

Chapter Nine

9-Vs. 1: But there will be no gloom for her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

This verse is 8.23 in the Hebrew text.

Muhaph is the noun for “gloom,” the only use of the term in the Bible whose verbal root suggests darkness and is similar to *mahuph* in 9.22. It is related closely to the presence of “anguish” or *mutsaq* (note similarity in sound) which has two other biblical references, Job 36.16 and 37.10, the former being cited here: “to a spacious place free from restriction.” “For her” most likely is Jerusalem living in fear of the Assyrian invasion.

The Lord singles out Zebulun and Naphtali, both of which had suffered the most during the Assyrian invasion and had been “brought into contempt” or *qalal* noted last in 8.21. It suggests having been cursed, that is, by the Lord through the agent of the Assyrians. Both Zebulun and Naphtali are mentioned in a quote of this verse (a different version) and the next in Mt 4.15: “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.” This is cited at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry when he resided in Capernaum “which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali” [vs. 14].

Note the contrast between two times or *heth* which is not unlike the Greek *kairos*, a proper time or opportunity where the notion of temporal duration is secondary: that which is former and that which is latter.

The verb *kaved* (cf. 6.10) as “will make glorious” with respect to the *derek* or “way” (cf. 3.12) of the sea suggests travel and transport of merchandise by the Mediterranean Sea. This making *kaved* will start there and extend inland, hence the mention of Galilee beyond the Jordan, that region designated as “of the nations” (*goy*, cf. 2.4), a term which often applies to non-Israelites.

9-Vs. 2: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

Compare “darkness” or *choshek* (cf. 8.22) with *muhaph* of the previous verse which is more in reference to the light of the sun. To have walked in such darkness is not to know where one is going. As for the “light” (*or*), nothing is said regarding its source but seems to appear not at once illuminating the darkness but more as a guiding beacon even though it is called “great.” Compare with the Magi who came to Jesus at his birth: “We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him” [Mt 2.2].

A second category, if you will, follows those who walked in darkness, persons who dwelt in a land of “deep darkness” or *tsalmaveth* which is a compound of *tsel* (shadow) and *maveth* (death). They may be called resides of Sheol or the underworld (cf. 7.11). “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil” [Ps 23.4]. For persons in this *tsalmaveth* the same light or *or* has “shined” upon them, the verb being *nagah* which has five other biblical references, one of which is 13.10: “The moon will not give its light.” Here the light is above shining below compared with the people who have seen a great light, that is, from a

distance.

In Mt 4.14 after having quoted the above two verses, we have “From that time on Jesus began to preach. ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’”

9-Vs. 3: You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

Ravah is the verb for “multiplied” which can mean to become great and is found last in 1.15 but not noted there whereas here it is used with respect to *goy* or “nation” (cf. vs. 1). Compare this multiplication with *gadal* (cf. 1.2) or “increased” which also refers to becoming great usually in the sense of growth. Here such *gadal* implies an organic growth, one from within, concerning the nation (Israel) or more accurately, it’s “joy” or *simchah* which has an air of gladness about it. “Joy and gladness are taken away from the orchards” [16.10].

The verbal root to *simchah* (again as ‘joy’) or *samach* translates as “rejoice” with respect to harvest. “Even the pine trees and the cedars of Lebanon exult over you” [14.8]. Another verb is used for the second “rejoice” or *gly* which means to dance in a circle, to leap for joy. “Let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation” [25.9]. In the verse at hand, *gly* gives the image of conquerors after a battle gathered around a campfire when they share the enemy’s spoil among them.

9-Vs. 4: For the yoke of his burden and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

The elements of oppression and slavery are presented in the context of the “day” (*yom*, cf. 3.7) of Midian, this term being not unlike a *kairos* event transcending the limits of space and time yet including them. Reference to Midian concerns Gideon’s stunning defeat recounted in Chapter Seven of Judges, of three hundred men who overwhelmed a massive army.

Here “yoke, staff and rod” are symbols of oppression which can be broken by a small band of determined people. Note the three terms which are similar in that they are used as sticks for punishment or beating. They are “broken” or *chatat* (cf. 8.9) which connotes fear:

1) *Hol* as related to *sovel* (‘burden’) where the two are found in 10.27: “In that day their burden will be lifted from your shoulders.” [10.27].

2) *Mateh* as related to *shekem* (‘shoulder’): “Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger” [10.5] and 10.27 cited in #1.

3) *Shevet* (also it refers to ‘tribe’) as related to *nagas* (‘oppressor,’ cf. 3.12). For the alternate meaning, see 49.6: “to raise up the tribes of Jacob.”

9-Vs. 5: For every boot of the trampling warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

This verse continues the image of Gideon’s victory over Midian or rather, its aftermath when the remnants of the battle will be destroyed. Perhaps Isaiah had in mind how the Midianites turned against each other unwittingly: “When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the Lord caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords” [Jud 7.22].

Rahash is the noun for “trampling” and fundamentally means noise, tumult. “The Lord

Almighty will come with thunder and earthquake and great noise” [29.6]. It modifies “warrior” or *sahan* (participle) from which is derived *se’on* or “battle.” Both are the only uses in the Bible.

Simlah means “garment” used by both men and women, usually an outer one, and noted last in 3.7.

9-Vs. 6: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Yeled is the noun for “child” along with the verb from which it is derived, *yalad* (‘is born’) found last in 8.18 but not noted there. Note two uses of “to us” (*lanu*) which brings home the point although neither the name nor the parents of the child is known. It could be Maher-shalal-hash-baz of 8.1, the child Isaiah was commanded to have by the prophetess. Still, there is no clear link between the two, and the child in the verse at hand disappears from the scene as quickly as he has appeared. Perhaps the Magi had this passage in mind once they got word concerning “the one who has been born king of the Jews” [Mt 2.2]. Although they had seen his star, this seems to have occurred after they got word of the child’s birth. Thus we lack any information about how the Magi discovered this—deliberately so—in order that the reader discover it on his own.

Misrah is the noun for “government” which has one other biblical reference in vs. 7. The verbal root is *sarah* which fundamentally means to place in a row, to set in order. Such rule will be placed on the child’s “shoulder” or *shekem* noted in vs. 4. Although this *misrah* isn’t spelled out, most likely it will be a king according to the line of David who is mentioned in the next verse.

The four names of this mysterious child with an important destiny are:

1) “Wonderful Counselor” or *Pele’ Yohets*. The first word is a noun suggestive of being distinct and therefore set apart. “You have done marvelous things” [25.1]. The second word is a participle of the verb *yahats* found last in 8.10.

2) “Mighty God” or *Gibor* found last in 5.22 which often refers to a warrior’s prowess in battle.

3) “Everlasting Father” or *‘Avyhad*, the only use of the term which is a compound of *‘av* (father) and the verb *yahad* (to appoint).

4) “Prince of Peace” or *Sar-Shalom*. The first is found last in 3.14 and the second is the well known word for peace found in the next verse.

9-Vs. 7: Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end upon the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Marbeh (from the verbal root *ravah*, cf. 9.3) means “increase” which has one other biblical reference, 33.23: “Then an abundance of spoils will be divided.” This noun is taken together with *shalom* or “peace” (cf. previous verse) and has no “end” or *qets* which also applies to an extremity. “But at the end of these seventy years” [23.1].

So the child mentioned in the previous verse will ascend the throne of David which most likely means he will be of that royal lineage. If so, his father will be king, a means of identifying him even if his name is kept secret for one reason or the other.

This new though as yet unknown king will both “establish and uphold” it, *kun* and *sahad*. The former is found last in 2.2 but not noted whereas the latter seems to refer to continued sustaining of that which already had been established. “You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me” [Ps 18.35]. Both *mishpat* and *tsedaqah* (cf. 5.16 for both) or “justice and righteousness” are the means of this ongoing support. This is something which doesn’t belong in the future but present, “from this time” or *mehatah*.

The future king who in a sense has already begun his reign as just noted (*mehatah*) isn’t acting on his own but by the Lord or more accurately, the divine “zeal” or *qin’ah* which also means envy and jealousy. “Ephraim’s jealousy will vanish” [11.13].

9-Vs. 8: The Lord has sent a word against Jacob, and it will light upon Israel;

The common verb *shalach* (‘sent’) is used with respect to a *davar* (‘word’) from the Lord (cf. 8.20). What that contains is not made known, but the people will know shortly (cf. next verse). This *davar* is not confined to a prophet or group of prophets but is to be shared both by Jacob and Israel. With regard to the latter, it will “light” upon that nation, *naphal* (cf. 3.8) being the common verb meaning to fall. That means the divine *davar* will gather weight and eventually fall from heaven upon Israel.

9-Vs. 9: and all the people will know, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, who say in pride and in arrogance of heart:

As for the relationship between Ephraim and Samaria, refer to 7.9: “The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.” And so while the divine *davar* comes to Jacob and Israel, these two other groups will “know” (*yadah*, cf. 6.9) about it. In fact, they will be able to see this *davar* fall (*naphal*) from heaven as noted above.

Regardless, Ephraim and Samaria will retain hearts hardened with “pride and arrogance” or *ga’avah* and *godel*. The former is similar to *ga’on* in 4.2 and found next in 13.3: “those who rejoice in my triumph.” The latter more specifically means greatness. “The willful pride of his heart” [10.12].

9-Vs. 10: "The bricks have fallen, but we will build with dressed stones; the sycamores have been cut down, but we will put cedars in their place."

Stones which are “dressed” or *gazyth* mean those which have been hewn compared with bricks which have been baked. In other words, something crafted by hand versus something which has been mass produced. “You have built houses of hewn stone” [Am 5.11].

“Cedars” or *erez* are often associated with Lebanon as mentioned in 2.13 but not noted there. Such timber went into construction of the temple during the reign of King Solomon (cf. 1Kg 5.6). So it seems that the people wished to imitate lavish public buildings as well as the temple at Jerusalem, the same sentiment that gave rise to the tower of Babel.

9-Vs. 11: So the Lord raises adversaries against them and stirs up their enemies.

The Hebrew text has “adversaries of Rezin” (cf. 8.6).

Now the Lord begins his action against the people who had taken excessive pride in their

building skills mirrored in their arrogance, again, not unlike what he did to those who erected the tower of Babel. Two verbs with regard to stirring up: “raises and stirs up” or *sagav* (cf. 2.17) and *sakak* which fundamentally means to cover, to protect. “I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian” [19.2].

9-Vs. 12: The Syrians on the east and the Philistines on the west devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.

“East and west” or *qedem* and *’achor*: the former is the preposition “before” as found last in 2.6 but not noted there and suggests being before, that is, the sun at its rising. The latter is the preposition “after” found last in 1.4 but not noted there and suggestive of being after the sun or its setting. So on these opposite points two of Israel’s traditional enemies are positioned with huge open mouths ready to devour her. Once the two mouths meet, they won’t kiss but proceed to devour each other. The other two directions (north and south) aren’t mentioned which would be the only escape routes. This image brings to mind some of what Rev 12.4 conveys: “And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth.”

During this devouring process from two (horizontal) directions the Lord is watching on though not taking any action to stop it. Rather, his “anger” or *’aph* (which refers to nostrils, cf. 5.25) is still breathing out fury while at the same time his hand is “stretched out (*natah*).” Both words are found in a similar sentence, 5.25: “For all this his anger is not turned away and his hand is stretched out still.”

9-Vs. 13: The people did not turn to him who smote them, nor seek the Lord of hosts.

A brief but poignant sentence, more like a sad commentary, where Isaiah couldn’t say more because there was nothing further to say. Here the verb *shuv* (cf. 6.10) means “did (not) turn;” compare with its use in the previous verse with regard to the Lord’s anger.

Darash (cf. 8.19) is the verb for “seek” and implies treading or actively going after something. “Hosts” suggests that the Lord is standing by with an angelic army more than enough to wipe out the Syrians and Philistines, but Israel failed to take advantage of this divine aide.

9-Vs. 14: So the Lord cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed in one day –

Karath (cf. 3.9) is the verb for “cut off” with regard to two sets of leaders who are identified in the next verse, that is, respected men in Israel. It hearkens back to the divine threat made in 3.1:

1) “Head and tail” or *r’osh* (cf. 7.10) and *zanav* noted last in 7.4 as “stumps” but not mentioned there.

2) “Palm branch and reed” or *kipah* and *’agmon*. The former has two other biblical references, 19.15 and Job 15.32, the former being cited here: “There is nothing Egypt can do—head or tail, palm branch or reed.” The latter is contained in the verse just cited.

Mentioned of “one day” (*yom*) is, like in vs. 4, a *kairos* event when something special or ominous happens, the duration or passage of time being secondary.

9-Vs. 15: the elder and honored man is the head, and the prophet who teaches lies is the tail;

Again, two sets based upon the previous verse and which will continue into the next verse:

1) *Ro'sh* or "head" = "elder and "honored man" or *zaqen* (cf. 3.14) literally, "one who is lifted up (*nasa'*, cf. 6.1) of faces." Here *ro'sh* is comprised of two men whereas the tail represents one, the prophet.

2) *Navey* or "prophet" mentioned last in 3.2 but not noted there. Isaiah has special contempt for false prophets, he being one as well. This type of prophet teaches "lies" or *sheqer*. "For we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place" [28.15].

9-Vs. 16: for those who lead this people lead them astray, and those who are led by them are swallowed up.

Two pairs:

1) "Lead and lead astray:" *'ashar* and *tahah*. The former is noted in 1.17 and means to be straight. From it is derived the relative pronoun *'asher* (who, which). The latter is noted in 3.12 and is the exact opposite of the former. Note the beginning of each verb: aleph and tau, the first and last letters (i.e., the extremes) of the Hebrew alphabet.

2) "Are led and "are swallowed up:" *'ashar* and *balah*, the latter being noted in 3.12. This is the second reference with regard to mouths or eating, the other being vs. 12.

9-Vs. 17: Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over their young men and has no compassion on their fatherless and widows; for every one is godless and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.

Hal-ken or "therefore" brings to a head the calamitous situation begun back in vs. 8 and which unfortunately continues through the rest of this chapter and beyond.

Samach is the verb for "does (not) rejoice" noted last in 9.3 with regard to "young men" or *bachur*, those who are still young but mature though not yet married. "I have neither reared sons nor brought up daughters" [23.4].

Racham means "has (no) compassion" and refers to tender compassion; the noun for "bowels" is derived from it. "They will have no mercy on infants" [13.18].

The reason for withholding both rejoicing and this special tender mercy is because the people have become both "godless and an evildoer" or *chaneph*, an adjective which means profane. "I send him against a godless nation" [10.6]. As for the latter, *rahah* is a participle noted last in 8.9.

In addition to these two, the Lord adds that the mouth of each and every one of them speaks "folly" or *nevalah* which comes from a verbal root meaning to lose one's strength, to fade. "For the fool speaks folly" [32.6].

As for the second sentence, it is very similar to vs. 12 and 5.25 as noted there and well as below. It seems the Lord wishes to communicate that he means business, that he is serious and will not relent in his punishment for some time to come.

9-Vs. 18: For wickedness burns like a fire, it consumes briars and thorns; it kindles the thickets of the forest, and they roll upward in a column of smoke.

Note three similar words, two of which pertain to eating: “burns, consumes and kindles:” *bahar* (cf. 5.5 where it means ‘devoured’ plus the next verse), *’akal* (the common verb ‘to eat,’ cf. 1.20) and *yatsath* which refers to the starting of a fire. “Like cut thorn bushes they will be set ablaze” [33.12]. The result of all three is *’avak* or “roll upward” after having been consumed in smoke, this verb being the only use in the Bible.

9-Vs. 19: Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts the land is burned and the people are like fuel for the fire; no man spares his brother.

Hatam is the verb for “burned,” the only use of this term in the Bible and implies being laid waste, here by divine “wrath” or *hevrah* which connotes an outpouring and thus continuous flow of anger assuming the form of fire. “I dispatch him against a people who anger me” [10.6].

Again the image of fire as devouring with “fuel” or *ma’akolet* derived from the verbal root *’akal* as in vs. 18 and found last in vs. 5 but not noted there. Similar to this all-consuming fire/wrath is that of men; i.e., no one “spares” his brother, *chamal* meaning to be gentle or mild. “It will break in pieces like pottery, shattered so mercilessly” [30.14].

9-Vs. 20: They snatch on the right but are still hungry, and they devour on the left, but are not satisfied; each devours his neighbor's flesh,

Gazar means “snatch” and connotes a cutting as with wood. “For he was cut off from the land” [53.8].

Three similar verbs: “hungry, (not) satisfied and “devours:” *rahev* (cf. 8.21 but not noted there), *savah* (cf. 1.11) and *’akal* (cf. vs. 18).

9-Vs. 21: Manasseh Ephraim and Ephraim Manasseh, and together they are against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away and his hand is stretched out still.

These two tribes had fought each other for centuries (cf. Judg 12.4+). The second sentence is the same as vs. 17 as well as vs. 12 and 5.25. It acts as a refrain or better, a reminder of the wickedness involved which will continue into the next chapter concerning Assyria.

Chapter Ten

This chapter commences the first extended section of woes or curses which constitute significant parts of the Book of Isaiah. Right away one gets the impression this will be a theme by the chapter’s opening word of “woe” or *hoy* (cf. 6.5). Although *hoy* appears just once in Chapter Ten, it is intended to pervade it fully.

Going through each and every verse relative to cursing or woes would be a tedious process as noted in the Introduction. One way of dealing with these verses is to center upon a few key words or ideas and list them, including references, that is, to say, a kind of abbreviated form of notations. This abbreviated format is used for those extended passages pertaining to curses and condemnations of various nations, etc. Starting with 19.16 key words and concepts are listed without each verse being spelled out as is the case at hand. In that instances and in

others which follow, the verses are given all together.

10-Vs. 1: Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees and the writers who keep writing oppression,

-“Decree iniquitous decrees.” The verb *chaqaq* as “decree” means to cut into in the sense of to hack, a rather violent action from which is derived *choq* or “decree” (cf. 5.14). “Destruction has been decreed” [10.22].

-“Writers who keep writing oppression.” *Katav* is the verb for “write” (cf. 4.3) and pertains to “oppression” or *hamal* which also refers to labor or whatever is heavy. “He shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied” [53.11].

10-Vs. 2: to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey!

“Turn aside the needy.” The verb *natah* also means to stretch forth as in 9.12, here as keeping them away at arm’s length, if you will, or as far away as possible. *Dal* is the adjective for “needy” and fundamentally means something which is hanging or swinging. “But with righteousness he shall judge the poor” [11.4].

“Rob the poor...of their right.” The verb *gazal* is as violent as *chaqaq* in vs. 1 and means to strip or pluck off by force. “Rob not the poor” [Prov 22.22]. *Hany* means “poor” (cf. 3.14) as well as affliction or misery. It is more common than *dal* which seems a more forceful word by reason of directly being applicable to anyone who is completely powerless. What is of issue here is the “right” of these people, *mishpat* (cf. 9.7 as ‘justice’).

“Widows as spoil.” *Almanah* (cf. 1.17) who here are equated as material objects, “spoil” or *shalal* (cf. 8.1), taken from after a battle or some kind of conflict.

“Fatherless as prey.” *Yatom* (cf. 1.17) as *bazaz* (cf. 8.1), where *baz* is similar to *shalal*.

10-Vs. 3: What will you do on the day of punishment, in the storm which will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help, and where will you leave your wealth?

-“Day of punishment.” As noted several times earlier, *yom* as “day” is along the lines of *kairos*, an event, independent of duration. Here it pertains to *pequdah* or “punishment.”

-“Storm from afar.” *Sho’ah* is the noun for “storm,” more as complete desolation. “And ruin shall come upon you suddenly” [47.11]. *Mimerchaq* or “from afar” may be taken as the Assyrian invasion.

-“Flee for help” and “leave and wealth.” *Nus* is the verb: “and every man will flee to his own land” [13.14]. *Hezrah* or “help” is found next in 20.6: “This is what happened to those...to whom we fled for help” [20.6]. It is similar in sound to *hazav* (cf. 1.28) or “leave” with regard to “wealth,” *kavod* also applicable to glory (cf. 6.3).

10-Vs. 4: Nothing remains but to crouch among the prisoners or fall among the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away and his hand is stretched out still.

-“Crouch among prisoners.” This phrase as well as the next has the preposition *tachat* or “under” which implies total abjection and ruin. *Karah* means to bow or to bend one’s knees.

“Bel bows down, Nebo stoops” [46.1].

-“Fall among slain.” *Naphal* of “fall” (cf. 9.9) with regard to those who have been “slain” or *harag* as in 14.19: “clothed with the slain, those pierced by the sword” [14.19].

-“Anger not turned away.” *Aph* or “anger” refers to nostrils or breathing out fury (cf. 9.12).

-“Hand stretched out.” *Natah* (cf. vs. 2).

10-Vs. 5: Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger, the staff of my fury!

-“Rod and staff.” *Shevet* and *mateh*: both are found in 9.4, the former often applicable to a tribe and here applicable to Assyria. These words read literally as “a staff it is in their hand my fury.” In the verse at hand, the *shevet* is associated with *aph* or “anger” (cf. vs. 4) and *mateh* with “fury” or *zaham* found next in vs. 25 as “indignation.”

10-Vs. 6: Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

-“Godless nation.” A *goy* (cf. 9.3) which is *chaneph*, an adjective which means profane (cf. 9.17).

-“People of my wrath.” A *ham* (cf. 2.4, a more generic term) which is the object of divine *hevrah* (cf. 9.19) which connotes an outpouring.

10-Vs. 7: But he does not so intend, and his mind does not so think; but it is in his mind to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few;

-“Intend” or *damah* which fundamentally means to liken as noted in 1.9.

-“Mind does not so think.” *Levav* noted last in 1.5 and often refers to the heart. Here it is associated with the verb *chashav* noted last in 2.22 and implies a taking into account.

10-Vs. 8: for he says: "Are not my commanders all kings?"

“Commanders and kings” or *sar* (cf. 3.14) and *melek* (cf. 8.21: not noted there).

10-Vs. 9: Is not Calno like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad? Is not Samaria like Damascus?

Calno, Carchemish, Hamath and Arpad: four lands conquered by Tiglath-Pileser III.

10-Vs. 10: As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols whose graven images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria,

-“Kingdoms of the idols:” *Elyl* (cf. 2.18) which connote vanity. Their association with kingdoms indicates just how pervasive are these empty objects of worship.

-“Graven images:” *pesylym* is derived from a verbal root meaning to carve or to form by cutting. “Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the images of her gods he has shattered to the ground” [21.9].

10-Vs. 11: shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols as I have done to Samaria and her images?"

"Images" or *'elyl* as in the previous verse.

10-Vs. 12: When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem he will punish the arrogant boasting of the king of Assyria and his haughty pride.

-“Finished” or *batsah* means to cut or break into pieces. It is used in a negative sense with respect not only to Jerusalem but to Mount Zion and by implication, the temple located there, the Lord’s own dwelling place. Use of the verb *batsah* clearly indicates that the work involved is one not so much of destruction but of purgation although that can involve both.

-The following two pertain to the king of Assyria who will do the punishing or *paqad* (in the verse at hand the first person singular is used), a verb with multiple meanings such as to visit, to review, to attack. “At the end of seventy years the Lord will visit Tyre” [23.17]:

1) “Arrogant boasting” which reads literally as “on the fruit of insolence of heart. *Godel* (cf. 9.9) and *levav* (cf. vs. 7).

2) “Haughty pride” or literally, “on the beauty of the highness of his eyes.” *Tiph’arah* (cf. 4.2) which applies more to an ornament and *rum* (cf. 6.1) which is similar to *godel* but connotes rising.

10-Vs. 13: For he says: "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I have understanding; I have removed the boundaries of peoples and have plundered their treasures; like a bull I have brought down those who sat on thrones.

-“Strength and wisdom” or *koach* and *chakmah*. “And there is no strength to bring them (children) forth” [37.3]. “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding” [11.2].

-“Plundered” or *shasah* which means to take spoil as in battle. “This is the portion of those who despoil us and the lot of those who plunder us” [17.14]. The object of such plundering here is “treasures” or *hatyd*, an adjective with five other biblical references and means prompt or prepared. “Let those curse it who curse the day, who are skilled to rouse up Leviathan” [Job 3.8].

-*Abyr* is an adjective meaning “bull” and means mighty or strong. “Young steers with the mighty bulls” [34.7].

10-Vs. 14: My hand has found like a nest the wealth of the peoples; and as men gather eggs that have been forsaken so I have gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved a wing or opened the mouth, or chirped."

-“Nest and wealth:” *qen* and *chayl* (cf. 5.22). The former often pertains to a nest in a lofty place such as belonging to an eagle. “Like fluttering birds, like scattered nestlings, so are the daughters of Moab” [16.2].

-“Gathered” or *asaph* connotes assembling as well as an increase. It is used last in 4.1 but not noted there as “take away.”

-“Chirp” or *tsaphaph* has three other references, all in Isaiah, the last being 8.19.

10-Vs. 15: Shall the ax vaunt itself over him who hews with it or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it? As if a rod should wield him who lifts it or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood!

-“Ax and saw:” *garzen* which has three other biblical references, one of which is Dt 9.15: “And his hand swings the axe to cut a tree.” *Masur* is the only biblical reference.

-“Rod and staff:” *shevet* and *mateh*: for both, cf. vs. 5.

10-Vs. 16: Therefore the Lord, the Lord of hosts, will send wasting sickness among his stout warriors, and under his glory a burning will be kindled, like the burning of fire.

-“Wasting sickness and burning:” *razon* intimates being lean and has three biblical references, one being Ps 106.15: “He gave them what they asked but sent a wasting disease among them.” *Yeqod* is the only biblical reference and used with the verbal root *yaqad* found next in 30.14: “That among its fragments not a sherd is found with which to take fire from the hearth.” In the verse at hand, such *yeqod* will come into existence under the divine “glory” or *kavod* (cf. vs. 3).

10-Vs. 17: The light of Israel will become a fire and his Holy One a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and briars in one day.

Three similar words: “light, fire and flame” or *’or* (cf. 9.2), *’esh* and *lehavah*. The last is found in 5.24 but not noted there.

10-Vs. 18: The glory of his forest and of his fruitful land the Lord will destroy, both soul and body, and it will be as when a sick man wastes away.

“Glory” or *kavod* (cf. vs. 16) with respect to forest and fruitful land. Both are equivalent to the land’s “soul and body” or *nephesh* (cf. 1.14) and *basar* as in 9.20 but not noted there. The latter often refers to flesh.

10-Vs. 19: The remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few that a child can write them down.

“Remnant” or *she’ar* is found last in 7.3 as part of the proper name Shear-jashub, a Remnant Shall return.” “The remnant of the trees of his forest” reads literally as “the remnant of tree of his wood.”

10-Vs. 20: In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean upon him that smote them but will lean upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

“In that day” or *yom* (cf. vs. 3) is another example along the lines of *kairos*, an event which is independent of duration.

“Remnant and survivors” or *she’ar* and *peleytah* (cf. 4.2) are similar. For the former, cf. vs. 19 which connotes those who have been left behind by an enemy (i.e., the Assyrian invasion).

They were deemed as unworthy of being led off into captivity so were left as stewards of a devastated land who will answer to the invaders pretty much as to absentee landlords. The latter derives from the verbal root *palat* meaning to escape, to deliver. While a *peleytah* may be called a *she'ar*, more specifically it refers to someone who has just emerged from a devastating attack and as soon as possible attempts to re-establish normal life.

The leaning or *shahan* at hand can apply to both groups, that is, their reliance in near total destitution upon Assyria which just now has ravaged them. "Because you despise this word and trust in oppression and perverseness, and rely on them" [30.12]. The verb *yasaph* (cf. 8.6) is used with *shahan* which emphasizes this dependence which shifts to the Lord or more specifically, in "truth" or *'emeth*. "And on it (throne) will sit in faithfulness in the tent of David one who judges and seeks justice" [16.5]. So once this *shahan* shifts from Assyria to the Lord, the trick is to maintain it which means cultivating what it means to be both a remnant and survivor over an extended period of time.

10-Vs. 21: A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.

Note the play on words: *she'ar yashuv*, "remnant will return." Here the *she'ar* of the last two verses is specified more as belonging to Jacob and as having not been left among the ruins or nearby cultivating vines, etc. Instead, Jacob has been taken captive to points unknown. The time frame isn't given but is secondary to the narrative at hand as to the place to which he will be restored. More important is the God who is "mighty" or *gibor*. Refer to 9.6 for this term which often applies to a warrior, and the Lord is viewed as such in order to free Jacob from the Assyrian captivity.

10-Vs. 22: For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness.

Now the action shifts from Judah to Israel, the Lord fully aware that both kingdoms are split and hopes to reunite them as one. Israel is likened to the vision of Abraham: "I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore" [Gn 22.17]. In light of this call, Israel, like Jacob, is compared to a *she'ar*. What will happen to the rest en route to their destination? Although the Lord takes the initiative as in vs. 21, just a *she'ar* will make it, that is, will return to "the mighty God."

The theme of *she'ar* and others like it pervade the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, despite salvation being offered to all. With this in mind, emphasis upon the *she'ar* at hand is more and adventure than awaiting a cold, indifferent fate.

Kilayon is the noun for "destruction" and connotes a wasting away, so it's an apt description of what will happen to Israel as remnant as she makes her way back to "the mighty God." That is to say, most of the people will waste away and not be sustained as had been the case under Moses' leadership for forty years in the Sinai wilderness. In fact, the return journey may be much longer than forty years. *Kilayon* has one other reference, Dt 28.65: "The Lord will give you there a trembling heart, failing eyes and a languishing soul."

In the verse at hand, the wasting away, if you will, is "decreed" or *charats* which means to sharpen and thus represents a more draconian decree. *Charats* is in the next verse, the same context.

Shataph means "overflowing" as in 8.8 and pertains to "righteousness," *tsedaqah* (cf. 9.7).

Thus Israel must make its way upstream, as it were, to “the might God” as she encounters this *tsedaqah* which is the determining factor to who gets beyond it.

10-Vs. 23: For the Lord, the Lord of hosts, will make a full end as decreed in the midst of all the earth.

This verse begins with two words for “Lord,” *Adonay* and *YHWH*, the second associated more specifically with “hosts” or *tseva’oth* (cf. 8.13). It’s a way the Lord wishes to establish who is in charge, a fact that Israel doesn’t seem to grasp but misses many times.

Charats as “make full end” is noted in the previous verse, as though the Lord will fashion a spear (verbal root means to sharpen) and hurl it down upon the earth. He won’t just do this in a general sort of way but in the “midst” or *qerev* of the earth (cf. 6.13). By so aiming at the earth’s very center this spear, if you will, will cause the earth to explode, for it has been “decreed” or *kalah* (cf. 1.28) suggestive of coming to completion or a full end.

10-Vs. 24: Therefore thus says the Lord, the Lord of hosts: "O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they smite with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did.

A second example of two names for the “Lord” as noted in the previous verse, this use of *tseva’oth* being associated with an angelic army which will wage war on the Assyrian invaders. The Lord’s “people” (*ham*, cf. vs. 6) are dwelling in Zion compared with the *ham* of Israel in vs. 21 who will return to “the mighty God.” At first this seems confusing, but *gibor* of vs. 21 is pretty much equivalent to *tseva’oth*. Also Zion is specified, hinting at the temple located there. As for the people dwelling in Zion, it seems they have returned to Jerusalem some time ago and have settled down there.

The Lord bids the people not to fear the Assyrians. More specifically, the verse seems to indicate that the enemy has not just besieged the city but penetrated the defenses. Such is the meaning of the Assyrians smiting (*nakah*, cf. 1.5) both with “rod and staff,” *shevet* and *mateh* (cf. 10.15 for both).

Although reference is made to a past conflict with Egypt which isn’t specified, there comes to mind the image of Moses who turned the tables against the Egyptians by using his *mateh* to divide the Red Sea (cf. Ex 14.16).

10-Vs. 25: For in a very little while my indignation will come to an end, and my anger will be directed to their destruction.

Hod metah mizhar or “in a very little while” is not unlike the idea of *yom* as in vs. 20, “in that day” or a *kairos* event although to the people involved this can seem a long time, especially when the Assyrians are invading and the situation seems lost.

“Indignation and anger” or *zaham* and *aph* (cf. vs. 5 for both). The former will “come to and end” or *kalah* (cf. vs. 23) and the latter will “be directed” (no verb in the Hebrew) to the “destruction” of the Assyrians, *tavlyth*, the only use of this noun in the Bible which is derived from the verbal root *balah* (cf. 9.16). It is prefaced with the preposition *hal-* or literally “upon destruction.”

10-Vs. 26: And the Lord of hosts will wield against them a scourge as when he smote Midian at the rock of Oreb; and his rod will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt.

While the Israelites are being pummeled by their Assyrian attackers, the Lord reminds them of past events where he came to rescue them. The first concerns the defeat of Midian, the rock of Oreb, where with just one hundred men Gideon captured Oreb and Zeeb (cf. Jdg 7.25), a victory celebrated in Ps 83, especially vs. 11: "Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna." The second involves the divine "rod" or *mateh* alluded to in vs. 24, that is, Moses dividing the Red Sea so Israel could pass through.

Hur is the verb for "wield" which more fundamentally refers to rousing or waking up. "(Sheol) rouses the shades to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth" [14.9]. In the verse at hand, the object of this rousing is a "scourge" or *shot* which refers to a whip. "When the overwhelming scourge passes through, it will not come to us" [28.15].

10-Vss. 27-32: And in that day his burden will depart from your shoulder, and his yoke will be destroyed from your neck." He has gone up from Rimmon, he has come to Aiath; he has passed through Migron, at Michmash he stores his baggage; they have crossed over the pass, at Geba they lodge for the night; Ramah trembles, Gibeah of Saul has fled. Cry aloud, O daughter of Gallim! Hearken, O Laishah! Answer her, O Anathoth! Madmenah is in flight, the inhabitants of Gebim flee for safety. This very day he will halt at Nob, he will shake his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

These six verses refer to the approach from the north to Israel taken by the Assyrians under the leadership of Tiglath-Pileser III. Reference to numerous places from north to south serve to increase the tension until the king reaches Nob (cf. vs. 32) where he will threaten Jerusalem itself.

Here is yet another reference "to that day" or *yom* (cf. vs. 20) which, given the verses involved, extend beyond a twenty-four hour period yet are designated as *yom* by reason of the major threat from Assyria involved.

Reference to "burden" or *sovel* hearkens back to 9.4 with the same imagery. The same applies to "yoke" or *hol*, also in this verse.

10-Vs. 33: Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts will lop the boughs with terrifying power; the great in height will be hewn down and the lofty will be brought low.

Another pair of "Lord" as *'Adon* (a variation of *'Adonay* found last in vs. 16 but not noted there) and *YHWH* with regard to *tseva'oth* or "hosts" which comes toward the conclusion of Chapter Ten. *Maharatsah* or "terrifying power" is the only use of the term in the Bible from the verbal root *harats* (cf. 8.13) meaning to be dreadful. It applies to the invading army of Tiglath-Pileser III.

A contrast between *gavoah* (cf. 7.11) and *shaphel* (cf. 5.16) or "lofty and 'brought low."

10-Vs. 34: He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an axe, and Lebanon with its majestic trees will fall.

Barzel means "axe" (compare with *masur* in vs. 15) which commonly refers to iron. "The

iron smith fashions it and works it over the coals” [44.12]. The trees of Lebanon represent pride because they are “majestic” or *‘adyr* which connotes being mighty or glorious. “But there the Lord in majesty will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams” [33.21]. The Israelites take delight in the falling of Lebanon’s trees...most likely referring to the cedars...for they can be used to reconstruct any damage to the temple (cf. 1Kg 5.6).

Chapter Eleven

11-Vs. 1: There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The conjunctive *v-* for “therefore” is used which normally means “and.” It is found in many verses throughout Isaiah as a means of connecting the flow of thought, not so much speeding the reader along with the text. For example, *w-* shows the connection between the last chapter and the current one, making a seamless transition.

Choter is the noun for “shoot” with one other biblical reference, Prov 14.3: “The talk of a fool is a rod for his back, but the lips of the wise will preserve them.” In the verse at hand, such a shoot will appear at a future time and place yet to be determined. However, it will arise not simply from Jesse (father of King David, cf. 1Sam 16.1-20) but from him as a “stump” or *gezah* which has two other references, one being Job 14.8 and the other 40.24: “Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth when he blows upon them.” In other words, *gezah* represents a tree that had been felled for some reason or another, symbolic of the unfortunate state of decline which befell the line of King David. Even though the time of the shoot’s appearing is not given, the line of King David will remain which is assurance enough.

Netser is a “branch” or sprout which has three other biblical references, two of which are in Isaiah, the first being 14.19: “like a loathed untimely birth” (the **RSV**) whereas the Hebrew reads “a loathed branch.” This branch will come from the very roots of Jesse, suggestive of the glory days of King David or even earlier, when Samuel anointed him as king to succeed Saul.

11-Vs. 2: And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

As noted in the last verb, the conjunctive *v-* for “therefore” commonly means “and” as it does with vs. 2 showing the close connection between them.

Note three “spirits” or *ruach* (cf. 4.4) which derive from the divine *Ruach*, breathed out, if you will. First this *Ruach* as source must “rest upon” the shoot and branch, two words for the same person who has yet to be identified. The verb at hand is *nuach* (cf. 7.2) which sounds a lot like *ruach*. With this in mind, the following three pairs are to share in this *nuach*, being informed by *ruach*:

1) The *ruach* of “wisdom” or *chakmah* (cf. 10.13) which originally means technical skill. This *ruach* combines *chakmah* with *bynah* (‘understanding’) as a pair, the latter being applied to insight and is related to the preposition “between”...a spirit of being able to see between things, if you will. “For this is a people without discernment” [27.11].

2) A second pair involving *ruach*, namely, “counsel and might” or *hetsah* (cf. 5.19) and

gevurah (cf. 3.25 but not noted there).

3) The third pair with regard to “knowledge and fear” or *dahath* (cf. 5.13) and *yir’ah* (cf. vs. 7.25 but not noted there). In the verse at hand, this *yir’ah* is more specific as pertaining to the Lord in the next verse.

11-Vs. 3: And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear;

Ruach is a verb, the only use in Isaiah, and more commonly refers to the sense of smell. “And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor” [Gn 8.21, hiphil form of verb]. Note that this verb is used with the preposition *b-* (in), presence-in this divine fear. With this notion of smell in mind, the future shoot/branch from Jesse’s stump, his cut-off remainder, will smell the *yir’ah* or “fear” of the Lord which means he will inhale it not unlike inhaling incense, fear here meaning respect. By way of note, the verb for “fear and see” (*yare’* and *ra’ah*) can be very similar in their varying forms, thereby enabling an exchange, if you will, between them: to fear is to see and to see is to fear.

Because the future ruler in the line of King David will have this sense of smell being operative, he will not “judge” (*shaphat*, cf. 5.3) with the senses of sight nor hearing. Nothing is said about the sense of touch, but it can be implied. Should we play along with this a bit, the ruler’s *ruach*...his smell...will be the guiding principle of all his actions which are spelled out in the next verse.

11-Vs. 4: but with righteousness he shall judge the poor and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.

Here is where that sense of *ruach*...smell or better, scent (a more delicate, all-inclusive term) comes into play, namely, “righteousness and equity” or *tsedeq* (cf. 1.27) and *myshur*. The latter also means a plain or level country. “The uneven ground shall become level and the rough places a plain.” [40.4].

The verb “judge” or *shaphat* (previous verse) is associated with *tsedeq* and pertains to the “poor” or *dal* (adjective) noted last in 10.2 where this word is compared with the more well known one for the poor, *hany*, and is found next.

The verb “decide” is *yakach* (cf. 2.4) which connotes confuting or convicting and pertains to the “meek” or *hanav* found next in 29.19. *Yakach* is used with the preposition *l-* or literally, “to the meek” compared with the verb *shaphat* which has the preposition *b-* or literally “in righteousness.”

Shevet is the noun for “rod” (cf. 10.24) which this new king will use to strike the earth. The words “of his mouth” suggest not that it comes physically from there but by reason of the words he will speak as king, and these words derive ultimately from the *ruach* or sense of smell delineated in vs. 3. Closely related to this *ruach* is his “breath” or the noun *ruach* which won’t be a gentle breeze but a powerful wind which will slay the “wicked” (*rashah*, cf. 3.11). Thus two actions from one mouth: the rod and breath or *shevet* and *ruach*.

11-Vs. 5: Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

“Righteousness and faithfulness” *tsedeq* (cf. vs. 4) and *‘emunah*, the latter derived from the verbal root *‘aman* as in 8.2. “Girdle” or *‘ezor* (found last in 5.27 but not noted there) is used twice, this verse being reminiscent of the “son of man” in Rev 1.13-16 (‘with a golden girdle round his breast,’ vs. 13). Also consider the seven angels in 15.6: “and their breasts girded with golden girdles.”

11-Vs. 6: The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.

Three pairs of animals are naturally hostile to each other, and that is carried over to the next two verses. Note the two verbs relative to their harmony, “dwell and lie down” or *gur* and *ravats*. The former means to tarry or sojourn for a period of time, not necessarily in a permanent fashion but for an extended period of time. Consider 54.15 with a different meaning which implies a gathering and hence stirring up: “If anyone stirs up strike, it is not from me.” The latter means to recline much as a four-footed animal folds its legs under its body, not unlike a crouching position. It is found in the next verse.

A “child” who is little or a *nahar* noted last in 7.16 with respect to Immanu-el could be the one involved. He doesn’t let these animals hang around but leads them, *nahag* often used with driving a flock and thus implying a certain force. “For he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them” [40.10].

11-Vs. 7: The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Another pair of unlikely opposites where the two verbs worth noting are “feed and lie down” or *raha* and *ravats* (cf. vs. 6), the former usually pertaining to the way a flock consumes food or grass. *Raha* is found last in 5.17 but not noted there. Perhaps something of this harmony is taken from the way the animals on Noah’s ark behaved for the duration of the flood, that is, one hundred and fifty days (cf. Gn 7.24). In the verse at hand a promise is made that this will be replicated by the “little child” of vs. 6.

11-Vs. 8: The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den.

Two words for a very young child: *yoneq* and *gamal* (both participles) for “suckling child and weaned child.” The former is found in participle form in 49.23: “Kings shall be your foster fathers and their queens your nursing mothers.” The latter is found last in 3.11 as “shall be done” and next in 28.9: “those who are weaned from the milk.” Obviously both *yoneq* and *gamal* are younger than that the *nahar* (‘little child’) of vs. 6. In the verse at hand, this child, symbol of innocence, will “play” or *shahah* which fundamentally means to stroke, to overspread and is noted last in 6.10 as “shut.”

11-Vs. 9: They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Two verbs relative to destruction by the wolf, leopard, lion, bear, asp and adder in the

past few verses: ‘hurt and destroy’ or *rahaḥ* and *shachat*, the former being noted last in 9.17 and the latter in 1.4. They pertain to the Lord’s mountain which is “holy” or *qodesh* (cf. 6.13) most likely is the temple in Zion with allusions to Sinai, the two being considered close to identical. “Those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem” [27.13].

Dehah is the noun for “knowledge,” closely related to the more common *dahath*, and has five other biblical references. “Whom will he teach knowledge and to whom will he explain the message” [28.9]? While such *dahah* will cover the earth—not unlike the waters of the primeval chaos in Genesis and the flood at Noah’s time though this time it will be beneficial—the Lord’s “holy mountain” will be the only landmass that will stand out amid all this water. However, forgetfulness of this water persists. Consider the image of a fish being in the water yet unaware of it.

11-Vs. 10: In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious.

“In that day,” a phrase first found in 2.11 and remarked upon frequently throughout Isaiah by reason of it being akin to a *kairos* event. In the context at hand, this *yom* (‘day’) will occur once the flood, if you will, of divine knowledge mentioned in the previous verse has enveloped the earth. Unlike earlier dealings in Isaiah with human wickedness, this divine knowledge comes about because the “Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” [Gn 6.5].

Because Mount Zion will be the only land above the water of divine knowledge, on it will be located the “root” of Jesse or *shoresh* (cf. vs. 1 but not noted) which was planted there once King David transferred the ark of the Lord to Jerusalem described in Chapter Six of Second Samuel. Although a root is beneath the ground, this one will show its fruit by becoming an “ensign” or *nes* (cf. 5.26) for all to behold which means a standard or flag, often with military connotations. This *nes* simply won’t be set up but “will stand” or *hamad* (cf. 10.32 but not noted there), a verb connoting permanence. Following through with this image, we could say that the people are on the new ark floating upon the waters of divine knowledge as they await making landfall with Mount Zion. Once they reach it, they discover that it is the source of this knowledge.

The “nations” (*goy*, cf. 10.6) more specifically imply non-Israelites compared with the more general term *ham* or “peoples.” In sum, both will be attracted to Zion, having seen it from afar off, *darash* being the verb for “seek” (cf. 9.13, implies treading).

Once the peoples and nations have landed at the shores of Mount Zion, they will recognize that the new king from Jesse’s root will have “dwellings” which will be “glorious.” *Menuchah* more specifically means rest or refuge compared with a place to live though quite applicable to Zion. “This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose” [28.12]. *Kavod* is a noun (cf. 10.18) and by reason of its brightness intimates a lighthouse of sorts. Thus the text reads literally as “rest of glory.”

11-Vs. 11: In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant which is left of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Ethiopia, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath and from the coastlands of the sea.

Mention of “in that day” a second time in a row intimates the supreme importance of Mount Zion as “holy mountain.” The Lord will be situated at Zion’s very summit from which he will “extend” his hand, *yasaph* (cf. 10.10) being suggestive of increase or extension which is continuous. So while this divine hand may be extended, the rest of the Lord, if you will, remains enveloped in the thick dark cloud often described in Exodus. The purpose for this extension is for the Lord to gather a “remnant” or *she’ar* (cf. 10.22) of his people who have been scattered in quite a few disparate places, that is, eight of them. This will happen, of course, once the divine knowledge of vs. 9 covers the earth, thereby drowning all the captives of the Lord.

11-Vs. 12: He will raise an ensign for the nations and will assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Vs. 10 speaks of an “ensign” or *nes* with respect to the root of Jesse which will take up a given position, not unlike a flag upon a hill acting as a rallying point. In the verse at hand the root of Jesse (still not identified) will raise this *nes* so that the nations may see it. Nothing is said, however, as to the exact nature of this ensign. Consider, for example, when Aaron and Hur supported the arms of Moses with the battle against Amalek. As long as his arms were extended, Israel prevailed (cf. Ex 17.8+) meaning that Israel had to keep one eye on this *nes* at all times while keeping another eye on the battle itself.

Nadach is a verb for “outcasts” noted last in 8.22 as having been thrust out, most likely those who comprised as small group who were not led into exile but simply scattered. How or when they will be driven out isn’t specified, for according to the theme of Chapter Ten, the Assyrian army has not managed to take Jerusalem. Perhaps those who had been cast out were people who weren’t necessarily outlaws but criticized the political and religious situation which had precipitated the invasion by Assyria.

Naphats is a verb for “dispersed” and suggests breaking or dashing to pieces. “Like chalkstones crushed to pieces” [27.9]. This seems to be a word with slightly less harsh connotations compared with *nadach* though both are quite close. Thus while the former verb applies to Israel and the latter to Judah, the implication is that both tribes will be united.

As for *nadach* and *naphats*, it will be with regard to the four “corners” of the earth, *kanaph* fundamentally meaning a wing and a wing can represent the flight to those distant places, the number four implying as far away from home as you can get. *Kanaph* is found in 10.14 but not noted there.

11-Vs. 13: The jealousy of Ephaim shall depart, and those who harass Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim.

This verse speaks of “jealousy and “harass” which go hand-in-hand, the two words being *qin’ah* and *tsarar*. The former applies to anything acquired or purchased and is found last in 9.7 as “zeal.” Its verbal root is *qanah* as “shall (not) be jealous.” The latter is noted last in 8.16 as “bind.” The two verbs associated with each are *sur* (cf. 6.7) and *karath* (cf. 9.14).

11-Vs. 14: But they shall swoop down upon the shoulder of the Philistines in the west, and together they shall plunder the people of the east. They shall put forth their hand against Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites shall obey them.

Implied here is an alliance brought about by the person identified as the root of Jesse who had set up an ensign as a rallying point for the various tribes. Once assembled, all will “swoop down” upon their traditional enemies, the Philistines, who had been living in and among them for centuries. *Huph* is the verb which means to fly, not necessarily to attack as implied here. It is found last in 6.2 but not noted there, that is, with regard to the seraphim. Such *huph* will take place in the west, an action countered by one from the east, that is, plundering or *bazaz* mentioned last in 10.2. Finally, Edom and Moab will be subdued with the Ammonites obeying them, *shamah* (to hear) being the verb (cf. 6.9).

11-Vs. 15: And the Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt; and will wave his hand over the River with his scorching wind and smite it into seven channels that men may cross dryshod.

These last two verses of Chapter Eleven pertain to the most significant event in Israel's history, departure from Egypt by crossing the Red Sea on foot. By appealing to this sacred memory the man sprung from Jesse's root will remind the people of their heritage as a means of projecting it into the present.

Charam is the verb for “utterly destroy” which fundamentally meanings to shut up or prohibit as well as consecrating to destruction. Thus *charam* has religious overtones with regard to the “tongue of the sea” or the Red Sea split in two by Moses' intervention. “He has doomed them, has given them over for slaughter” [34.2].

At the opposite end of the Red Sea or toward the east the Lord will dry up the Euphrates simply designated as the “River.” Thus we have two bodies of water flanking Israel. The “wind” or *ruach* (cf. vs. 4) here is “scorching” or *hayam*, the only use of this noun in the Bible which pertains to strength and terror. As for the *ruach*, the same word is used in Ex 14.21 as the means by which the Lord paved a way through the sea: “And the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night.” Thus the same action is applied to the Red Sea on the west and to the Euphrates on the east. The seven channels seem to be seven smaller or lesser streams of water which are easy to cross.

11-Vs. 16: And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant which is left of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt.

The “highway” or *mesilah* (cf. 7.3 but not noted there) will be established from Assyria to complete this unification of the tribes and silencing of Israel's enemies on the east and on the west. *Misilah* suggests something that has been heaped up or raised, therefore a more important type of road for transportation.

When Israel came from Egypt through the Red Sea, it was the model *par excellence* for the “remnant” or *she'ar* (cf. vs. 11). Compare *she'ar* with the outcasts and dispersed of vs. 12, the first perhaps applicable to all who had been forced to leave their homes. *She'ar* is in the context of “of his people,” rather poignant, because we don't know how many comprised this group, apparently small. Nevertheless, this group of survivors sets the stage for further developments.

Chapter Twelve

12-Vs. 1: You will say in that day: "I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, and you comforted me.

This is the shortest chapter in the Book of Isaiah which can be taken as a kind of song or refrain. Since Chapter Eleven closed with references to the Exodus, compare the chapter at hand with the song comprising much of Exodus Chapter 15 as well as the brief refrain of Miriam in vs. 21.

"You" refers to the collective nature of the tribes of Israel speaking in the equally collective "that day" or *yom* (cf. 11.10) which everyone wishes would last forever and is a sign of good things to come. Although this *yom* existing in the future isn't specified, the collective "you" already contains a sense of its presence.

Yadah means "give thanks" and applies equally to giving praise. "O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name" [25.1]. In the verse at hand, *yadah* is used with regard to the Lord having been "angry" with "me," that collective "you" just spoken of. The verb is *'anaph* which refers to breathing, that is, breathing forth anger. "You have been angry; oh, restore us" [Ps 60.1]. In the verse at hand, *'anaph* is used with the preposition *b-* or literally "have been angry in me."

The verb *nacham* means "comforted" and as 1.24 notes, can apply to wrath or anger. So here the divine "anger" or *'aph* (cf. 10.25; from the verbal root *'anaph*) turns away which means it doesn't disappear but stays ready in case it needs application in the future.

12-Vs. 2: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation."

Hineh or "behold" (cf. 7.14) intimates something that is present, right before oneself, God as "salvation" *yeshuhah* (also the proper name for 'Jesus'). The second use of this noun reads literally "and he was to me to salvation," i.e., two uses of the preposition *l-*. *Yeshuhah* occurs next in vs. 3.

"Trust and (not) be afraid" or *batach* and *pachad* (cf. 2.19 which connotes terror). For the former, cf. 30.12: "Because you despise this word and trust in oppression and perverseness."

"Strength and song" or *hoz* and *zimrath*. For the former, cf. 25.3: "Therefore strong peoples will glorify you." The latter has two other biblical references, Ex 15.2 and Ps 118.14, the second being cited which parallels the words in the verse at hand: "The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." Thus a close connection exists between a song (the act of singing) and salvation.

12-Vs. 3: With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

After the collective "you" of Israel has spoken in the first two verses of the chapter the Lord comes in again but only quickly as a means to shepherd along the rest of this short section.

Sha'av means "draw water" as in Gn 24.13: "the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water." In the verse at hand *sha'av* is unlike any other drawing, that is, from wells in which "salvation" is hidden below (*yeshuhah*). In other words, *yeshuhah* is in the form of water which requires being hauled up. This can't but help bring to mind Jesus

(*Yeshuhah*) and the Samaritan woman at the well: “whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst” [Jn 4.14].

Sason (cf. 22.13) is the noun for “joy” and often is associated with oil: “Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows” [Ps 45.7].

12-Vs. 4: And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name; make known his deeds among the nations, proclaim that his name is exalted.

“In that day” is the same *yom* as in vs. 1 with the theme of thanks (same verb). Here is added the calling (*qara'*, cf. 6.3) upon of the divine name which is *YHWH* because it is mentioned in this verse.

Yadah is the verb for “make known” (cf. 9.9) not so much the Lord but his “deeds” or *halyah*, usually ones of glory and renown, which derives from the verbal root *halal* noted last in 3.12. “Tell among the peoples his deeds” [Ps 9.11]! Such deeds are not to be confined to Israel’s borders but proclaimed outside them, this being quite a statement in light of the recent verses pertaining to the Assyrian invasion. The deeds are to be made known literally “in (*b-*) the nations.”

Zakar means “proclaim” and is the common verb meaning to remember. Thus Israel is to engage in a special type of *yadah*, one where the peoples will recognize...remember...their inherent nature as made in the divine image and likeness. Here both *yadah* and *zakar* are bound up with the divine name being *sagav* or “exalted” (cf. 9.11), something that only can be down from within and then manifested.

12-Vs. 5: "Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth.

Zamar is the verb for “sing praises,” the verbal root for *zimrath* in vs. 2. “Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously” [12.5]. In the verse at hand, there is no connecting particle: “sing praises the Lord,” the two therefore being as one.

The common verb *hasah* (‘has done’) is associated with “gloriously” or *ge’oth* which is a noun and can intimate pride as well as majesty. Refer to 12.5 cited just above. To date the nations (cf. vs. 4) are mentioned as knowing about the Lord’s deeds whereas here it pertains to “all the earth” or all creation other than that which is human.

12-Vs. 6: Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

“Shout and sing for joy” or *tsahal* and *ranan*. The former verb can apply to shouts of joy or distress and found last in 10.30 but not noted there. The latter applies to both singing and rejoicing. “Sing, of heavens, for the Lord has done it” [44.23]. We could say that both are applicable more specifically to those living in Zion, that is, the more specified area of the temple compared with the rest of Jerusalem.

Qerev or “in (your) midst” (cf. 10.23) can apply to being at the very center which here is obvious, Zion.

Chapter Thirteen

13-Vs. 1: The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

This is the first mention of “oracle” or *masa’* in Isaiah which more fundamentally means a burden or a carrying (*nasa’* being the verbal root as in 9.15, there as lifted up). It is a fitting term because the entirety of Chapter Thirteen spells out the disaster in store for Babylon. In fact, just by uttering this oracle Isaiah feels its weightiness or *masa’*. “In the year that King Ahaz died came this oracle” [14.28]. As for the oracle at hand, it is the first one against Babylon whose power had superseded that of Assyria.

13-Vs. 2: On a bare hill raise a signal, cry aloud to them; wave the hand for them to enter the gates of the nobles.

The participle for “bare” is *shaphah* which fundamentally means to scratch, to make naked. There is one other use of this word in the Bible, Job 33.21: “and his bones which were not seen stick out.” We could say that this hill will stick out among all others regardless of size.

The verb *nasa’* for “raise” is, as noted in vs. 1, the root for “oracle” or *masa’*. I.e., this *masa’* which will be *nasa’* concerns a “signal” or *nes* noted last in 11.12. As in that instance, the *nes* at hand isn’t identified, but this verse wishes to convey an air of urgency. Certainly the people must have had in mind a traditional *nes*, that is, with military connotations, so once they saw it they knew something of great urgency was at hand.

The verb *rum* (cf. 10.12) with the noun *qol* (voice) forms the verb for “cry aloud.” *Rum* is similar to *nasa’* (and *masa’*): it conveys a lifting up in the sense of making high whereas *nasa’* implies increase as well as this lifting up. Thus the *qol* takes on the same force as the *masa’*. One is heard whereas the other is seen.

Nuph means “wave” found last in 11.15 but not noted there and also means to sprinkle as either blood or an offering from a sacrifice (cf. Ex 29.26 as one example). Since *nuph* pertains to a hand, it implies a closer encounter compared with the signal and crying aloud.

In the verse at hand, “nobles” or *nadyv* is an adjective which also means to be willing. Apparently the idea is that such a noble gave willingly of his time and resources. “Nor the knave said to be honorable” [32.5]. Such nobles seem to be in charge of fortified cities in which the people can take refuge against the invading Babylonians. If the Lord interceded on their behalf against the Assyrians, surely he will do the same in this instance.

13-Vs. 3: I myself have commanded my consecrated ones, have summoned my mighty men to execute my anger, my proudly exulting ones.

This chapter began with an oracle or a *masa’* which is communicated in the first person singular. In other words, the Lord is using Isaiah as a mouthpiece.

The identity of these “consecrated ones” isn’t clear, though the RSV has a footnote referring to 10.5-6 concerning Persian soldiers in the service of the Lord. Regardless, these could be specially trained soldiers...those who have been set apart as the verbal root *qadash* (cf. 8.14) intimates.

Two other groups of the same caliber are mentioned: “mighty men and “proudly exulting ones” or *gibor* (cf. 10.22) and *halyzey ga’avaty*. The first word is the adjective *halyz* which basically means rejoicing and is found next in 22.2 but not noted there: “you who are full of

shoutings, tumultuous city, exultant town.” The second is the noun *ga'avah* meaning pride, excellency or swelling. “And lay low the haughtiness of the ruthless” [vs. 11].

Both groups have as their task the execution of the Lord’s “anger” or *'aph* (cf. 12.1) which intimates breath, the breathing forth of such anger.

13-Vs. 4: Hark, a tumult on the mountains as of a great multitude! Hark, an uproar of kingdoms, of nations gathering together! The Lord of hosts is mustering a host for battle.

“Hark” is the noun *qol* which more properly pertains to a voice and noted last in vs. 2. Vs. 2 has a “bare hill,” that noun being *har*, the same for “mountains” though here it’s plural. The signal and waving of a hand had an immediate response, that is, a “tumult” or *hamon* (cf. 5.14) which connotes a loud noise as shouting. Such *hamon* is likened to a “great multitude” or *ham* (people) which is *rav* (great). This force seems to apply to the Babylonian army along with its allies arrayed against Israel and more specifically, Jerusalem. They are described as an “uproar” or *sha'on*, a tumult as well as destruction. This word is found last in 5.14 but not mentioned there.

Paqad (cf. 10.12) is the verb for “mustering,” clearly a military term with regard to *tsava'* or “host,” that consisting of the consecrated ones, mighty men, kingdoms and nations of vs. 3. Here the singular is used though *tsava'* occurs frequently in Isaiah, the last reference being 10.33 where it is in the plural. And so in response to the Babylonian invasion, the Lord arrays his own *tsava'* which is not specified.

13-Vs. 5: They come from a distant land, from the end of the heavens, the Lord and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole earth.

This verse speaks of the origin, albeit unspecified, of the divine *tsava'* in the previous verse. What we do know is that the *tsava'* comes from well beyond Israel’s borders, perhaps even beyond those Babylon, which takes both by surprise.

Not only “land and heavens” are mentioned (*'erets* and *shamaym*, 2.19 and 1.2 respectively), usually conceived as below and above, but as extreme points, “distant and “end” or *merchaq* and *qatseh*, two nouns. The former is found last in 10.3 with the preposition *min-*prefaced to it and the latter in 7.3 but not noted there.

And so on the mountains of vs. 4 will come the Lord with his weapons of “indignation” or *zaham* (cf. 10.25). He will “destroy” the entire earth, *chaval* also meaning to act corruptly, to spoil. Most likely this *chaval* will apply to the Babylonians only and can include any other nation in league with them. In other words, “whole earth” is a kind of exaggeration, a way to include Babylon and her allies. The next reference to *chaval* is 32.7: “Wicked devices to ruin the poor with lying words.”

13-Vs. 6: Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!

Yalal is the verb for “wail” which fundamentally means to howl, a dramatic word which is applicable for the “day” or *yom* (cf. 12.4) of the Lord, that is, *yom* as a *kairos* event. It is found next in 14.12 but not in the RSV translation: “How you are fallen from heaven, (*yalal* or ‘how’) O Day Star, son of Dawn!” In the verse at hand the *yom* proper to the Lord is *qarov* which also can mean at hand or just around the corner. “Its time is close at hand and its days will not be

prolonged,” that is, vs. 22 or the conclusion of Chapter Thirteen.

Shod is the noun for “destruction” and *Shady* for “Almighty.” Both words are derived from a verbal root (*shadad*) meaning to be strong, powerful. And so the text reads *keshod mishady*. So when this *shod* finally arrives, it will be indistinguishable from *Shady* who will send it.

13-Vs. 7: Therefore all hands will be feeble, and every man's heart will melt,

Two verbs with similar meaning: “feeble and “melt” or *rapha'* and *masas*. The former fundamentally means to sew together or to mend as noted last in 6.10 and the latter is found last in 10.18 but not noted but reads as “wastes away.” To the former belong hands and the latter, “heart” or *levav* found last in 10.12 but not noted there. On occasion the alternate spelling of *lev* is used as in 7.2. Again, reference most likely is to the Babylonian invaders and their cohorts.

13-Vs. 8: and they will be dismayed. Pangs and agony will seize them; they will be in anguish like a woman in travail. They will look aghast at one another; their faces will be aflame.

This part of the previous verse brings home the force of the connective *w-* or “and” noted last in 11.2. That is to say, these words have a directness that would have been lost if retained within vs. 7 even though that verse itself is short. *Bahal* is the verb for “dismayed” which also means to trouble. “I am dismayed so that I cannot see” [21.3].

The *balal* as applicable to the Babylonians will come upon them in a completely unexpected way. Their aim is to confront Israel and defeat it but suddenly are confronted with attacks that arise from within them, namely, “pangs and agony” or *tsyr* (cf. 18.2) and *chevel* as in 5.18 where it means cords as well as a region or lot. Both are not unlike a woman in “travail” or *chul* which means to turn, to be twisted or tremble.

Tamah means to “look aghast” or more commonly as to wonder or be astonished.

“Stupefy yourselves and be in a stupor” [29.9]. This will come upon the Babylonians suddenly, as they are about to issue an all-out attack on Israel with focus upon Jerusalem. Then while on the advance this *tamah* will hit them, causing their faces to “be aflame” or *lahav*. “And the flame of a devouring fire” [29.6]. *Lhav* is a noun which makes the text read literally as “faces of flame.”

13-Vs. 9: Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel with wrath and fierce anger to make the earth a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it.

Hineh or “behold” is, as noted in 12.2, indicative of something present or about to happen which here relates to the “day (*yom*, cf. 6) of the Lord.” Given what Isaiah has presented thus far, *hineh* is almost an after-thought. That is to say, in a sense there’s no need to get one’s attention which is focused already on the dramatic events about to unfold. Nevertheless, Isaiah felt the need to throw it in almost as a divine curse or condemnation of Babylon.

This *yom* is in the process of coming (present tense) compared with anything laying in the future. It is “cruel” or *akzary*, a very harsh adjective as in Jer 6.23: “They are armed with bow and spear; they are cruel and show no mercy.” If this *akzary* weren’t enough, it comes

with “wrath and fierce anger” or *hevrah* and *charon* with *’aph* (cf. 13.3). The former is noted last in 10.6 and connotes an outpouring. The latter more specifically connotes heat with *’aph* which often refers to breathing. And so we could say that the Lord is breathing heavily and quickly with blazing fire coming out his nostrils.

Easily the Lord could bring about “desolation” of the earth or *shamah* (cf. 5.9) which is used with the verb *sum* and reads as *lasum leshamah*. The preposition *l-* or “to” is prefaced to both verbs thereby showing immediacy of action.

Shamad as “destroy” often refers to laying waste, a total form of destruction. It is found last in 10.7 but not noted there. Finally and to add insult to injury, the implied Babylonians are called “sinners” (*chata’*, cf. 1.28). Surprisingly, this word occurs four times in Isaiah, for you’d think it would occur more often.

13-Vs. 10: For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising and the moon will not shed its light.

This darkening of the heavenly luminaries is a preparation, if you will, for “the day of the Lord” (again, *yom* doesn’t apply to day nor night) when the Lord as being “cruel” will vent his wrath and fierce anger. In other words, it will be done at night, a night no so much as when daylight falls but when night overtakes daylight.

While the sun and moon suffer the same fate of being blacked out, the stars are important as a means of divining the future. They are located in the “heavens” or *shamaym* noted last in vs. 5 as well as their “constellations” or *kisyf* which, as the **RSV** observes, can be taken as Orion and also translates as fool. Apparently Orion was considered as a giant who lacked reverence or piety. “Neither does a fool understand” [Ps 92.6]. *Halal* is the verb for “give light” noted last in 3.12 with another alternate meaning. Another use is of this verb is 41.16: “in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.”

13-Vs. 11: I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant and lay low the haughtiness of the ruthless.

During the total black-out of natural light described in the previous verse the Lord will take action against the Babylonians, a frightening prospect, because they don’t have a clue as what is transpiring. As much as they wish, the Israelites won’t be able to participate but must learn to remain still. In other words, they must recall how they had enjoyed light while the Egyptians were afflicted with “a darkness to be felt” [Ex 10.21]. And so this ninth plague is amplified against the Babylonians.

Paqad is the verb for “punish” noted last in 13.4 and commonly applied to the notion of mustering which is not unlike the case at hand. Here such mustering, if you will, is against the “world” or *tevel*, a poetic word for inhabited regions not unlike the Greek *oikumene*. *Tevel* can also contain uncivilized peoples. “Who made the world like a desert and overthrew cities” [14.17]. This *tevel* has “evil” or *rah* found last in 7.16 but not noted there. In other words, the world or the institutions set up by humanity as a whole have become evil. Consider this universality with the more limited “wicked” or *rashah* (cf. 11.4) which has an element of unrighteousness about it compared with the more physical evil of *rah*. Those who are *rashah* engage in *havon* or “iniquity” (cf. 5.18).

The verb *shavat* fundamentally means to rest (Sabbat is derived from it) and has a less

militant air compared with *paqad*. “The vintage shout is hushed” [16.10]. In the verse at hand, such rest, if you will, applies to both “pride and haughtiness” *ga’on* and *ga’avah*. The former is noted last in 4.2 and the latter in vs. 3 meaning pride, excellency or swelling. Both are derived from the same verbal root and have a slightly different nuance.

“Arrogant and ruthless” are the two adjectives *zed* and *haryts*. The former suggests swelling and the latter, fear. Two references are as follows: “You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones, who wander from your commandments” [Ps 119.21]. “Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you” [25.3]. And so the pair in the verse at hand goes as: *ga’on* for *zed* and *ga’avah* for *haryts*.

13-Vs. 12: I will make men more rare than fine gold and mankind than the gold of Ophir.

Yaqar is the verb for “make (more) rare” which applies to that which is very precious or dear. “Because you are precious in my eyes” [43.4]. “Men” in general is the subject here which seems to include everyone, including the Babylonian invaders. So complete will be their destruction that the *yaqar* that results will be compared to two precious metals: “fine gold” and “gold” from Ophir, *paz* and *ketem*. The former is gold which has been purified whereas the latter applies to that which is kept in a treasury as a kind of reserve. Sg 5.11 contains both words: “His head is finest gold.” As for *ketem*, King Solomon brought a lot of it from Ophir as noted in 1Kg 9.28 to finance his building projects.

The preposition *min-* (from) is prefaced to both words reading literally, “from fine gold” and “from the gold of Ophir.”

13-Vs. 13: Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the Lord of hosts in the day of his fierce anger.

Here mankind gets hit from two directions—above and below—which makes escape impossible from the heavens and the earth. The former will “tremble” and the latter will be “shaken,” *ragaz* and *rahash*. The former also means to be angry and the latter implies a trampling noted in 9.6. As for *ragaz*, cf. vs. 9: “Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come.”

“Place” or *maqom* is found last in 7.23 but not noted there. In the verse at hand the earth is implied as resting on some kind foundation from which it will be wrenched. Biblically speaking, that foundation consists of the primeval waters spoken of at the beginning of Genesis.

“Wrath and fierce anger” or *hevrah* and *charon ‘aph* are both found last together in vs. 9 which are associated with *yom* or “day” (cf. vs. 10).

13-Vs. 14: And like a hunted gazelle or like sheep with none to gather them, every man will turn to his own people, and every man will flee to his own land.

Chapter Thirteen is essentially an oracle against Babylon and seems to go beyond this particular people and its invasion of Israel. That is to say, it has harsh words for people of any nation who have forsaken the Lord’s ways.

Two types of animals: the gazelle which is wild and the sheep which is tame. Both have no person to “gather” them or *qavats* which means to take by the hand, to collect. “I will gather yet others to whim besides those already gathered” [58.8]. In other words, the gazelle will turn

to its kind and the sheep to its kind which means both will go wild.

13-Vs. 15: Whoever is found will be thrust through, and whoever is caught will fall by the sword.

Those mentioned here could be like the gazelle and sheep of the previous verse as they rush back to their own kind in order to escape the Lord “in the day of his fierce anger” [vs. 13]. Note two similar verbs: “thrust through and “fall” or *daqar* and *naphal* (cf. 10.4). For the former, cf. Zech 12.10: “when they look on him whom they have pierced they will mourn for him.”

13-Vs. 16: Their infants will be dashed in pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished.

Note three verbs with different meanings but with a lot in common in this verse:

1) *Ratash* or “dashed to pieces” and more fundamentally, to be broken to pieces. It is found next in vs. 18 with a different sense: “Their bows will slaughter the young men.”

2) *Shasas* or “plundered” as in 42.22: “All that pass by despoil him.”

3) *Shagal* or “ravished” which fundamentally means to lie with a woman. “The city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women ravished” [Zech 14.2].

13-Vs. 17: Behold, I am stirring up the Medes against them who have no regard for silver and do not delight in gold.

Here we have the Medes in the broader context of Isaiah’s oracle which concerns Babylon, their only mention. Use of “behold” or *hineh* (cf. vs. 9) can be taken as a way to get one’s attention to this added threat which may not have been expected. *Hur* is the verb for “stirring up” found last in 10.26. Apparently this people is so ruthless that they care nothing for silver nor gold. It should be noted that the Lord is doing this *hur*, not the Medes in and by themselves. So with their innate cruelty stirred up by the Lord, they will be a formidable force to reckon with.

13-Vs. 18: Their bows will slaughter the young men; they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb; their eyes will not pity children.

Mention of bows suggests that the Medes were excellent archers. “Have (no) mercy and “(not) pity” or *racham* and *chus*. The former refers to tender compassion; the noun for “bowels” is derived from it. The latter can also mean to be grieved over anything as well as to spare. “He shall spare the poor and the needy” [Ps 72.13].

13-Vs. 19: And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pride of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them.

Earlier the significance of the connective *w-* had been pointed out, “and” being another example where it brings attention back to Babylon here towards the end of Chapter Thirteen. After all, this is what Isaiah’s oracle is about. Among all the earth’s kingdoms, Babylon stands out by reason of three characteristics:

- 1) "Glory" or *tsevy* noted last in 4.2 as the adjective "beautiful."
- 2) "Splendor" or *ga'on* (cf. vs. 11)
- 3) "Pride" or *tiph'arah* (cf. 10.12) which belongs to the Chaldeans along with *ga'on* and who are mentioned next in 23.13.

Babylon is compared to Sodom and Gomorrah mentioned in 1.10, cities which the Lord had overthrown or *mahpekah* (cf. 1.7), a noun connoting to pervert. The verbal root of this noun (*haphak*) is used to actually describe the event: "and he overthrew those cities and all the valley and all the inhabitants of the cities and what grew on the ground" [Gn 19.25]. Literally speaking, the Lord rained down brimstone and fire from heaven (cf. vs. 24), that is, it came from above. The force was so strong that it turned Sodom and Gomorrah upside down...*haphak*.

13-Vs. 20: It will never be inhabited or dwelt in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there, no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there.

"Never" reads literally "to (*L*) forever" (*netsach*), just like Sodom and Gomorrah, the preposition "to" adding force to this statement. "Arab" (*'Arvy*) is the only occurrence in Isaiah and refers in a disparaging way to the descendants of Ishmael (cf. Gn 21) who were nomads. Such wanderers were well acquainted with places to camp for the night, even less desirable ones, which pale in comparison to the waste of Sodom and Gomorrah. The same applies to shepherds who had intimate knowledge of terrain for minding their sheep.

13-Vs. 21: But wild beasts will lie down there, and its houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will dwell and there satyrs will dance.

Despite the rejection of Babylon because of its likeness to the two cities overthrown by the Lord, still it will be a refuge for less desirable creatures. Note the use of the verb *ravats* (cf. 11.7) for "lie down" which is found in the previous verse relative to sheep. It means to recline much as a four-footed animal folds its legs under its body, a kind of crouching position.

Sehyrah means "satyrs" or a female goat by reason of it being hairy. "And wild beasts shall meet with hyenas, the satyr shall cry to his fellow" [34.14]. Reference is to Edom which will suffer the same fate as Babylon or in accord with the two overthrown cities in Genesis.

Raqad is the verb for "dance" and implies skipping which fits the description of the satyrs. "The mountains skipped like rams" [Ps 114.4].

13-Vs. 22: Hyenas will cry in its towers and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand and its days will not be prolonged.

Hyenas and jackals are two animals known for eating the remains of animals, not necessarily having killed them. Such repulsive creatures will inhabit the previously splendid palaces of Babylon which here are described as "pleasant" or *honeg*, a noun, which makes the text read literally as "palaces of pleasure." The only other biblical verse is 58.13: "If you turn back your foot from the sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day." The verbal root connotes living delicately along with sexual perversions. Such had been the case when Babylon was at the height of its power. In fact, those who had occupied its palaces were human hyenas and jackals preying off other people and nations.

Mention of *heth* (cf. 9.1) or “time” is not unlike the Greek *kairos*, a proper time or opportunity where the notion of temporal duration is secondary. It is a fitting way to conclude the oracle of Isaiah which begins this chapter. *Heth* is “close at hand” or *qarov* (cf. vs. 6) or very close by. In the verse at hand, the single *heth* consists of multiple days which are not specified. Because Babylon’s fate is likened to Sodom and Gomorrah which occurred at once or in one *heth*, the days relative to them were not “prolonged” (*mashak*, to drawn out; cf. 5.18). Such days could refer back to when Abraham interceded for the two cities after his encounter with the mysterious men (cf. Gn 18). And so the *heth* and days it contains in the verse at hand have this in mind relative to Babylon.

Chapter Fourteen

14-Vs. 1: The Lord will have compassion on Jacob and will again choose Israel and will set them in their own land, and aliens will join them and will cleave to the house of Jacob.

This chapter, like so many earlier instances, deals with the future which is the nature of an oracle or *masa’*. Isaiah has it wrapped up and needs to unroll it, as it were, much as a scroll before he can relate its contents as he does here. “And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals” [Rev 5.1]. Chapter Five has a lot to say about this unrolling of the scroll which has a certain parallel with the unfolding of Isaiah’s *masa’* as it continues in the present chapter.

Racham is the verb for “will have compassion” noted last in 13.18 from which is derived the noun for “bowels.” Thus to have *racham* is to be moved at the deepest level by the Lord, that is, by the presence of his divinity. The object here is Jacob and by extension, Israel, whom the Lord will choose once more, *bachar* with the preposition *b-* prefaced to Israel, literally as “will choose in Israel.” “Jacob whom I have chosen” [41.8]. Note use of “again” (*hod*), most likely hearkening back to 2.2-4 and 11.10-12. Apparently Jacob has no need of this *hod*.

So once this twofold gesture of *racham* and *bachar* takes place, the Lord with “set” both in their respective lands (*’erets*, cf. 13.5), *nuach* (cf. 11.2) which also means rest. Once there, “aliens” will come, *ger* being found only here in Isaiah and meaning a sojourner, one with a temporary home or living in a land other than one’s own. “I am a sojourner on earth; hide not your commandments from me” [Ps 119.19]! The juxtaposition of *’erets* and *ger*, the ability for these two to exist together, can come only from the *racham* and *bachar* of the Lord.

Two similar verbs, “join and cleave,” or *lavah* and *saphach*. The former also means to borrow as with money. “And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord” [56.6]. The latter fundamentally means to pour or spread out and has four other biblical references, one of which is 1Sam 2.36: “Put me, I pray you, in one of the priest’s places that I may eat a morsel of bread.” In the verse at hand, both verbs use the preposition *hal-* or “upon,” indicative of a close and sustained union with the house of Jacob.

14-Vs. 2: And the peoples will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them in the Lord’s land as male and female slaves; they will take captive those who were their captors and rule over those who oppressed them.

Perhaps unknown to the aliens of vs. 1, they will become slaves as noted here, “peoples”

(*ham*, cf. 13.4) being Jacob and Israel. *Maqom* (cf. 13.13) or “place” is the same as *‘erts* or “land” of vs. 1. “Land” is *‘adamah* (more specifically as earth, cf. 5.15) which belongs to the Lord. We could say that this *‘adamah* is situated within the *‘erets* of vs. 1, that is, its very center and could be applied to the temple at Jerusalem.

Nachal is the verb for “possess” and usually means to inherit, that is, inherit the aliens. “I have kept you...to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages” [49.8].

Nagas is the verb for “oppressed” and noted last in 9.4 and here used with *radah* or “rule over” which connotes treading over. “The peoples...that ruled the nations in anger with unrelenting persecution” [vs. 6].

14-Vs. 3: When the Lord has given you rest from your pain and turmoil and the hard service with which you were made to serve,

“When” is rendered as *beyom* or “in the day” (*yom*, cf. 13.13).

In the previous verse slaves are mentioned whereas here we find the verbal root to that noun as “serve” (*havad*) in conjunction with the “service” or *havodah* which is “hard” (*qasheh*). *Havodah* is found next in 28.21: “to do his deed—strange is his deed!” As for *qasheh*, cf. 91.4: “and I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a hard master.” In contrast to these harsh words is *nuach* (‘has given rest’) noted last in vs. 1 with a different connotation.

Nuach has three objects, if you will: “pain, turmoil and hard service” or *hotsev*, *rogez* and *havodah* which is *qasheh* (already noted above). A reference to the first is 48.5 with the alternate meaning of “image:” “My graven image and my molten image commanded them.” A reference to the second is Hab 3.2: “in wrath remember mercy.”

14-Vs. 4: you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon: "How the oppressor has ceased, the insolent fury ceased!"

The *yom* or “when” of the previous verse carries over with regard to the “taunt” not so much against Babylon but its king who, as the **RSV** observes, could be Nebuchadrezzar (i.e., not Nebuchadnezzar). The noun is *mashal* which also means a proverb or something short and pithy, that is, able to be remembered easily. Such is not the case here, for the *mashal* continues through verse 21, a kind of song of taunts. *Mashal* has the preposition *hal-*, “on the king.” “You have made us a byword among the nations” [Ps 44.14].

The contents of this *mashal* has two components with the verb “ceased” used twice, *shavat* (13.11) which means more than coming to an end but coming to rest. The components: “oppressor” and “insolent fury.” The first word is the participle *nagas* noted in vs. 2 and the second, *madhevah*, which the **RSV** labels as “obscure,” possibly a misspelling or copyist’s error, but can be translated something like “storehouse of gold.”

14-Vs. 5: The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of rulers,

Mateh or “staff” is found last in 10.26 and also means a tribe, here of the “wicked” or those who are *rashah* (cf. 13.11). Since tribe can be intimidated, this breaking applies to their lineage, that it will be smashed and no longer continue in existence.

Shevet is noted last in 11.4 and applied to “rulers” or those who *mashal* (different from *mashal* in vs. 4, here with a long “a.” Like the *mateh* of the wicked, association of *shevet* with

rulers means that their governance will not long exist. “They have sent lambs to the ruler of the land” [16.1].

14-Vs. 6: that smote the peoples in wrath with unceasing blows, that ruled the nations in anger with unrelenting persecution.

That which does the smiting or *makah* (cf. 10.26 but noted there) is a noun which also can mean a plague and is twofold, the staff and scepter of vs. 5. Such *makah* will be done in “wrath” or *hevrah* (cf. 13.13) made all the more intense by blows which are “unceasing” or *sarah* which means cessation (cf. 1.5).

Parallel to *sarah* is *chasak* or “unrelenting” whose verbal root means to hold back, to refrain. To the latter belongs “persecution,” *murdaph* (only use in the Bible), which comes from the verbal root *radaph*, to pursue vehemently.

14-Vs. 7: The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.

This verse reflects the result of divine intervention begun in vs. 5, the peoples and nations not being specified but most likely Babylon as chief among them since its king is noted in vs. 4.

Nuach (cf. vs. 3) and *shaqat* (cf. 7.4) or “rest and quiet:” the former is applicable more to actually accomplishing it and the latter to the state of quiet or rest that follows.

Patsach as “break” as to be cleft into pieces. “Break into singing, you mountains” [44.23]. In the verse at hand, such breaking or cleaving is with regard to “singing” or *rinah* which applies to a shout of joy as sharp as the meaning of the verb *patsach*. “And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing” [35.10].

14-Vs. 8: The cypresses rejoice at you, the cedars of Lebanon, saying, ‘Since you were laid low, no hewer comes up against us.’

Two types of trees noted for their durability for construction as with Solomon’s temple in 1Kg 5.8: “I (King Hiram) have heard the message which you have sent to me; I am ready to do all you desire in the matter of cedar and cypress timber.” In the verse at hand, the cypresses “rejoice at you,” *samach* being (cf. 9.17) used with *leak*, “at you” or literally “to (*I*) you.”

While the cypresses are so engaged, the cedars say with some exultation that since Babylon had been “laid low” or *shakav*, no one has come by to cut them down. Thus they are allowed to grow freely for eventual use in the Jerusalem temple. The verb means to lay down as well as to sleep as in the case of death. “All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb” [vs. 18].

14-Vs. 9: Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come, it rouses the shades to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth; it raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations.

Both the cypresses and cedars continue their taunt of Babylon by saying that Sheol (cf. 7.11) got wind of its defeat and hence is “stirred up” or *ragaz* noted last in 13.13. For Sheol to be so roused is no mean event as it eagerly looks forward to meeting Babylon, *qara’* being the verb

noted last in 12.5 and fundamentally meaning to call or to summon.

In its excitement of *ragaz*, Sheol “rouses” (*hur*, cf. 13.17) those who dwell there which are called “shades” or *repha’ym* as referring to the dead. “They are dead, they will not live; they are shades, they will not arise” [26.14]. The verb “greet” is not in the Hebrew text. Apparently special shades, if you will, are summoned, those who had been “leaders” or *hatud* (cf. 1.11 but not noted there) which means a he-goat, an insult bordering on the demonic.

In addition to rousing the shades and leaders, Sheol will raise (*qum*, cf. 7.7) from their thrones those who had been kings. In other words, these kings seem to have retained their desire for power and still sat on their thrones while in Sheol. In life they were doing the same, so there’s no difference between the two.

14-Vs. 10: All of them will speak and say to you: ‘You too have become as weak as we! You have become like us!’

Once Sheol has roused itself as well as the shades, leaders and kings, they will form a chorus (under Sheol’s direction, of course)—a welcoming committee—who will first “speak” or *hanah* (cf. 3.9) which fundamentally means to answer or respond and then “say,” the common verb *amar*. Those entering Sheol will be very much aware of this greeting, a terrible foreboding of what it’s like to live forever in their future home.

Chalah is the verb for “become weak” and also means to be pained as well as to make grievous. “Yet the harvest will flee away in a day of grief and incurable pain” [17.11]. Such is the likeness into which these once powerful rulers have become, the verb *mashal* noted last in vs. 4. This weakness consists in being shadow-like, an image which exists by reason of light shining on an object or person without which it has no existence.

14-Vs. 11: Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your harps; maggots are the bed beneath you, and worms are your covering.

Ga’on or “pomp” (cf. 13.19) accompanies these rulers as well as the “sound” of their harps, *hemyah*, the only use of this word in the Bible which is similar to *hamon* of 13.5, a “tumult” or a confused, loud noise which is not in harmony.

“Maggots and worms” or *rimah* and *tolelah*. As for the former, cf. Job 7.5: “My flesh is clothed with worms and dirt.” As for the latter, cf. 41.14: “Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel!” *Tolelah* also means scarlet by reason of the worm’s color.

14-Vs. 12: "How you are fallen from heaven, Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!

Presumably the former great ones of the earth continue to speak, taking a certain delight in the fate of an important heavenly personage. *Heylel* means “Day Star” whose verbal root *halal* (cf. 13.10) means to be bright and is the only use of this noun in the Bible. Similar to this name is another, “son of Dawn,” *shachar* (cf. 8.20). This lofty position makes the fall—presumably into Sheol—all the more dramatic and terrifying. Before going there, however, this entity (which could be an angel) is “cut down” or *gadah* (cf. 10.33 but not noted there), a verb similar in meaning to *chalah* which means to lay prostrate on the ground. It has two other references, Ex 17.13 and Job 14.10, the former being cited here: “And Joshua mowed down Amalek

and his people with the edge of the sword.”

14-Vs. 13: You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far north;

By reason of being spirits, these great ones now in the depths of Sheol can see clearly into the hearts (*levav*, cf. 13.7) of the living. Not only will the Day Star/son of Dawn ascend to heaven but above God's stars and there set up his throne. Note the two verbs for this presumed ascent, *halah* and *rum*, 8.7 and 13.2 respectively though not noted in the first instance. The former connotes the act of ascent whereas the latter is a lifting up in the sense of making high.

According to a footnote in the RSV, the “mount of assembly” refers to Jebel 'Aqra which is north of Ugarit. *Mohed* is the noun for “assembly” found last in 1.14 as “appointed time.” *Yarkah* is the noun for “far” which also means a side or quarter and translates as “depths” in vs. 15.

14-Vs. 14: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.'

Another use of the verb *halal* ('ascend') which is indicative of the height of arrogance on part of the Day Star/son of Dawn.

Apparently the “Most High” or *Helyon* dwells above the clouds, the reason why he reveals himself to Moses on Mount Sinai within a cloud. In other words, this heavenly being was not content to be like Moses but sought to pierce that which cannot be pierced. *Helyon* is an adjective found last in 7.3 but not noted there as “upper” pool.

Once beyond the impenetrable cloud of divinity, the Day Star/son of Dawn presumably will try to become like *Helyon*, the verb being *damah* (cf. 10.7). By reason of his exalted position, this heavenly being had certain knowledge of *Helyon* and wished to imitate it, the next step being removal of the same *Helyon*.

14-Vs. 15: But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the Pit.

The Day Star/son of Dawn not only is brought down to Sheol by reason of his own pride and arrogance to usurp God's place, he sinks to its lower part called a “Pit” or *Bor*. This noun as a proper name is found next in vs. 19. *Yarkah* is the noun for “depths” noted in vs. 13 as “far.” In other words, this Pit is so deep...far...that it can't be fathomed.

14-Vs. 16: Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms,

Note the two types of looking with a third resulting from them:

- 1) “See” or *ra'ah* (cf. 6.9).
- 2) “Stare at” or *shagach* which is more along the lines of a prolonged beholding and has two other references, Ps 33.14 and Sg 2.9, the latter being quoted here: “Behold, he there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice.” As for “looking through,” the verb here is *tsuts* which literally means to flourish (in the sense of blooming).
- 3) “Ponder over” or *byn* noted last in 6.9 which means to understand. Both *shagach* and

byn have the same preposition *‘el* (literally, ‘to’) for “at” and “over.”

Two verbs of a similar nature, “tremble and shook” or *ragaz* and *rahash*. The former connotes being stirred up as well as angry and the latter a trampling. Both are found in 13.13. They are used with regard to the Day Star of son of Dawn who, despite his previous lofty position and perhaps unique status as participating in the divine, is here called a man.

14-Vs. 17: who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?’

The remaining verses of Chapter Fourteen contain a series of condemnations regarding the Day Star as well as Babylon, Assyria and Philistia. Because this condemnation is sustained over thirty-five verses, the procedure outlined at the beginning of Chapter Ten will be followed here. That is to say, key words, not each and every one within a given verse, will be picked out and commented upon.

A contrast between “world and desert,” *tevel* and *midbar*. The former (cf. 13.11) suggests inhabited places which are in contrast to the word at hand, *midbar*. “They have sent lambs to the ruler of the land, from Sela, by way of the desert, to the mount of the daughter of Zion” [16.1].

14-Vs. 18: All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb;

The verb “lie” (*shakav*, cf. vs. 8) with respect to “glory” or *kavod* (cf. 11.10) and “tomb,” the latter in Hebrew being “house” or *beyth*. The permanence of their being there stands out more in the original by use of the preposition *b-* (‘in’) prefaced to each noun.

14-Vs. 19: but you are cast out, away from your sepulcher, like a loathed untimely birth, clothed with the slain, those pierced by the sword, who go down to the stones of the Pit, like a dead body trodden under foot.

Netser means “birth” but more specifically a branch as in 11.1 which in the verse at hand it is considered “untimely” rendered by the participle *tahav* meaning to abhor, to despise. “How much less one who is abominable and corrupt” [Job 15.16].

Being clothed with the slain suggests that in some way the Day Star is alive while wearing these dead bodies as garments.

Reference to stones in the “Pit” (*Bor*, cf. vs. 15) suggests its very bottom or foundation. The dead body which is “trodden” is akin to these stones, the verb *bus* as in 63.6 (not noted there): “I trod down the peoples in my anger.”

14-Vs. 20: You will not be joined with them in burial because you have destroyed your land, you have slain your people. "May the descendants of evildoers nevermore be named!

Here a parallel exists between burial and land, for not to be buried in one’s native land or *‘erets* (cf. vs. 2) is similar to going into exile only it’s permanent because death is involved.

The second sentence in this verse is a curse which continues through vs. 21. *Zerah* is the noun for “descendants” and as noted in 1.4, fundamentally means seed. For such evil descendants...seeds...to lack a name (*qara’* is the verb for ‘be named’ and also as called, cf. vs. 9)

is the worst fate imaginable, worse than going to Sheol, for not to have a name means never to have existed.

14-Vs. 21: Prepare slaughter for his sons because of the guilt of their fathers, lest they rise and possess the earth, and fill the face of the world with cities."

Matbeach or "slaughter" is the only use of the noun in the Bible but of the same root as *tevach* and often applies to the offering of a sacrifice. It is for paternal "guilt" or *havon* (cf. 13.11). Mention of sons and fathers suggests the possibility that these descendants of the Day Star can regain their power ('possess the earth').

"Earth and world" or *'erets* (cf. vs. 20) and *tevel* (cf. vs. 17) or usually one's native land and the inhabited places on the earth.

14-Vs. 22: "I will rise up against them," says the Lord of hosts, "and will cut off from Babylon name and remnant, offspring and posterity, says the Lord.

At last the Lord speaks and does so with regard to Babylon noted last in vs. 4. Mention of a name ties in with the value placed upon remembrance which, once cut off, means not having existence.

Three other words reflect this supreme value of remembrance: "remnant, offspring and prosperity" or *she'ar* (cf. 11.16), *nyn* and *neked*. The second has two other biblical references, Gn 21.23 and Job 18.19, the latter being cited here: "He shall have neither son or nephew." The third has two other biblical references which are the same for *nyn* and is always joined with it.

14-Vs. 23: And I will make it a possession of the hedgehog and pools of water, and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction, says the Lord of hosts."

Qipod is a "hedgehog" with two other biblical references, Zep 2.14 and 34.11 (not noted there), the latter being cited here: "But the hawk and the porcupine shall possess it." This animal is among a number of less desirable ones that appear throughout Isaiah as inhabitants of places the Lord has brought to ruin.

14-Vs. 24: The Lord of hosts has sworn: "As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand,

The verb for "has sworn" is *shavah* from which is derived the sacred number seven. "By myself I have sworn" [45.23]. It has two objects, if you will: "planned" and purposed" or *damah* (cf. vs. 14) and *yahats* (cf. 9.6). Both speak in a matter-of-fact way of thing to be done: "so shall it be" and "so shall it stand," *qum* being the verb (cf. vs. 9).

14-Vs. 25: that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains trample him under foot; and his yoke shall depart from them and his burden from their shoulder."

This verse continues from the previous one and shows the result of the Lord's *shavah*, namely, the destruction of the Assyrians who have invaded...not just Israel but the Lord's very own "land" or *'erets* (cf. vs. 21). The same type of divine possessiveness which should make

Israel, Judah and everyone else jealous pertains to “mountains.”

Reference to “burden and yoke” or *sovel* and *hol* are both found in 10.27.

14-Vs. 26: This is the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.

“Purpose and purposed” or *hetsah* (cf. 11.2) and *yahats* (cf. vs. 24) which in the verse at hand is effected through the divine hand. Note the two similar words, “earth” and nations” or *‘erets* (cf. vs. 25) and *goy* (cf. 11.10). Such purpose which is purposed looms over both as a dark, threatening cloud which the people perceive but don’t quite grasp.

14-Vs. 27: For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?

This verse more or less repeats the divine intent of the previous verse. Another use of the verb *yahats* as in the last verse which no human can “annul” or *parar*, a verb which means to break into pieces as in 8.10.

14-Vs. 28: In the year that King Ahaz died came this oracle:

This verse is a shifting of gears, if you will, from the threatening words by the Lord in terms of an “oracle” or *masa’* noted last in 13.1 (i.e., the first occurrence in Isaiah). Note that the *masa’* “came” which in Hebrew is rendered by “was.” Presumably Isaiah is the medium by which the oracle is transmitted.

14-Vs. 29: "Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of you, that the rod which smote you is broken, for from the serpent's root will come forth an adder, and its fruit will be a flying serpent.

Here attention is directed rather suddenly to Philistia, traditional enemy of Israel which long had occupied Canaan. Thus both had been living in close proximity over an extended period of time. The words “all of you” are deliberate insertion, a way of getting attention of the Philistines as a whole who were complacent in their security.

Shevet (cf. vs. 5) as “rod” is not unlike the root of the serpent which will beget an adder and that, in turn, will beget a flying “serpent” or *saraph* noted in 6.6 which approached Isaiah to cleanse him from his sins. As noted in 6.2, *saraph* applies to the fiery serpents which afflicted the Israelites in the Sinai desert. “The Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died” [Num 21.6].

14-Vs. 30: And the first-born of the poor will feed, and the needy lie down in safety; but I will kill your root with famine, and your remnant I will slay.

“Poor and need” or *dal* and *‘evyon*. The former is noted last in 11.4 in conjunction with the more well known *hany*. Associated with it is “first-born” or *bekor* which signifies special divine care for those so afflicted. “I will make him my first-born” [Ps 89.27]. The latter applies more to those who are oppressed. Both *dal* and *‘evyon* are mentioned in the next reference (25.4): “For you have been as stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress.”

Also both are not unlike the “remnant” or *she’eryth* which is similar to *she’ar* of vs. 22. “A lion for those of Moab who escape for the remnant of the land” [15.9].

“Feed and lie down in safety” or *rahaḥ* (cf. 11.7) and *ravats* (cf. 13.21) with *betach* which means “trust” and found next in 32.17: “and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.”

14-Vs. 31: Wail, O gate; cry, O city; melt in fear, O Philistia, all of you! For smoke comes out of the north, and there is no straggler in his ranks."

This is the second mention of Philistia (cf. vs. 29) which again has the words “all of you,” a way of getting attention of the Philistines as a whole. “Out of the north” is the direction from which Philistia’s enemy will come as found in Jer 1.13-15. However, this enemy remains unspecified which is more terrifying for the Philistines since they are held in an unbearable suspense. “I see a boiling pot facing away from the north...evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.”

14-Vs. 32: What will one answer the messengers of the nation? "The Lord has founded Zion, and in her the afflicted of his people find refuge."

This verse contains two sentences, the first being a kind of rhetorical question arising from the *masa’* or “oracle” of vs. 28. It doesn’t seem clear from where come the “messengers” (*ma’lak*), let alone their “nation” (*goy*, cf. vs. 26). We have an unknown force about to invade Philistia and perhaps Israel as well. “Go, you swift messenger to a nation tall and smooth” [18.2].

The second sentence is not so much a response to the question just posed but the *masa’* claiming that the Lord will defend Israel as well as Zion (i.e., the temple at Jerusalem). More specifically, the Lord will care for those so “afflicted” or *hany* (cf. 11.14) as well as the *dal* and *’evyon* (‘poor and needy’) of vs. 30. He will do so not directly but by reason of having “founded” Zion, *yasad*. “Behold, I am laying in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tested stone” [28.15]. Awareness of this foundation, if you will, is sufficient to offer “refuge” or *chasah* which also means to trust. “To take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh” [30.2].

Chapter Fifteen

15-Vs. 1: An oracle concerning Moab. Because Ar is laid waste in a night Moab is undone; because Kir is laid waste in a night Moab is undone.

This verse states clearly the intent of a new chapter, namely, an “oracle concerning Moab,” *masa’* (cf. 14.28) in conjunction with the death of King Ahaz. Thus the two seem to be different.

Ar is mentioned in conjunction with Moab in Dt 2.9: “Do not harass Moab or contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land for a possession because I have given Ar to the sons of Lot for a possession.”

Kir is mentioned in 2Kg 16.9: “The king of Assyria marched up against Damascus and took it, carry its people captive to Kir.” The verb *shadad* for “laid waste” is used twice regarding

Ar and Kir noted last in 13.6. The verb *damah* (cf. 14.24) is also used twice for “undone” and means to be brought to silence. In the verse at hand, it takes place at night with regard to Moab.

15-Vs. 2: The daughter of Dibon has gone up to the high places to weep; over Nebo and over Med’eba Moab wails. On every head is baldness, every beard is shorn;

Dibon is found in Num 32.34 as built by the sons of Gad along with two other cities, that is, as part of the distribution of land by Moses to the twelve tribes of Israel. It is found next in vs. 9. Apparently on this tableland are located “high places” or *bamah* found last in 14.14 as “heights” but not mentioned there. Reference to daughters in the verse at hand can imply that these are widows of the slain, possible priests of gods of those high places.

As for Moab, it “wails” or *yala* (cf. 13.6) which seems a more collective mourning regarding Nebo and Medeba. The former is the mountain on which the Lord showed Moses the land of promise which he was forbidden to enter (cf. Dt 34.1+). Medeba is first mentioned in Num 31.30 along with Dibon as subject of a ballad and having been destroyed by the Israelites (cf. vs. 27).

The shaving of heads and beards is a sign of mourning: “For every head is shaved and every beard cut off” [Jer 48.37].

15-Vs. 3: in the streets they gird on sackcloth; on the housetops and in the squares every one wails and melts in tears.

Saq or “sackcloth” is found last in 3.34 but not mentioned there. *Yala* or “wails” is found in the previous verse. *Yarad* is the verb for “melts” which more specifically means to descend, to go down...i.e., “to go down in tears.”

15-Vs. 4: Heshbon and Ele-aleh cry out, their voice is heard as far as Jahaz; therefore the armed men of Moab cry aloud; his soul trembles.

A similar verse is found in Jer 48.34: “Heshbon and Ele-aleh cry out (literally, ‘from the cry of Heshbon to Ele-aleh’), as far as Jahaz they utter their voice.” Such crying out or *zahaq* (cf. 14.31 but not noted there) forms a chain reaction of lament (‘cry out, voice is heard, cry aloud and trembles’), this verb being found in 14.31 but not noted there.

Compare *zahaq* with *ruah* or “cry aloud:” he cries out, he shouts aloud” [42.13]. The former also means to exclaim as well as to assemble whereas the latter is a loud noise as well as to be evil. The third in this chain is *yarah* or “trembles” which also means to be evil and reads literally as “his soul (*nephesh*, cf. 10.18) is grievous to him.” “The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice” [59.15]. This reads literally as “was evil in his eyes.” In the verse at hand, note the similarity of forms: *yaryhu* and *yarhah* or “cry aloud and trembles.”

15-Vs. 5: My heart cries out for Moab; his fugitives flee to Zoar, to Eglath-shelishiyah. For at the ascent of Luhith they go up weeping; on the road to Horonaim they raise a cry of destruction;

“My heart” (*lev*, cf. 7.2) most likely refers to Isaiah who otherwise would rejoice over Moab’s fate. He “cries out” (*zahaq*, cf. previous verse) over Moab because his lament is in the

context of that *masa'* or oracle which opens Chapter Fifteen. In other words, he takes no pleasure in the destruction of people, even if hostile toward Israel.

“Cry of destruction” has the noun *zahaqah* (derived from *zahaq*) and found next in vs. 8. *Shever* means literally a breaking as in 1.28, “a cry of breaking,” if you will.

15-Vs. 6: the waters of Nimrim are a desolation; the grass is withered, the new growth fails, the verdure is no more.

Meshmah is the noun for “desolation” which connotes a stupor or astonishment. Most references are in Ezekiel as in 5.15: “You shall be a reproach and a taunt, a warning and a horror.”

15-Vs. 7: Therefore the abundance they have gained and what they have laid up they carry away over the Brook of the Willows.

“Gained and laid up” or *hasah* (the common verb to do, to make; cf. 12.5) and “laid up” or *pequdah* (cf. 10.3).

“Brook of the Willows” could be the border between Moab and Edom. *Herev* is the noun for “willows” with four other biblical references. “They shall spring up like grass amid the waters, like willows by flowing streams” [44.4].

15-Vs. 8: For a cry has gone round the land of Moab; the wailing reaches to Eglaim, the wailing reaches to Beer-elim.

Two similar words are “cry and wailing” or *zahaqah* (cf. vs. 5) and *yekalah* which has three other biblical references and is derived from the verbal root *yala* as in vs. 3. “Hark, the cry (also *zahaqah*) of the shepherds and the wail of the lords of the flock” [Jer 25.36]!

Gevul is the noun for “land” (of Moab) and basically means border (cf. 54.12).

15-Vs. 9: For the waters of Dibon are full of blood; yet I will bring upon Dibon even more, a lion for those of Moab who escape for the remnant of the land.

Dibon is mentioned in vs. 2 which is to be seen in light of the ballad noted there. *She'ar* means “remnant” noted last in 14.30.

Although this is the end of Chapter Fifteen, the *masa'* or oracle against Moab continues throughout Chapter Sixteen where this same format will be followed instead of including the full verses.

Chapter Sixteen

16-Vs. 1: They have sent lambs to the ruler of the land, from Sela, by way of the desert, to the mount of the daughter of Zion.

The lambs in question refer to Mesha, king of Moab, who “had to deliver annually to the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs and the wool of a hundred thousand rams” [2Kg 3.4]. Note use of “daughter” with respect to Zion (cf. 1.8) which could be taken as an expression of

endearment as well as the line of kings located in Jerusalem who were betrothed to the Lord.
Sela is a proper name which means “rock” and found next in 31.9 as *selah*.

16-Vs. 2: Like fluttering birds, like scattered nestlings, so are the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon.

The fords of the Arnon hearken back to Jos 12.1 when Israel captured lands on the other side of the Jordan River: “Now these are the kings of the land whom the people of Israel defeated and took possession of their land beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise from the valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon with all the Arabah eastward.”

16-Vs. 3: "Give counsel, grant justice; make your shade like night at the height of noon; hide the outcasts, betray not the fugitive;

The RSV begins this verse with parentheses which run through vs. 5 meaning that someone is speaking. It hearkens back to Isaiah and his *masa'* or oracle which begins Chapter Fifteen. The verse at hand takes a surprising turn for Moab, traditional enemy of Judah and Israel, for she is asking for refuge from invaders making their way from the north. “Counsel and justice” or *hetsah* (cf. 14.26) and *pelyly*, the only use of the term in the Bible derived from a verbal root (*palal*) meaning to judge.

Moab puts the refuge being sought as a “shade” or *tsef* noted last in 9.2 which also can refer to a shadow. This *tsef* would hide both “outcasts and the fugitive” or *nadach* (cf. 11.12) and *nadad*, both participles. *Nadad* suggests a wandering about aimlessly and found in 10.14 but not noted there.

16-Vs. 4: let the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you; be a refuge to them from the destroyer. When the oppressor is no more, and destruction has ceased, and he who tramples under foot has vanished from the land,

“Outcasts” or *nadach* of the previous verse are asked to “sojourn” or *gur* (cf. 11.6) which has the preposition *b-* prefaced to “you” or literally “in you.”

Seter or “refuge” means literally a hiding found next in 28.17: “and waters will overwhelm the shelter.” In the verse at hand *seter* is used with the participle *shadad* (cf. 15.1) or “destroyer.”

Note the similarity of the three words:

- 1) “Is no more” or *aphes* which has four other biblical references, the next in Isaiah being 29.20: “For the ruthless shall come to nought and the scoffer cease.”
- 2) “Has ceased” or *kalah* (cf. 10.25) which implies coming to a full or complete end.
- 3) “Has vanished” or *tamam* which means to consume, come to an end. “For before the harvest, when the blossom is over” [18.5].

16-Vs. 5: then a throne will be established in steadfast love and on it will sit in faithfulness in the tent of David one who judges and seeks justice and is swift to do righteousness.”

This verse is the end of the quote begun in vs. 3 as noted there.

Amazingly once Moab has taken refuge in its traditional enemy, it become part of Israel under the rule of the line of King David. The throne will exist independently of any individual

king. It refers to the Davidic line which will be characterized by “steadfast love” or *chesed*, that un-translatable word containing benevolence, zeal and piety all rolled into one. In 40.6 it’s rendered as “beauty:” “All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.”

The king who is yet to be identified will sit on this throne of *chesed* and be characterized by three actions:

- 1) “Judge” or *shaphat* (cf. 11.4)
- 2) Seek “justice,” or the noun derived from the verb just mentioned, *mishpat* (10.2).
- 3) Be swift to effect “righteousness” or *tsedeq* (cf. 11.5). The verb *darash* is used regarding *mishpat* (cf. 11.10). The verb “is swift” or *mahar* (5.19) is used regarding *tsedeq*.

16-Vs. 6: We have heard of the pride of Moab, how proud he was; of his arrogance, his pride, and his insolence—his boasts are false.

The “we” can refer to Judah and Israel after having had a long and painful interaction with Moab which recently had taken refuge under their wings. More is involved than just having heard about Moab’s arrogance; Judah and Israel had felt it first hand for many years.

The characteristics of Moab have been six in number: 1) “pride” or *ga’on* (cf. 14.11), 2) “proud” or *ge’* which is the only adjective in the Bible, 3) “arrogance” or *ga’avah* (cf. 13.11), 4) “insolence” or *hevrah* (cf. 14.6), 5 & 6) “boasts” or *bad* (cf. 44.25).

16-Vs. 7: Therefore let Moab wail, let every one wail for Moab. Mourn, utterly stricken, for the raisin-cakes of Kir-hareseth.

Yalal (cf. 15.3) is the verb for “wail” used twice here, with regard to Moab itself and those who had taken it under their protection as noted in vs. 4.

Naka’ is the adjective for “stricken,” the only use in the Bible. The same applies for *‘ashyth* translated as “raisin cakes” but more commonly as foundations or *‘ashyshah*.

16-Vs. 8: Therefore let Moab wail, let every one wail for Moab. Mourn, utterly stricken, for the raisin-cakes of Kir-hareseth. For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah; the Lords of the nations have struck down its branches which reached to Jazer and strayed to the desert; its shoots spread abroad and passed over the sea.

Bahaley goy or “Lords of the nations” signifies rulers hostile to Moab, *bahal* being the singular term which also can mean master or husband and found last in 1.3 but not noted there. Such terms as vine, branches and roots suggest the production of grapes and therefore wine as well as spreading or growing underground, away from sight.

16-Vs. 9: Therefore I weep with the weeping of Jazer for the vine of Sibmah; I drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Ele-aleh; for upon your fruit and your harvest the battle shout has fallen.

The first person singular here most likely is Isaiah continuing to unfold his oracle first mentioned in Chapter Fifteen and carried over to the present. The dramatic words of lament are not unlike those of Jesus who wept over Jerusalem: “Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes” [Lk 19.41].

16-Vs. 10: And joy and gladness are taken away from the fruitful field; and in the vineyards no songs are sung, no shouts are raised; no treader treads out wine in the presses; the vintage shout is hushed.

The lament is specified with regard to the harvest of grapes, that is, for making wine, where traditionally workers sang songs during this season. “They tread the wine presses but suffer thirst” [Job 24.11].

16-Vs. 11: Therefore my soul moans like a lyre for Moab, and my heart for Kir-heres.

The word for “soul” is not the expected *nephesh* (cf. 15.4) but *mehym* which more properly refers to bowels. “Your offspring (of your bowels) would have been like the sand” [48.19]. When *mehym* moans like a lyre, the sound produced is not unlike the growling of one’s stomach. *Hamah* is the verb for “moans” which in the verse at hand sound similar, *mehay yememu*. “Ah, the roar of nations, they roar like the roaring mighty waters” [17.12]!

16-Vs. 12: And when Moab presents himself, when he wearies himself upon the high place, when he comes to his sanctuary to pray, he will not prevail.

Despite Moab having taken refuge in Judah (cf. vs. 4), it—the proper name suggests the people as a whole—will persist in its idol worship on the “high place” or *bamah* (cf. 15.2). The verb for “presents” is the common one for to see, *ra’ah*. The verb for “wearies” is *la’ah* (cf. 7.13). The verb for “prevail” is *yakal* (cf. 1.13).

16-Vs. 13: This is the word which the Lord spoke concerning Moab in the past.

Mention of “word” (*davar*, cf. 9.8) from the Lord is used with the verb *davar* for “spoke.” It is with regard to Moab not in the present but in the “past” or *me’az*, literally “from then.”

16-Vs. 14: But now the Lord says, "In three years, like the years of a hireling, the glory of Moab will be brought into contempt, in spite of all his great multitude, and those who survive will be very few and feeble."

The interim period when Moab takes refuge with Judah is three years, the general term of someone who has been hired to do work. *Hamon* (cf. 14.11) is derived from the verbal root *hamah* noted in vs. 11. *Kabyr* is an adjective meaning strong or mighty and is used here with the negative for “feeble.”

Chapter Seventeen

17-Vs. 1: An oracle concerning Damascus. Behold, Damascus will cease to be a city and will become a heap of ruins.

The Book of Isaiah contains extended sections of woes, curses and oracles of now

obscure places and people which form an extended *masa'* or oracle. Now we have more of the same only with regard to Damascus which includes other nations, all the way through Chapter Eighteen.

Sur is the verb for “cease” found last in 11.13 and connotes a turning aside, here from a metropolitan center to a “heap” or *mehy* (the only use of this term in the Bible, *hy* being close to it with seven biblical references) which consists of “ruins” or *mapalah*. This, too, is the only use of the word in the Bible and derived from the verbal root *naphal* meaning to fall (cf. 13.15).

17-Vs. 2: Her cities will be deserted forever; they will be for flocks which will lie down, and none will make them afraid.

This verse speaks of a plurality of cities compared with the singular one of vs. 1 or Damascus, most likely satellite cities with regard to the capitol. By reason of their association, they will share the same disastrous fate. Their habitation by flocks suggests that shepherds will be left behind to take care of them. The lack of fear shown by these flocks (and shepherds) suggest that they will be dwelling in the ruins for a long period of time with no outsiders attempting to rebuild the ruins.

17-Vs. 3: The fortress will disappear from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus; and the remnant of Syria will be like the glory of the children of Israel, says the Lord of hosts.

Mention of Ephraim is made by reason of its location towards the north and alliance with Damascus (cf. 7.1-2). *Mivstar* suggests something that is fenced in as in 25.12: “And the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down.”

She'ar or “remnant” is noted last in 15.9 which applies to one of Israel’s most formidable enemies, Syria. That country will share in the same “glory” or *kavod* (cf. 14.18) proper to Israel which ultimately finds its root in God. Note the phrase “Lord of hosts,” for the Lord wishes to use fairly strong words so everyone involved will get the message loud and clear.

17-Vs. 4: And in that day the glory of Jacob will be brought low, and the fat of his flesh will grow lean.

Note a direct correspondence between two verbs, *dalal* and *razah* (“brought low’ and ‘grow lean’). The former literally means to hang down, to swing, the image here being that Jacob’s *kavod* (cf. vs. 3) will sway like a pendulum in the wind after which it comes to a stop. “And the branches of Egypt’s Nile will diminish and dry up” [19.6]. The latter has one other biblical references, Zep 2.11: “yet he (the Lord) will famish all the gods of the earth.”

17-Vs. 5: And it shall be as when the reaper gathers standing grain and his arm harvests the ears, and as when one gleans the ears of grain in the Valley of Rephaim.

“Standing grain, ears and ears of grain:” *qamah* and *shibolet*. For the former, cf. 37.27: “like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown up.” The latter is used for the last two terms in 27.12: “the Lord will thresh out the grain, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel.”

Valley of Rephaim forms part of the boundary drawn up by lot for the tribe of Judah (cf.

Jos 15.8).

17-Vs. 6: Gleanings will be left in it, as when an olive tree is beaten—two or three berries in the top of the highest bough, four or five on the branches of a fruit tree, says the Lord God of Israel.

Holeloth or “gleanings” refer to grapes or olives at the harvest. “As when an olive tree is beaten, as at the gleaning when the vintage is done” [24.14].

17-Vs. 7: In that day men will regard their Maker, and their eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel;

“In that day” (*yom*, cf. 14.3) is another instance of a *kairos* event which does not necessarily refer to a specific date or time yet can include both. Here, as with other examples thus far, this *yom* lies in the future in the context of Isaiah’s oracle. All the woes thus far with regard to Damascus, etc., are designed to effect this *yom*.

Shahah as “regard” is in the sense of looking around or about and also means to be dismayed. It is found in the next verse and in 41.10 with this sense of dismay which fits in with the verse at hand. *Shahah* is close in sound to “Maker” or *Hasah* (the common verbal root for ‘to do’ as noted in 12.5).

Ra’ah (cf. 16.12) is the common verb for “look” with the preposition ‘*e/-*’ (‘to’) and is used with “eyes” whereas *shahah* does not have this term. The object here (as opposed to the Maker, if you will) is the Holy One of Israel which intimates the temple in Jerusalem.

17-Vs. 8: they will not have regard for the altars, the work of their hands, and they will not look to what their own fingers have made, either the Asherim or the altars of incense.

The pair of verbs in the last verse (*shahah* and *ra’ah*) is used again with regard to a rejection of past practices of worship. The words “what their own fingers have made” are important because it indicates more clearly the nature of this rejection. The only other reference to Asherim is 27.9: “no Asherim or incense altars will remain standing.” *Chamanyim* is the noun for “incense altars” which also could refer to pillars erected to worship the sun.

17-Vs. 9: In that day their strong cities will be like the deserted places of the Hivites and the Amorites, which they deserted because of the children of Israel, and there will be desolation.

“They” refer to vs. 7 with “men” who will turn their attention to the Lord who made them. Then again, Chapter Seventeen is “an oracle against Damascus” and could refer to its inhabitants as well as those of Canaan. Their fortified places do have a precedent, namely, like those of the Hivites and Amorites. Those have been “deserted” (*hazav*, cf. 1.28) by invasions of the Israelites, and what is left will be “desolation” or *shemamah* (cf. 6.11). In other words, if those affiliated with Damascus looked at past examples of how Israel had treated its enemies, they would relent and not suffer the same fate.

17-Vs. 10: For you have forgotten the God of your salvation and have not remembered the Rock of your refuge; therefore, though you plant pleasant plants and set out slips of an alien god,

To forget (*shakach*) is the exact opposite of *shahah* and *ra'ah* of first vs. 7 as it pertains to the Lord and then as with respect to religious practices that stood in the way of worship of the Lord. "But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me" [49.14]. In the verse at hand, such forgetfulness pertains not just to God but to the God of your "salvation" or *yeshah* (i.e., same as the proper name Jesus or very close to it) and found next in 45.8: "let the earth open that salvation may sprout forth."

Not to remember (*zakar*, cf. 12.4) seems more active or more deliberate than the forgetting just mentioned. Here it pertains to the Lord as "Rock of refuge" or *Tsur* (cf. 2.10) and *mahoz*. The latter is in the previous verse but not noted there as the adjective "strong:" i.e., "cities of strength."

The adjective for "pleasant" as applicable to vineyards is the noun *nahamanyim*, the only use of the word in the Bible derived from the verbal root *naham* meaning to be pleasant.

The last part of this verse reads literally "and pruned slip of an alien one you shall sow him." Apparently reference is to an alien god, certainly one other than the Lord God of Israel. *Zur* is the adjective for "alien" and is a verb noted last in 1.7.

17-Vs. 11: though you make them grow on the day that you plant them and make them blossom in the morning that you sow; yet the harvest will flee away in a day of grief and incurable pain.

Two references to *yom* (cf. vs. 7): "on that day" which refers to growing and blossoming and "in a day" which consists of "grief and pain" or *chalah* (cf. 14.10) and *ke'ev*. The former suggests weakness and the latter has five other biblical references. "But you shall cry out for pain of heart and shall wail for anguish of spirit" [65.10].

17-Vs. 12: Ah, the thunder of many peoples, they thunder like the thundering of the sea! Ah, the roar of nations, they roar like the roaring of mighty waters!

"Thunder and roar" or *hamon* (cf. 16.14) and *sha'on* (cf. 13.4). As for the former which connotes a tumult, not the similarity of sound with "peoples:" *hamon hamym*.

17-Vs. 13: The nations roar like the roaring of many waters, but he will rebuke them, and they will flee far away, chased like chaff on the mountains before the wind and whirling dust before the storm.

"Roar" or *sha'on* as in the previous verse which the Lord will "rebuke" or *gahar* as in 54.9: "I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you." *sha'on* is not unlike *suphah* or "storm" which is more a whirlwind found last in 5.28 but not noted there.

17-Vs. 14: At evening time, behold, terror! Before morning, they are no more! This is the portion of those who despoil us, and the lot of those who plunder us.

Several references are made to "day" or *yom* (cf. vs. 11) which is more than the circadian rhythm of day and night. Here Chapter Seventeen concludes on a kind of triumphal note and mentions "evening." While the conventional meaning of that term applies, it can have more or less the same sense as *yom*, a finality to those who are threatening Israel.

“Portion and lot” or *cheleq* and *goral*. The former pertains to something meted out beforehand with the verb *shasah* noted last in 10.13 and the latter to something not unlike a lottery, a casting of dice, if you will, to determine who will get what. For *cheleq*, cf. 57.6: “Among the smooth stones of the valley is your portion.” For *goral*, cf. 34.17: “He has cast the lot for them, his hand has portioned it out to them with the line.”

Chapter Eighteen

18-Vs. 1: Ah, land of whirring wings which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia;

There seems to be a seamless transition from the previous chapter to the current one which is much shorter. Whirring wings can be symbolic of armies coming from the south like a plague of locusts.

18-Vs. 2: which sends ambassadors by the Nile, in vessels of papyrus upon the waters! Go, you swift messengers, to a nation, tall and smooth, to a people feared near and far, a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide.

Tsy as “ambassadors” is noted last in 13.8 with its alternate meaning of agony which fits in well here. They are also called “messengers” or *mal’ak* (cf. 14.32) who are “swift” or *qal* (cf. 5.26) which ties in with the lightly built but swift boats made of papyrus.

“Near and far” or literally “from him and beyond.”

“A nation mighty and conquering” or literally the awkward “measuring tape-measuring tape and trampling.”

18-Vs. 3: All you inhabitants of the world, you who dwell on the earth, when a signal is raised on the mountains, look! When a trumpet is blown, hear!

Note the two similar words, “world and earth” or *tevel* (cf. 14.21) and *’erets* (cf. 14.26). *Tevel* usually refers to inhabited regions whereas *’erets* is the place of residence for a given people. To the former belong “inhabitants” or *yashav* and to the latter, those who “dwell” or *shakan*. *Yashav* means to sit down whereas *shakan* is more along the lines of settling down. The former is found last in 12.6 but not noted there whereas the latter is found last in 13.20 but not noted there.

The noun for “signal” is *nes* found last in 13.2 and has military connotations, here one placed on a mountaintop. Similar in function to this *nes* is a “trumpet” or *shophar* found next in 27.13: “In that day a great trumpet will be blown,” *shophar tishmahu*.

18-Vs. 4: For thus the Lord said to me: “I will quietly look from my dwelling like clear heat in sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.”

Most likely “me” refers to Isaiah as the Lord reveals his plan to counter the invasion, all this being part of the oracle noted in 17.1 though there it pertains to Damascus. Both “quietly and look” are verbs, *shaqat* and *navat*, 14.7 and 8.22 and are done from the divine “dwelling” or *makon* (cf. 4.5) which also means a foundation or base. In other words, first being

quiet followed by the looking which is more a beholding.

The twofold action of *shaqat* and *navat* is likened to two things:

1) Heat which is “clear” or *tsach*, also meaning the color white. There are three other biblical references such as 32.4: “and the tongues of stammerers will speak readily and distinctly.”

2) A cloud of “dew” or *tal*. “For your dew is a dew of light” [26.19]. The *tal* at hand is in the shape of a cloud found in the late summer or early autumn, the time of harvest. That means the *shaqat* and *navat* from above filter through this cloud of dew, thereby diffusing it, perhaps into many colors or mini-rainbows.

18-Vs. 5: For before the harvest, when the blossom is over, and the flower becomes a ripening grape, he will cut off the shoots with pruning hooks, and the spreading branches he will hew away.

The cutting off and hewing away will take place shortly before the harvest or when the fruit (blossom) and grape (flower) have passed. In other words, there is a short time still for growing or coming to maturity of these fruits, a time of expectation which is cut short, the situation all the more tragic by happening at the end of the harvest season.

18-Vs. 6: They shall all of them be left to the birds of prey of the mountains and to the beasts of the earth. And the birds of prey will summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth will winter upon them.

What makes this situation worse, apart from the tragedy of not coming to full maturity as in vs. 5, is that “birds of prey” (*hayt*) will spend the summer upon both the blossom of fruit (unspecified in vs. 5) and flower of the grape. “Calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country” [46.11].

The verb for “summer” is *hazav* which means to abandon (cf. 17.9). The verb for “winter” is *charaph* which means to pluck off, to scorn. “Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God” [37.4]. In other words, the blossom and flower will be ravaged during the two seasons of summer and winter or the year pretty much in its entirety.

18: Vs. 7: At that time gifts will be brought to the Lord of hosts from a people tall and smooth, from a people feared near and far, a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide, to Mount Zion, the place of the name of the Lord of hosts.

Although this short chapter begins on threatening note with an invasion of Israel from the south, it has a positive conclusion. That is, the people tall and smooth as in vs. 2 bring “gifts” or *shay* which has two other references, Pss 68.29 and 76.11, the former being cited here: “Because of your temple at Jerusalem kings bear gifts to you.”

Such gifts will be brought “at that time” (*heth*, cf. 13.22) which is a more specific time compared with the general nature of earlier instances. Most likely these gifts brought to the Lord will consist of animals for offerings at the Jerusalem temple, hence the name of Mount Zion in this verse. It is designated as a *maqom* or “place” (cf. 14.2) for the Lord’s name or more accurately, the Lord of hosts.

