In the land or in Israel the people will “possess” or inherit (*yarash*, cf. 60.21) the *mishneh* already mentioned along with a “joy” or *simchah* (cf. 55.12) which does not come to and end, *holam* (cf. 56.5).

61-Vs. 8: For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Up until this point the servant has been speaking, and now we have the Lord doing it. “Love and hate” or *’ahav* (cf. 56.6) and *sane’* (cf. 60.15) which have respectively “justice” (*mishpat*, cf. 59.15) and “robbery” (*gazel*) along with “wrong” or *havlah* (cf. 59.3). *Gazel* has three other biblical references, one of which is Ps 62.10: “Put no confidence in extortion, set no vain hopes on robbery.”

“Recompense” or *pehulah* (cf. 49.4) is used with the noun *’emeth* (cf. 59.14) which generally means truth and is prefaced with the preposition *b-*, literally, “in truth.”

A “covenant” (*beryth*) which is everlasting is found last in 56.4 and in the verse at hand the Lord will “make” it, *karath* (cf. 56.5) which literally means to cut.

62-Vs. 9: Their descendants shall be known among the nations and their offspring in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.

Note two prepositions, “among and in the midst” or *b-* (usually as ‘in’) and *betok* (cf. 24.13), the latter often associated with the center of anything. The former is associated with “nations” (*goy*, cf. vs. 6) and the latter with “peoples” (*ham*, cf. 60.3).

To the former are “offspring” or *zerah* and to the latter, “offspring,” (*tse’etsa’ym*) both found together in 48.19. In both instances they will be “known,” *yadah* (cf. 60.16).

Seeing these two together results acknowledging them, *nakar* being the verb which has various meanings such as to estrange and to feign. “Israel does not acknowledge us” [63.16]. The result of this acknowledgment is that Israel is a “people” (*zerah*) “blessed” by the Lord, the verb being *barak* found last in 51.2 but not noted there.

61-Vs. 10: I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

It seems that the servant resumes speaking in this verse and in the next after a brief intervention by the Lord himself.

“Greatly rejoice” is rendered by a double use of the verb *sus* (cf. 35.1) and “exult” or *gyl* (cf. 49.13). The former is “in the Lord” by “I” and the latter, “in my God” by “soul” or *nepshesh* (cf. 58.11).

The reason for this *sus-gyl* is that the Lord has clothed his servant with the garments of “salvation” or *yeshah* (cf. 51.5). In addition, he has a robe of “righteousness” or *tsedaqah* (cf.

60.17). Both robes, if you will, resemble both a bridegroom and his spouse, the verbs “decks and adorns” being used respectively. *Kahan* is the verbal root for priest or *kohen* in vs. 6. “That he may minister to me in the priest’s office” [Ex 28.1]. *Hadah* means “adorns” as in Jer 4.30: “that you deck yourself with ornaments of gold.”

61-Vs. 11: For as the earth brings forth its shoots and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

Note the two verbs, “brings forth and spring forth” or *yatsa’* (cf. 55.12) and *tsamach* (cf. 58.8). The latter is used a second time with regard to “righteousness and praise” or *tsedaqah* (cf. vs. 10) and *tehilah* (cf. vs. 3). *Tsemach* is the noun for “shoots” as in 4.2. Such sprouting takes time which means that the “nations” or *goy* (cf. vs. 9) before which both are done will be with the people of Israel watching and tending this growth.

Chapter Sixty-Two

62-Vs. 1: For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until her vindication goes forth as brightness and her salvation as a burning torch.

Note the two verbs, ‘keep silent’ (*chashah* cf. 57.11) and “rest” or *shaqat* (cf. 32.17), both of which the Lord will not do. Both are dependent upon the small word “until” or *had*. That is to say, until first her “vindication” or *tsedaqah* (cf. 61.11) “goes forth” (*yatsa’*, cf. 61.11) followed by “salvation” or *yeshuah* (cf. 60.18).

To the former belongs “brightness” *nogah* (cf. 60.19) while the latter isn’t explicitly mentioned as going forth but is a burning “torch” or *lapyd*. “On that day I will make the clans of Judah...like a flaming torch among sheaves” [Zech 12.6].

62-Vs. 2: The nations shall see your vindication and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord will give.

Another mention of *goy* and *tsedaqah* as in the previous verse with the addition of kings seeing (*yare’*, cf. 59.15) Israel’s “glory” or *kavod* (cf. 61.6).

As for this new “name” (*shem*, cf. 59.19), no details are given which for now keeps both the nations and Israel in suspense.

62-Vs. 3: You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The pair “crown of beauty and royal diadem” *hatarah* and *tsphyrah* are found together in 28.5 only here both are located in God’s hand.

62-Vs. 4: You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My delight is in her and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married.

Note the contrast between the two pairs: “Forsaken (*Hazuwah*; cf. 6.12) and Desolate” (*Shemamah*; cf. 49.19) vs. “My delight (*Chephets*; cf. 58.13) and Married (*Behulah*.” *Behulah* derives from the verb *bahal* as in 54.5.

62-Vs. 5: For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

Betulah or “virgin” is mentioned last in 37.22 and here is equivalent to a bride, both as an image where God will “rejoice” over Israel, *sus* being the verb (cf. 61.10).

62-Vs. 6: Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest,

this verse continues into the next, the first sentence having to do with the Lord placing (*paqad* as ‘set,’ cf. 38.10) watchmen on Jerusalem’s walls. While stationed there, they won’t “be silent” or *chasah* (cf. vs. 1) which means constantly they will arouse the people though this verse lacks the precise nature of what is involved.

The second sentence has to do with “remembrance” or *zeker* (cf. 26.14) and with regard to this same *zeker*, the watchmen aren’t to “take rest” or *domy*, a noun found in the next verse and has one other biblical reference, Ps 83.1: “Do not hold your peace or be still, O God!” So we can take this injunction as applicable to watchmen on a wall, a way of maintaining vigilance.

62-Vs. 7: and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth.

The person addressed here seems to be the servant to whom the people will give no rest or *domy* (previous verse). That is to say, he must establish (*kun*: 54.14) Jerusalem and make (*sum* connotes placing; cf. 42.16) it a “praise” or *tehilah* (cf. 61.11). This establishing or literally placing is to be in the earth, intimating that it will be in its center.

62-Vs. 8: The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: "I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you have labored;

Shavah is the verb “sworn” (cf. 54.9), the two images symbolic of divine strength and the only means possible for the Lord to carry out this oath since he can’t rely upon people. *Beney-nekar* is the noun for “foreigner,” literally as son of foreigner (cf. 60.10).

62-Vs. 9: but those who garner it shall eat it and praise the Lord, and those who gather it shall drink it in the courts of my sanctuary."

A direct correspondence exists between “garner and praise” or *asaph* (cf. 52.12) and *halal* (cf. 45.25). Reference seems to be to the grain of the previous verse which goes into some kind of (fermented) drink which the people will use in the “courts” or *chatser* (cf. 42.11) of the Lord’s “sanctuary,” *qodesh* (cf. 52.1).

62-Vs. 10: Go through, go through the gates, prepare the way for the people; build up, build up

the highway, clear it of stones, lift up an ensign over the peoples.

Havar (cf. 40.27) as “go through” suggests more a passing which seems to be said by the servant to those who garner and drink in the previous verse, *havar* used twice for emphasis. Once within the city, these select people are to “prepare” or *panah* (cf. 57.14) a “way” or *derek* (cf. 59.8) after which they are to “build up” or *salal* (used twice; cf. 57.15) a “highway” or *mislal* (cf. 49.11) which derives from the verbal root *salal*.

Nes means “ensign” and as noted in 49.22, usually has military connotations.

62-Vs. 11: Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him and his recompense before him."

This verse contains three instance of *hineh* (cf. 60.2) or “behold.” The first sums up what has just been “proclaimed” or *shamah* (cf. 59.2), the common verb to hear or as in this verse, “has caused to hear.” “Ends” or *qets* (cf. 41.9) include the circular boarder, if you will, beneath the dome of the sky as it touches the earth. With this in mind, the phrase “daughter of Zion” is a way of speaking about the center of this dome, the Jerusalem temple.

The second *hineh* draws attention to the people’s “salvation” or *yeshah* (cf. 61.10).

The third *hineh* draws attention to the divine “reward” or *sakar* (cf. 40.10) and “recompense” or *pehulah* (cf. 61.8). Note that the first is with the Lord whereas the second is before the Lord, the latter suggestive of him carrying it as a present for all to see.

62-Vs. 12: And they shall be called The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought out, a city not forsaken.

Note two pairs divided between “they” and “you:”

- 1) “Holy and redeemed” or *qodesh* (cf. vs. 9) and *ga'al* (cf. 60.16).
- 2) “Sought out and (not) forsaken” or *darash* (cf. 58.2) and *hazav* (cf. 60.15).

Chapter Sixty-Three

63-Vs. 1: Who is this that comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, announcing vindication, mighty to save."

In vs. 6 of the last chapter the Lord had set watchmen who here may be said to pose the question at hand. Although they don’t know the identity of the man approaching, it’s evident he comes from both Edom and Bozrah by reason of his “crimsoned” garments. To the watchmen this could mean a recent battle. The participle here is *chamets* meaning that which is sharp or sour and hence applies to leavened bread. For another meaning, see Ps 71.4: “Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man.” Perhaps this man is the servant though that is not stated clearly. Also the watchmen who spot him and identify him quickly could attribute this singular man as a way of speaking about an army sent out against her two enemies (cf. 34.5-7).

Hadar is the participle for “glorious” (cf. 45.2) as applied to “apparel” or *levush* (cf. 14.19)

but not noted there) compared with the “garments” (*beqed*; cf. 59.17 but not noted there) at hand, the former usually more splendid and the latter as exterior clothing.

The watchmen could tell easily that the man...army...approaching was victorious by reason of “marching” (*hatsah*, cf. 51.14) not just in his “strength” (*koach*, cf. 40.1) but in its “greatness” or *rav* (cf. 57.10). The verb at hand is *tsahah* (implies stooping or bending) which has four other biblical references as in 51.14 but not noted there. A defeated army would have returned home sullen, a sight easily detectable from afar.

To the question posed by the watchmen the victor responds with the first person singular. He is coming now to announce “vindication” or *tsedaqah* (cf. 62.2) which reads literally as “speaking in (*b-*) righteousness” and does this as being “mighty” (second use of *rav*) to “save” or *yashah* (cf. 60.16).

63-Vs. 2: Why is your apparel red and your garments like his that treads in the wine press?

The watchmen pose this question even though as vs. 1 states, they knew the answer. The winepress suggests much splattering of blood which made the garments not just red but crimsoned red.

63-Vs. 3: "I have trodden the wine press alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment.

The victor begins a lament of sorts which continues through vs. 6, lamenting the fact that he lacked support from his own people. Nevertheless, his “anger and wrath” or *’aph* (cf. 48.9) and *chemah* (cf. 59.18) was enough to bring a victory against Edom and Bozrah.

Netsach is the noun for “lifeblood” which has one other biblical reference in vs. 6. The verb *ga’al* (not to be confused with the *ga’al* meaning to redeem) suggests defilement as in 59.3.

63-Vs. 4: For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption has come.

Mention of “day and year” in one verse hearkens back to 61.2: “to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.”

Ga’al is the participle for “redemption” as in 62.12.

63-Vs. 5: I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me victory, and my wrath upheld me.

Three pairs, if you will, implying that the people were tucked away safely within their city walls:

- 1) “Looked and (none to) help” or *navat* (cf. 51.6) and *hazar* (cf. 50.9). The former connotes beholding and as in the case at hand, a close, intense gaze.
- 2) “Appalled and (no one to) uphold” or *shamam* and *samak*, both found in 59.16.
- 3) “Brought victory and upheld” or *yashah* (cf. vs. 1 and a second use of *samak*). The latter is used with “wrath” or *chemah* (cf. vs. 3).

63-Vs. 6: I trod down the peoples in my anger, I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured

out their lifeblood on the earth."

The RSV has quotes beginning with vs. 3 which conclude here, that is, the unidentified victor making known his complaint.

"Anger and wrath" or *'aph* and *chemah*, both of which are mentioned in vs. 3. The second biblical reference to "lifeblood" or *netsach* occurs in vs. 3.

63-Vs. 7: I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel which he has granted them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

Most likely it is Isaiah who resumes speaking here.

Zakar (cf. 57.11) or "recount" fundamentally means to remember which can be taken as the victor reminding the people of the divine "steadfast love" or *chesed* (cf. 57.1) and "praises" (*tehilah*, cf. 62.7) which they had forgotten. Thus the people are standing before this man...the servant...without any response due to their embarrassment. He drives home the fact that the Lord had interceded for the people, not for him as an individual, by the second person plural or for "us."

"Goodness" is the adjective *tov* (cf. 52.7) which is "great" or *rav* (cf. vs. 1) with respect to Israel (speaking not of 'us' but of 'them'). *Rachamym* (cf. 54.7) or "mercy" is in the plural and akin to *chesed* just mentioned, the former being more specific and pertaining to the bowels or inner organs. As with *tov*, such *rachamym* is *rav* or "great" and "granted" or *gamal* (cf. 11.8).

63-Vs. 8: For he said, Surely they are my people, sons who will not deal falsely; and he became their Savior.

Now Isaiah quotes the Lord in an authoritative way, intended to put them at ease after the complaint he had made against them. The small word *'ak* or "surely" is vital, for it serves to put the people at ease.

Such people won't "deal falsely" or *shaqar* which has five other biblical references as Ps 89.33: "But I will not remove from him my steadfast love or be false to my faithfulness." As a result of not being *shaqar*, the Lord became (past tense) the "Savior" or the people, the verb *yashah* (cf. vs. 5) prefaced with the preposition *l-*, literally as "he was to (also *l-*) them to save."

63-Vs. 9: In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Isaiah now associates the "affliction" (*tsarah*, cf. 46.7) undergone by the people with that of the servant, the noun *tsar* (cf. 49.20) being used. Thus these words read literally "in all their affliction not distress." Such words could be taken that although the servant assumed the people's affliction in a real way, somehow he was untouched by it. This could help to explain the presence of the angel or more specifically, the one of "his presence" (literally as 'face') who brought about salvation, *yashah* (cf. vs. 8).

In addition to this salvation, the servant "redeemed" the people, *ga'al* (cf. vs. 4) using both his own "love and pity" or *'ahavah* (the only reference to this noun in Isaiah) and *chemlah* (*chamal*, cf. 30.14) which has one other biblical reference, Gn 19.16: "the Lord being merciful to

him (Lot).”

“Lifted up and carried” or *natal* and *nasa’* (cf. 60.4): the former has three other biblical references, one of which is in 40.15.

63-Vs. 10: But they rebelled and grieved his holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and he himself fought against them.

Note the distinction between the servant and his own “Spirit” or *Ruach* (cf. 61.3) which is “holy” (*qodesh*, cf. 62.12) or literally, “Spirit of holiness.” In other words, the people “rebelled and grieved” this *Ruach* belonging to the Lord, *marah* (cf. 50.5) and *hatsav* (cf. 54.6). As a result, the Lord became their enemy and fought against them, the preposition *l* being a preface as “to them” and “to an enemy.”

63-Vs. 11: Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses his servant. Where is he who brought up out of the sea the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his holy Spirit,

The conjunctive *v-* or “then” plays an important part in that it serves to shift away from the rebellion and grief the people caused in the previous verse to care for them. This is done by remembering (*zakar*, cf. vs. 7; also the verbal root for ‘male’ and therefore the begetting of future generations) the “days of old” or *yemey-holam* which the Lord associates with Moses, a natural association for the people as well. Moses is identified as bringing from Egypt and across the Red Sea not so much the people of Israel but their shepherds which can refer to their religious leaders. The Lord puts to his people this rhetorical sentence followed immediately by a second which continues for a lengthy period into the next two verses.

As for the “Spirit” or *Ruach* (cf. vs. 10), it can be associated with Num 11.17 and 25, both of which say “some of the spirit” which was upon Moses and distributed among seventy elders.

63-Vs. 12: who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name,

The noun *tiph’arah* (cf. 60.19) as “glorious” reads literally “right hand of his beauty” is associated with Moses’ right hand, both acting together is splitting the Red Sea in two (cf. Ex 14.21).

Holam or “everlasting” is found in the previous verse in another sense, “days of old.”

63-Vs. 13: who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble.

This is the conclusion of that lengthy sentence begun in vs. 11 as well as the conclusion of the second rhetorical question put to the people by the Lord.

The noun for ‘depths’ is *tehom* (cf. 51.10) which refers to primeval chaos as in Gn 1.2: “The earth was without form and void.”

63-Vs. 14: Like cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So did you lead your people, to make for yourself a glorious name.

The “Spirit” or *Ruach* (cf. Vs. 11) continues to be active in this reminder, if you will, of Israel’s redemption from Egypt, the primary agent for giving “rest” *nuach* (cf. 30.32).

Nahag (cf. 60.11) or “lead” is associated often with the driving of a flock and fits in well here with mention of cattle.

“Glorious” name of a “name of beauty” (*tiph’arah*) as in vs. 12.

63-Vs. 15: Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and glorious habitation. Where are your zeal and your might? The yearning of your heart and your compassion are withheld from me.

Here the people, it seems, entreats the Lord to “look down” (*navat*, cf. vs. 5) from heaven not unlike looking down upon the cattle in the valley of the previous verse. After all, this is the Lord’s “habitation” or *zevul* which is both “holy and glorious” (literally, ‘habitation of holiness,’ *qodesh*; cf. vs. 10). *Zevul* has four other biblical references. Also this habitation is one of glory, the noun *tiph’arah* (cf. vs. 14).

Asking about the Lord’s “zeal and might” (*qin’ah* (cf. 59.17) and *gevurah* (cf. 36.5) is more a complaint than a rhetorical question by the people to the Lord. Both are associated, if you will, with the “yearning” or *hamon* (cf. 60.5) of the Lord’s “heart” which is not the customary *lev* (cf. 61.1) but *mehah* as referring to the bowels. “You are he who took me from my mother’s womb” [Ps 71.6]. *Hamon* may also have as its object the Lord’s “compassion,” second instance of *hamon*. To withhold both is a serious matter because the verb ‘*aphaq* (cf. 42.14) involves being strong or mighty.

63-Vs. 16: For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.

This verse contains an honest acknowledgment of Israel’s situation, of being not known by the first patriarch Abraham, *yadah* (cf. 62.9) meaning intimate knowledge along with lack of acknowledgment (*nakar*, cf. 61.9) by Israel which could be the other patriarch, Jacob.

The people cry out to the Lord, calling his Father twice and “Redeemer” (*Ga’al*, cf. vs. 9) to show their desperation.

63-Vs. 17: O Lord, why do you make us err from your ways and harden our heart so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage.

This is not a rhetorical question (Israel is in no position to pose it) but a plea coming straight from the heart. The desperate words “err and harden” (*tahah*; cf. 53.6 and *qashach* which has one other biblical reference, Job 39.16: ‘She (ostrich) deals cruelly with her young as if they were not hers’).

The question is followed by a demand, if you will, for the Lord to “return” (*shuv*, cf. 59.20), hoping that he will continue Israel’s “heritage” or *nachalah* (cf. 58.14).

63-Vs. 18: Your holy people possessed your sanctuary a little while; our adversaries have trodden it down.

Here Israel speaks of herself objectively as though she were another person, another way

of making her plight known to the Lord. *Qodesh* (cf. vs. 15) is a noun for “holy” and reads literally as “people of your holiness.” Israel does more than possess the Lord’s sanctuary (this word is suggested in the noun *qodesh*) but have inherited it from one generation to the next, the fundamental meaning of the verb *yarash* (cf. 61.7). However, this verse says they had this inheritance, if you will, a short period of time while their “adversaries” trampled it, *tsar* (cf. vs. 9).

63-Vs. 19: We have become like those over whom you have never ruled, like those who are not called by your name.

It is one thing to claim not being like nations and peoples over whom the Lord hasn’t had dominion but another—far more serious—not to be called by the Lord’s “name” or *shem* (cf. 62.2).

Chapter Sixty-Four

64-Vs. 1: O that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence—

The Hebrew text has this verse as part of 63.19 with vs. 1 as vs. 2.

The people’s plea reaches a new urgency, bidding the Lord to “rend” the heavens, *qarah* as applied to clothes or cloth and found in 37.1 but not noted there. During his descent the Lord will first make contact with the mountains which will “quake” or *zalal* which is found in vs. 3. “At your presence” literally reads as “from your face.”

65-Vs. 2: as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence!

When the Lord comes down—and hopefully he does—he will do so in the form of a consuming fire. Such is a way of making his “name” or *shem* (cf. 63.19) known to his “adversaries” or *tsar* (cf. 63.18). Concomitant with this, if you will, is that the nations will “tremble” or *ragaz* (cf. 37.29) at the Lord’s presence, again as “from your face.”

64-Vs. 3: When you did terrible things which we looked not for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

By now the people hope the Lord gets the point, that is, by appealing to his descent upon Mount Sinai and all that involves. “Terrible things” consists of the verb *yare’* (to fear, cf. 62.2 which echoes Ps 66.3 & 5: “How terrible are your deeds!...he is terrible in his deeds among men.”

The verse at hand says that the people did not look for such terrible things, *qavah* (cf. 59.11) implying expectation or waiting which can hold true for the Mount Sinai encounter.

Zalal is the verb for “quaked” as in vs. 1 with (literally) “from your face” as noted there.

64-Vs. 4: From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides

you, who works for those who wait for him.

Halom (cf. 57.15) or “from of old” means never with regard to hearing and seeing. Nevertheless, the people acknowledge that the Lord works for anyone who waits for him, the verb *chakah* (cf. 30.18) connoting a tying or binding. Compare this verse with “That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes (etc.)” [1]n 1.1].

64-Vs. 5: You meet him that joyfully works righteousness, those that remember you in your ways. Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?

Pagah (cf. 59.16) is the verb for “meet” which the Lord does under two conditions:
1) For the person who does “righteousness” or *tsedeq* (cf. 61.3) in a joyful manner, *sus* (cf. 62.5) being a verb. These words read literally “you meet him rejoicing making righteousness.”
2) For those who “remember” the Lord, *zakar* (cf. 63.11) with its implication of male begetting and hence future generations. More precisely, *zakar* is used with divine “ways” or *derek* (cf. 62.10), suggestive of the Torah.

Hen (cf. 59.1) or “behold” serves to sustain the people imploring the Lord or better, acknowledgment of their sins which have angered him, *qatsaph* (cf. 57.17). Sin is presented as a mode of life sustained by the people for a “long time” (*halom*, cf. vs. 4), so long that they question whether or not they will be “saved” (*yashah*, cf. 63.9). Nevertheless, they are not afraid to engage in a kind of bargaining which they know will succeed although the possibility for failure remains.

64-Vs. 6: We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Tame' (cf. 52.11) is the verb for “unclean” which in this circumstance is similar to a garment that has become “polluted” or *hidah*. It occurs only here and can apply to a woman in her menstrual period. Apparently *hidah* is related to *hadah* which means to adorn as in 61.10. In the verse at hand, it pertains to the collective “righteousness” (*tsedaqah*, cf. 63.1) of Israel, of those making this urgent petition to the Lord.

Despite the “iniquities” (*havon*, cf. 59.12) at hand, they are light enough to be blown away. In other words, the people have become withered like dry leaves by their misdeeds.

64-Vs. 7: There is no one that calls upon your name, that bestirs himself to take hold of you; for you have hid your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquities.

Several times thus far in Chapter Sixty-Four “from your face” is noted, a way of speaking of God’s presence. Here he hides this face, similar to the use of *satar* in 59.2, which has the automatic result of the people being “delivered” (*mug*: cf. 14.31; not noted there but rendered as ‘melt’) into their own “iniquities” (*havon*, cf. vs. 6). In other words, the Lord allowed Israel to melt away in their misdeeds.

Qara' or “calls” (cf. 61.2) with the preposition *b-* or “in your name or *shem*” (cf. vs. 2) and *hur* (cf. 52.1) as “bestirs” with the preposition *b-* or “in you.”

64-Vs. 8: Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.

This verse has elements of 45.9: "Woe to him who strives with his Maker, an earthen vessel with the potter! Does the clay say to him who fashions it, 'What are you making'? or 'Your work has no handles?'"

64-Vs. 9: Be not exceedingly angry, O Lord, and remember not iniquity forever. Behold, consider, we are all your people.

Qatsaph (cf. vs. 5) is the verb for "be (not) angry," and "exceedingly" is rendered as *had-me'od* or literally "until excessively."

Use of the now familiar *zakar* (cf. vs. 5) or "remember" can be taken as the people not wishing the Lord to beget (the notion of a male again) their "iniquity" or *havon* (cf. vs. 7) forever. Note the singular use of this word compared with the plural of vs. 6. By summing up their misbehavior to one they hope the Lord will pay attention.

Hen (cf. vs. 5) or "behold" is a way the people wish the Lord to "consider" or *navat* (cf. 63.15) that each person comprising Israel forms a single people.

64-Vs. 10: Your holy cities have become a wilderness, Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.

In addition to Zion (which is with Jerusalem) the people bring attention to the Lord other cities which are "holy" or the noun *qodesh* (cf. 63.18). Thus these words read literally "the cities of your holiness."

Midbar is the noun for "desert" (cf. 51.3) applicable to the more specific Zion and *shemamah* is the noun for "desolation" (cf. 62.4) applicable to the more general Jerusalem which contains Zion.

64-Vs. 11: Our holy and beautiful house where our fathers praised you has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins.

By appealing to their fathers, the people hope a memory of virtuous generations from the past can persuade the Lord. They embellish this, if you will, by calling the Jerusalem temple a house which is "holy and beautiful" or *qodesh* (cf. vs. 10) and *tiph'arah* (cf. 63.15). After all the temple is the place where Israel's fathers had "praised" the Lord, *halal* (cf. 62.9).

Note the transformation: *machmad - charbah* (cf. 52.9) or "pleasant places - ruins." A similar reference to the former is Lam 1.10: "The enemy has stretched out his hands over all her precious things."

64-Vs. 12: Will you restrain yourself at these things, O Lord? Will you keep silent and afflict us sorely?

The drama of Chapter Sixty-Four concludes with two desperate questions which hopefully the Lord will answer. The first contains the verb *'aphaq* (cf. 63.15) or "restrain." The second contains the two verbs *chasah* (cf. 62.6) and *hanan* (cf. 57.3). The latter has "afflict (us)

sorely” or *had-me’od* as in vs. 9, “exceedingly.”

Chapter Sixty-Five

65-Vs. 1: I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here am I, here am I," to a nation that did not call on my name.

Note the similarity between *darash* (cf. 62.12) and *matsa’* (cf. 55.6), “to be sought” (the Hebrew text lacks the English ‘ready’) and “to be found” which are countered by the two negatives *sha’al* (cf. 30.2) and *baqash* (cf. 51.1), “did not ask” and “did not seek.” Both are summed up by the Lord breaking in upon the scene, *hineny hineny* which read more as “Behold here I am, Behold here I am.” This imposition by the Lord, if you will, concerns Israel which failed to call literally “in (*b-*) my name.”

65-Vs. 2: I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices;

Paras is the verb for “spread out” mentioned last in 37.14 but not noted there. The Lord does this “all the day” where *yom* (cf. 58.5) suggests not just a twenty-four hour cycle but more or less without interruption though for a limited time.

Sarar (cf. 30.1 but not noted there) and *machasheveth* (cf. 59.7) or “rebellious and devices” which are more less equivalent here.

65-Vs. 3: a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and burning incense upon bricks;

Compare *tamyd* (cf. 58.11) or “continually” relative to the people’s provocation with the previous verse where the Lord spreads his hands out to them “all the day.”

Kahas as “provoke” suggests anger about to be released made all the worse by the people doing it to the Lord’s face or literally “on (*hal-*) my face.” “Provoking the Lord to anger” [1Kg 14.15]. The provocation is done by offering sacrifices in hidden places such as gardens, etc.

65-Vs. 4: who sit in tombs and spend the night in secret places; who eat swine's flesh and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

Sitting and spending the night suggest persistence in the sacrileges being described, equivalent to the “abominable things” the people are eating, *pigul* being the noun which has two other biblical references, Lev 7.18 and Ezk 4.14, the former being cited here: “It shall be an abomination, and he who eats of it shall bear his iniquity.”

65-Vs. 5: who say, "Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am set apart from you." These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.

The two verbs *qarav* (cf. 58.2) and *nagas* (cf. 60.17) or “keep (to yourself)” and “do (not)

come near” are similar but are used in opposite ways. What gives a tragic note here is the people acting as one and saying to the Lord that they are “set apart,” the very word most often to describe the Lord himself or in his holiness, *qadash* (cf. 41.16).

65-Vs. 6: Behold, it is written before me: "I will not keep silent, but I will repay, yea, I will repay into their bosom

As noted often, *hineh* (62.11) or “behold” is a way indicating how the Lord grabs attention of someone he wants to address. As for what is written, the **RSV** has a footnote referring to 4.3: “And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem.” In both instances the verb *katav* (cf. 30.8) is used.

“I will not keep silent” is found in 64.12, the verb *chashah* being used in both instances. In the verb at hand, this lack of silence, if you will, takes the form of the Lord repaying—he says this twice for emphasis—*shalam* (cf. 59.18) along with the collective bosom of the people. Although this sentence continues into the next verse, its force is sufficient reason to pause with some dread as to what will follow and follow it will.

65-Vs. 7: their iniquities and their fathers' iniquities together, says the Lord; because they burned incense upon the mountains and reviled me upon the hills, I will measure into their bosom payment for their former doings."

As the people might expect, the Lord speaks not just of their own “iniquities” or *havon* (cf. 64.9) but of their fathers. Both the current generation and those of the past engaged in worship of gods, the result being that the Lord will “measure” or *madad* (cf. 40.12) a “payment” or *pehulah* (cf. 62.11) for what they had done. Those whom the Lord is addressing know full well what this will be even though they may lack the specifics.

65-Vs. 8: Thus says the Lord: "As the wine is found in the cluster and they say, 'Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,' so I will do for my servants' sake and not destroy them all.

These words must come as a relief in light of the last few verses although the people know by now that the Lord is not simply to overlook past offenses but deal with them accordingly.

The **RSV** has a footnote here referring to the Last Judgment in Mt 25.32-33. As for the verse at hand, the Lord decides to follow the advice of the saying quoted about a blessing in the cluster or the promise of that cluster producing wine, nevertheless, he will go ahead with destroying part of it, *shachat* (cf. 54.16) being the verb. However, the Lord makes it perfectly clear he will take this action for the sake of those whom he deemed his servant. At this juncture the people don't know their identity but will in the near future. Just this unknowing is a punishment for them.

65-Vs. 9: I will bring forth descendants from Jacob and from Judah inheritors of my mountains; my chosen shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

Vs. 7 speaks of the people burning incense on mountains which is the back of the Lord's

mind while speaking here. That is to say, those whom he chooses will be “inheritors” who will “inherit” (*yarash*, cf. 63.18) them and therefore sanctify them by dwelling upon them. The similar sound of words with stress upon the “sh” sound in *yeshknu-shamah* bring this home, “shall dwell there.

65-Vs. 10: Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down for my people who have sought me.

Sharon and Achor represent two extremes, the northern coastal plain and desolate region west of the Dead Sea.

Ravats (cf. 14.31) is the verb for “lie down” which applies to four-footed animals curling their legs under them as they rest upon the ground. Such a comfortable and secure position is for those who have “sought” the Lord, *darash* (cf. 65.1).

65-Vs. 11: But you who forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny;

As soon as the people heard this use of the conjunctive *v-* as “but” they knew what is to follow will not be in their favor. That is to say, *v-* is followed immediately by two verbs with similar meaning here, *hazav* (cf. 62.12) and *shakach* (cf. 51.13) or “forsake and forget.” Both are with regard to the Lord’s holy mountain which can be taken as Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

Gad and *Meni* are rendered as “Fortune and Fate,” gods of Syrian origin.

65-Vs. 12: I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter; because when I called you did not answer, when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes and chose what I did not delight in.”

Manah (cf. 53.12) or “destine” implies being numbered which, in turn, suggests being limited.

Note the contrast between *qara’* (cf. 64.7) - *hanah* (cf. 59.12) and *davar* (cf. 59.13) - *shamah* (cf. 62.11) or “called - answer” and “spoke - listen.”

Rah (cf. 59.15) or “evil” is the consequence of the conjunctive *v-* as “but,” not unlike that of the previous verse’s use. It is the opposite of what the Lord takes delight in, *chaphets* (cf. 58.2).

65: Vss. 13 & 14: Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame; (14) behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart, and shall wail for anguish of spirit.

These two verse are combined since they form a set of four pairs: 1) eat / be hungry, 2) drink / be thirsty, 3) rejoice / put to shame, 4) sing / cry out (includes wailing). In #4 note mention of “heart and spirit” or *lev* (cf. 65.4) and *ruach* (cf. 63.14).

65-Vs. 15: You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the Lord God will slay you; but his servants he will call by a different name.

Shevuhah or “curse” is the only occurrence in Isaiah and primarily means an oath. From it derives the sacred number seven. “The covenant which he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac” [Ps 105.9]. To associate this solemn act with the idea of a “name” (*shem*, cf. 64.7) is to be taken seriously which here is borne out by the fact that the Lord will slay those who disobey him. On the other hand, the Lord will “call” or *qara’* (cf. his servants which had been mentioned above by another *shem*).

65-Vs. 16: So that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hid from my eyes.

Barak (cf. 61.9) and *shavah* (cf. 62.8) or “blesses and swear,” both with respect to the “land” or *‘erets* (cf. 38.11) and the God of “truth” or *‘amen* which in Hebrew as well as in English remains as “amen.”

Here the verbs *shakach* (cf. vs. 11) and *satar* (cf. 64.7) or “forgotten and hid” are with regard to former “troubles,” *tsarah* (cf. 63.9).

65-Vs. 17: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.

Hineh (cf. 65.6) or “behold” is equivalent to *hen*, often mentioned, and here ties in with the Lord creating (*bara’*, cf. 48.7) both a heaven and earth which are new. Not that the other heaven and earth are old but are seen in light of remembrance of “former things” or *ri’shon* (cf. 48.12) and connotes something as head as well as a beginning. Such remembrance is expressed through the verbs *zakar* (cf. 64.9) and *lev* (cf. vs. 14) which usually translates as “heart”...here literally as “come upon heart.”

This verse is reminiscent of Rev 21.1: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.”

65-Vs. 18: But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy.

Sus and *gyl* or “be glad and rejoice” are both found together in 61.10 with respect to God’s creative activity, *bara’* as in the previous verse. The Lord speaks of this first in a general way followed by its application to Jerusalem with two nouns derived from *sus* and *gyl*, *gylah* (cf. 35.2) and *masus* (cf. 60.15).

65-Vs. 19: I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress.

This verse contains another instance of the pair *sus* and *gyl* or “rejoice and be glad” only with respect to the Lord himself, singling out Jerusalem and his people as in the previous verse. Cry and distress are reminiscent of Rev 21.4 which is in the same context of a citing from that book in vs. 17: “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed

away.”

65-Vs. 20: No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.

This verse hearkens back to the extended life span enjoyed by people after the expulsion of the first man from Eden (cf. Chapter Five of Genesis). Despite this, it is in terms of length of days compared being made “in the likeness of God” which is part of 5.1 in the context at hand.

65-Vss. 21-23: They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. (22) They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. (23) They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord, and their children with them.

These three verses can be taken as one since they deal with laboring but not “in vain” or *ryq* (cf. 49.4). In other words, this building, planting and begetting children will be as what takes place within the Garden of Eden prior to the first man’s expulsion. “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it” [Gn 2.15].

65-Vs. 24: Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.

Above all else, the exertion-free condition of humankind described in the past few verses in light of its restoration means an immediate presence of the Lord. This is put in terms of “call-answer” (*qara’* (cf. vs. 15)-*hanah* (cf. vs. 12) and “speaking-will hear” (*davar-shamah* (both verbs in vs. 12)).

65-Vs. 25: The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, says the Lord.”

The naturally hostile pairs of wolf/lamb, lion/ox plus serpent are to share food together as well as not causing hurt nor destruction (the verbs *rahaḥ* as in 59.15 and *shachat* (cf. vs. 8)). The latter has a specific place, the Lord’s holy mountain which can be taken as Zion in Jerusalem. Note, however, that the animals just mentioned may eat together but nothing specific is said as to this *rahaḥ* or *shachat*.

Chapter Sixty-Six

66-Vs. 1: Thus says the Lord: "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house which you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?"

This is the next-to-last “Thus says the Lord” in the Book of Isaiah which means close attention is demanded. The house and place of “rest” *menuchah* (cf. 32.18) is, of course, the

temple of Jerusalem situated midway between the divine throne in heaven and the divine footstool of the earth. In other words, it stand in between both.

66-Vs. 2: All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine, says the Lord. But this is the man to whom I will look, he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

All that the Lord claims to have made is within that closed world, if you will, of heaven and earth spoken of in the previous verse. Here a person's "spirit" or *ruach* (cf. 65.14) is both "humble and contrite" or *hany* and *nakah*. Not only this, he "trembles" or *charad* (cf. 41.5) at the Lord's *davar* or "word" (cf. 59.21).

66-Vs. 3: "He who slaughters an ox is like him who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like him who breaks a dog's neck; he who presents a cereal offering, like him who offers swine's blood; he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense, like him who blesses an idol. These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations;

Four examples of immoral behavior go to form "ways" or *derek* (cf. 64.5) where the collective "soul" or *nephesh* (cf. 61.10) of these people do not relinquish them but takes delight (*chaphets*, cf. 65.12) in them because they are "abominations" (*shiquts*), a term usually associated with impurity and the only occurrence in Isaiah. "Put away your abominations" [Jer 4.1].

66-Vs. 4: I also will choose affliction for them and bring their fears upon them; because when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not listen; but they did what was evil in my eyes and chose that in which I did not delight."

Here the Lord has tailor-made "afflictions" for the people, *tahalulym* having one other biblical reference in 3.1 as "boys." That is to say, they consist in their own "fears" or *megurah* which has two other biblical references, Ps 34.4 and Hag 2.19, the former being cited here: "I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears."

Note the two pairs as in 65. 24 which unfortunately do not work: *qara' - hanah* and *davar - shamah*.

Here the noun *rah* (cf. 65.12) or "evil" is equivalent with what the Lord does not "delight" or *chaphets* (cf. vs. 3).

66-Vs. 5: Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at his word: "Your brethren who hate you and cast you out for my name's sake have said, 'Let the Lord be glorified that we may see your joy;' but it is they who shall be put to shame.

Note the pair *shamah* (cf. vs. 4) = *charad* (cf. vs. 2) or "hear = tremble" with respect to the Lord's *davar* (cf. vs. 4) or "word." More precisely, this pair is aimed at those who have maltreated those obedient to the Lord.

Instead of their words concerning the Lord being "glorified" (*kavad*, cf. 60.13) and seeing their "joy" (*simchah*, cf. 61.7), they will be "put to shame" or bosh (cf. 54.4).

66-Vs. 6: "Hark, an uproar from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of the Lord, rendering recompense to his enemies!"

The Hebrew text lacks "hark" but begins immediately with *qol* (cf. 51.3) or "voice" which comes first from the city and then from the more specified area of the temple. In other words, this is the same *qol* which recompenses the Lord's enemies, *shalam* being the verb (cf. 59.18).

66-Vss. 7 & 8: "Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she was delivered of a son. (8) Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her sons."

These two verses are combined since they go together. Vs. 7 is followed by four rhetorical questions about a "land" or *'erets* (cf. 65.16) coming to birth in one day as well as a nation in one "moment" or *paham*. The latter is found last in 41.7 as "anvil," the general idea seeming to be related to striking.

66-Vs. 9: Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth? says the Lord; shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb? says your God.

The Lord asks two more rhetorical questions intended to press the people not so much for an answer, something touched upon earlier, but to shake them from their lethargy and proneness to idol worship, etc. *Shavar* (cf. 61.1) is suggestive of breaking and is the verb for "bring to birth."

66-Vs. 10: "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her;"

Samach (cf. 56.7) and *gyl* (cf. 65.19) or "rejoice and be glad," the latter with the preposition *b-* prefaced to "her" or literally, "in her." Both have as their object those who "love" Jerusalem, *'ahav* (cf. 61.8).

Sus (cf. 65.19) and *masus* (cf. 65.18) or "rejoice and joy." This command is aimed toward those who are mourning over Jerusalem, *'aval* (cf. 61.3).

66-Vs. 11: that you may suck and be satisfied with her consoling breasts; that you may drink deeply with delight from the abundance of her glory."

Those whom the Lord begins to address in the previous verse here are likened not to children but even younger, babes at the breast. *Savah* is the verb for "be satisfied" (cf. 58.11) which comes from Jerusalem's "consoling" breasts or *tanchumym*, a noun which is rendered literally as "breasts of consolation." It has two other biblical references, Ps 94.19 and Jer 16.7, the former being cited here: "When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul."

Matsats or "drink deeply" is the only occurrence in the Bible and suggests milking out. It is to be done "with delight" or *hanag* (cf. 58.14), a verb which implies neighing like a horse. Jerusalem's "glory" or *kavod* (cf. 62.2) is not unlike her two breasts just mentioned.

From them or more accurately, from their “abundance” or *zyz* those mentioned in vs. 10 are to drink deeply. *Zyz* pertains to anything moving or an abundance and has two other biblical references, Ps 50.11 and Ps 80.13, the former being cited here: “and all that moves in the field is mine.”

66-Vs. 12: For thus says the Lord: "Behold, I will extend prosperity to her like a river and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall suck, you shall be carried upon her hip and dandled upon her knees.

This is the last “Thus says the Lord” in the Book of Isaiah, so it requires close attention. Furthermore, it’s followed by by *hineh* (cf. 65.17) or “behold.”

Natah (cf. 55.3) and *shalom* (60.20) or “extend and prosperity,” use the image of a river. Similar to this example is that of a stream which is “overflowing” or *shataph* noted last in 43.2 as consuming with regard to wealth coming from nations or those subject to Israel.

The last three verbs pertain to a babe, the third being “dandled” or *shahah* (cf. 29.9).

66-Vs. 13: As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Nacham (cf. 61.2) is the verb for “comforts,” *hwew* in the motherly sense and is applicable to the Lord as well as Jerusalem. In other words, *nacham* suggests that the people are not there yet, possibly in exile, a fact which hasn’t come to the fore until now.

66-Vs. 14: You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your bones shall flourish like the grass; and it shall be known that the hand of the Lord is with his servants, and his indignation is against his enemies.

Rejoicing follows upon seeing or *sus* (cf. vs. 10) upon *yare’* (cf. 64.3). Such rejoicing is more specified, if you will, by the people’s bones flourishing or *parach* (cf. 45.8) which connotes sprouting. Such will be indicators of the Lord’s presence with his servants and “indignation” against his foes, *zaham* (cf. 30.27).

66-Vss. 15 & 16: "For behold, the Lord will come in fire and his chariots like the storm wind to render his anger in fury and his rebuke with flames of fire. 16. For by fire will the Lord execute judgment, and by his sword upon all flesh; and those slain by the Lord shall be many.

As with vss. 7 & 8, these two go together, *hineh* (cf. vs. 12) or “behold” introducing the coming of the Lord in fire and with chariots. Note the imagery: “storm wind, fury and flames” or *suphah* (cf. 29.6), *chemah* (cf. 63.6) and *lahav* (cf. 29.6). In other words, vs. 15 is not unlike 29. 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.”

Vs. 16 continues with the image of fire which will “execute judgment” or *shaphat* (cf. 59.4).

66-Vs. 17: "Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one in the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and mice shall come to an end together,

says the Lord.

This verse contains a perverse use of the verbs “sanctify and “purify” or *qadash* (cf. 65.5) and *taher* which connotes shining or brightness. It is found frequently in the Book of Leviticus for obvious reasons: “the man who is to be made clean” [Lev 14.11].

“Abomination” or *sheqets* often refers to that which is unclean, here pertaining to swine and mice. As with *taher*, this word is found frequently in Leviticus: “If anyone touches an unclean thing...whether the uncleanness of man or an unclean beast or any unclean abomination” [Lev 7.21].

66-Vs. 18: "For I know their works and their thoughts, and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory,

The Hebrew text lacks “I know” and has instead the first person singular pronoun. Thus it reads literally “For (conjunctive *v-*) I their works and thoughts.” The former is *mahaseh* (cf. 32.17) and the latter is *machasheveth* (cf. 65.2).

The Lord says nothing about the time of his coming, an indirect way to warn the people, almost a veiled type of threat. The purpose: to “gather” or *qavats* (cf. 60.7) every nation on earth. The same verb used by the Lord as “coming” or *bo'* (cf. 46.11) applies to them in order to see the Lord’s “glory” or *kavod* (cf. vs. 11).

66-Vs. 19: and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put and Lud who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off that have not heard my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations.

'Oth (cf. 55.13) is “sign” which the Lord will “set” or *sum* (cf. 62.7) not so much among the nations but literally “in (*b-*) them.” We have no details about this sign, but the next sentence within the same verse ominously puts it in context. That is, it speaks of “survivors” or *palyt* which has one other biblical reference, Num 21.29: “He has made his sons fugitives.”

These survivors are those who weren’t slain by Israel and naturally will be relatively small. Having been so chastened, they will fan out over the entire region in order to “declare” or *nagad* (cf. 48.20) the Lord’s “glory” or *kavod* (cf. vs. 18) literally “in (*b-*) the nations.” This in-ness will correspond to the same in-ness pertaining to the sign.

66-Vss. 20-21: And they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the Lord, upon horses and in chariots and in litters and upon mule, and upon dromedaries to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the Lord, just as the Israelites bring their cereal offering in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord. And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the Lord.

The two verses are combined since they form one entity.

The *'oth* or “sign” is becoming more evident both to Israelites and non-Israelites, that is, the survivors of the previous verse have a mission which is turn return Israelites who have been scattered and sent into exile. They will follow a pattern (i.e., a clearer interpretation of *'oth*), namely, the ritual bringing of “cereal offering” or *minchah* (cf. 1.13 though in vs. 3 but not noted

there) which must be in a clean or purified vessel. The destination, of course, is the temple or “house of the Lord.”

Note that those destined to become priests and Levites are not Israelites who have remained at home but those who had lived abroad forcefully for an extended period of time. Perhaps awareness of their absence created a longing for Israel and Jerusalem not shared by their fellow countrymen.

66-Vs. 22: "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, says the Lord; so shall your descendants and your name remain.

This verse is reminiscent of 65.17: ““For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.” The difference is that both shall “remain” or *hamad* (cf. 59.14) before the Lord, this verb connoting an uninterrupted standing. If these heavenly bodies which seem eternal will engaged in such a *hamad*, so will the descendants of those brought to Jerusalem (cf. vs. 20) as well as their “name” or *zerah* (cf. 61.9) which literally means seed.

66-Vs. 23: From new moon to new moon and from sabbath to sabbath all flesh shall come to worship before me, says the Lord.

New moon and sabbath suggest a way of marking time, religiously speaking. It will set more specific times of worship in the Jerusalem temple for “all flesh.”

66-Vs. 24: "And they shall go forth and look on the dead bodies of the men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

The RSV has this concluding verse set off in parentheses though the Lord has been speaking all along.

The going forth can apply to “all flesh” of the previous verse who are in Jerusalem and gave upon the dead bodies going and departing the city.

Mention of a worm which does not die is reminiscent of Mk 9.47, pretty much in the same context: “where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.” *Dera'on* is the noun for “abhorrence,” the only use of this word in the Bible.

+ The End +