

### Chapter Forty-Three

**43-Vs. 1: But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.**

Once again the small conjunctive *v-* ('but') plays an important role because it serves to connect the previous chapter with the present one, showing a transition of words of rebuke to words of hope.

"Created and formed" or *bara'* (cf. 42.5) and *yatsar* (cf. 37.26): the former suggests cutting or engraving with regard to Jacob whereas the latter, fashioning from existing material with regard to Israel.

"Redeemed and called" or *ga'al* (cf. 41.14) and *qara'* (cf. 41.25), the latter using the preposition *b-* which reads literally, "called in name." "You are mine reads literally "to me you."

**43-Vs. 2: When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.**

This verse has echos of the Exodus across the Red Sea which is what the Lord wished to evoke. Generally speaking, waters applies to chaos, that "face of the deep" in Gn 1.2. Reference to fire is reminiscent of Ps 66.12: "You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us forth to a spacious place." In the verse at hand, *shataph* (cf. 30.28) or "consume" suggests a welling up with force.

**43-Vs. 3: For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.**

The words "I am the Lord" occur last in 42.8 but here as "Savior" or the verbal root *yashah* (cf. 38.20). In the same breath the Lord speaks of some of Israel's traditional enemies: Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba, the former being as "ransom" or *kopher* which has two other varied meanings such as pitch and cypress. "Truly no man can ransom himself or give to God the price of his life" [Ps 49.7].

**43-Vs. 4: Because you are precious in my eyes and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.**

"Precious and honored" or *yaqar* (cf. 28.16) *kavad* (cf. 26.15) follow the Lord's outright expression of love, *ahav* (cf. 41.8).

*Nephesh* (cf. 42.1) is the noun for "life" which fundamentally means soul and is in the singular, as though Israel were comprised of one soul or one person.

**43-Vs. 5: Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you;**

The Lord speaks of two directions from which Israel and her offspring had been scattered, that is, from the east (from where King Cyrus comes) and from the west or the extreme west of the coastlands. *Qavats* is the verb for “gather” noted last in 40.11 and as noted there, means to take by the hand.

**43-Vs. 6: I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth,**

In addition to the east and west of the previous verse, the Lord speaks of the other two cardinal points, north and south as well as the earth’s “end” or *qatseh* (cf. 42.10). Note that *qatseh* is singular which is literally true if the earth is conceived as the base where the firmament comes down upon it, not unlike being covered by a bowl (cf. 42.10).

**43-Vs. 7: every one who is called by my name whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."**

This is the end of a quote marked off in the RSV beginning with vs. 1.

Three verbs relative to making: “created, formed and made” or *bara’, yatsar* and *hasah* (cf. 41.20). The first two are found in vs. 1 which is similar to the one at hand.

**43-Vs. 8: Bring forth the people who are blind yet have eyes, who are deaf yet have ears!**

This bringing forth differs from the Lord issuing a command to summon his people from the four cardinal points of the earth in vss. 5 and 6. Obviously he has in mind a blindness and deafness other than the physical kind.

**43-Vs. 9: Let all the nations gather together, and let the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this and show us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to justify them, and let them hear and say, It is true.**

*Qavats* is the verb for “gather together” as in vs. 5 with respect to Israel and here applies to “nations” or *goy* (cf. 40.7). Compare with *yasaph* in 37.31 which connotes adding to what already is present, that is, the “peoples” or *ham* (cf. 34.1) which is used with *goy* as in the verse at hand. In other words, the *goy* are to come together whereas the *ham* are already present but are to increase...a subtle difference, if you will, between the two. Nothing is said as to the place where for this to happen which is secondary to the meaning at hand.

“Gather and show” or *nagad* (cf. 42.12) and *shamah* (cf. 42.24), the latter meaning to hear. Both are with respect to “former things,” *ri’shon* (cf. 42.9). There *ri’shon* is with respect to Israel whereas here, to the nations and peoples to whom is put this rhetorical questions which can’t be answered. Thus it is more to get their attention and submit them to the Lord.

The third sentence is a twofold challenge put to the nations and peoples is that first they produce “witnesses” or *hed* (cf. 19.20) in order to “justify” themselves, *tsadaq* (cf. 5.23) which can be done only by the Lord himself. Secondly, they are to first “hear” (*shamah*) and say with regard to *ri’shon*, “It is true” or *’emeth* (cf. 42.3) which is a noun meaning truth.

**43-Vs. 10: "You are my witnesses," says the Lord, "and my servant whom I have chosen, that you**

**may know and believe me and understand that I am He. Before me no God was formed, nor shall there be any after me.**

A second instance of *hed* or “witnesses,” most likely referring to the nations and peoples of the previous verse though not specified. Right after asking a rhetorical question and posing a challenge, in his mercy the Lord shifts the tone of his speech. Also the Lord uses the singular “servant” or *heved* which is mentioned in 42.1, “Behold, my servant.” In both cases his identity is unclear: Israel, the nations and peoples together or perhaps Cyrus who makes his appearance at the end of Chapter Forty-Four. It is for each to figure out and act accordingly.

The Lord’s choice of this *heved* is specifically for the witnesses to “know, believe and understand” or *yadah* (cf. 41.22), *’aman* (cf. 28.16) and *byn* (cf. 40.21). Note that all three occur in 40.21 and here have as their object the Lord.

A contrast between before and after with regard to the verb *yatsar* or “formed” (cf. vs. 7) which connotes planning.

**43-Vs. 11: I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior.**

*Yashah* is the verb for “savior” noted last in vs. 3 and here is related to the being of the Lord.

**43- Vs. 12: I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses," says the Lord.**

The previous verse has the verb *yashah* as here but includes two others, *nagad* and *shamah* which are found in vs. 9. This seems to take place before the nations and peoples (presumably still being addressed) had a “strange god” or *zur*, the participle of a verb (cf. 29.5). In other words, the Lord having *yashah*, *nagad* and *shamah* had made the people “witnesses” or *hed* (cf. vs. 10).

**43-Vs. 13: "I am God, and also henceforth I am He; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work and who can hinder it?"**

The Hebrew text begins this verb as *miyom* or literally “from day.” *Natsal* is the verb for “deliver” noted last in 42.22, a sudden snatching away. *Pahal* is the verb for “work” (cf. 41.4) and suggests the fabrication of something. *Shuv* is the verb for “hinder” (cf. 42.22) and suggests a returning.

**43-Vs. 14: Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "For your sake I will send to Babylon and break down all the bars, and the shouting of the Chaldeans will be turned to lamentations.**

*Ga’al* is the verb meaning “Redeemer” which hearkens back to vs. 1. Mention of Babylon hearkens back to 13.1, “The oracle concerning Babylon” and bars suggest Israel having been imprisoned by that country. Both Babylon and the Chaldeans are mentioned together in 13.19.

*Ranan* (cf. 42.11) and *’anyah* (cf. 29.2) or “shouting and lamentations,” the former also meaning to shout for joy.

**43-Vs. 15: I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King."**

In 40.28 the Lord calls himself "Creator of the ends of the earth" whereas here he applies it to Israel, the participle *bara'* being used (cf. vs. 7). This verse marks the completion of a quote begun in the last verse begun by the familiar "Thus says the Lord."

**43-Vs. 16: Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters,**

This is the second instance of "Thus says the Lord" happening in consecutive fashion. In light of Israel's tendency to worship either idols or foreign gods, such words can't be repeated often enough. Here the Lord seems to allude to the Exodus from Egypt: "way and path" with respect to waters, *derek* and *netyvah*, both being found together in 42.16. The verse at hand can also apply to the waters of Gn 1.2 or chaos.

**43-Vs. 17: who brings forth chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:**

Again, most likely this alludes to the Exodus: "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea" [Ex 15.1].

**43-Vs. 18: "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.**

*Zakar* is the verb for "remember" (cf. 38.3) used with respect to *ri'shon* or "former things" (cf. vs. 9). *Byn* is the verb for "consider" which often refers to understanding (cf. vs. 10) with respect to what is old or *qadmony* as well as the east as in Jl 2.20: "I will remove the northerner far from you...his front into the eastern sea."

**43-Vs. 19: Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.**

In a sense, "behold" (*hineh*, cf. 42.9) resembles "Thus says the Lord" both to grab attention and put it where it should be, on the Lord. The "new thing" or *chadash* (cf. 42.10) is in the process of springing forth, *tsamach* (cf. 42.9). While this is going on, the Lord asks his people whether or not they "perceive" it, the familiar verb *yadah* or to know being used (cf. vs. 10).

*Midbar* (cf. 42.11) and *yeshymon* (cf. vs. 20): the latter suggests a place of utter desolation in which rivers will flow whereas the former will have a "way" or *derek* (cf. vs. 16).

**43-Vs. 20: The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people,**

A second use of the pair *midbar* and *yeshymon* but in reference to wild animals in which the people of Israel are dwelling, that is, reference to the forty years of wandering in the Sinai wilderness. *Kavad* is the verb for "honor" (cf. vs. 4) concerning these animals which they do simply by existing.

**43-Vs. 21: the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.**

The previous verse spoke of wild animals giving glory to the Lord whereas here the people are to parallel them, that is, they are to give the Lord “praise” or *tehilah* (cf. 42.12). More precisely, they are to “declare” it, *saphar* (cf. 36.3) which fundamentally means to read and to read something means that it has to be inscribed on a scroll or stone. Such declaring...reading...depends upon the people being aware that they have been “formed” by the Lord, *yatsar* (cf. vs. 10), and that differs from the honor given by the wild animals of the previous verse.

**43-Vs. 22: "Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob; but you have been weary of me, O Israel!**

*Yagah* is the verb for “weary” (cf. 40.31) used with the preposition *b-* which reads literally “weary in me.” It seems a lack of calling (*qara'*, cf. vs. 1) upon the Lord causes weariness of him, one way of equating this being lack of remembrance of him.

**43-Vs. 23: You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offerings or honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with offerings or wearied you with frankincense.**

Compare the *kavad* by the wild beasts in vs. 20 with the people in the verse at hand, the former giving the Lord more glory. *Yagah* is the verb for “wearied” as in vs. 22.

**43-Vs. 24: You have not bought me sweet cane with money or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins, you have wearied me with your iniquities.**

Note the similar sound of “brought” and “sweet cane,” *qanah* (cf. 1.3) and *qaneh*. The first verb “satisfied” is completely opposite the other two, “burdened and wearied:” *ravah* (cf. 34.5 but not noted there) also means to be drunk or watered, *havah* (cf. 19.23) which means to serve as a slave and *yagah* (cf. vs. 23).

**43-Vs. 25: "I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.**

Use of the singular personal pronoun “I” twice is equivalent to “Thus says the Lord” and “behold” as noted in vs. 19.

*Machah* (cf. 25.8) means “blots out” with regard to the people’s “transgressions” or *peshah* (cf. 24.20) which here is equivalent to divine forgetfulness, *zakar* being the verb for “remember” (cf. vs. 18).

**43-Vs. 26: Put me in remembrance, let us argue together; set forth your case that you may be proved right.**

Another use of the verb *zakar* rendered here something like “cause me to be remembered,” an indirect way of putting it or without exerting force or compulsion.

*Shaphat* (cf. 33.22) is the verb for “argue” and fundamentally means to judge, and where

judgement is involved, the Lord surely is to win though he does not put it like that.

*Saphar* is the verb for “set for (your) case” and found in vs. 21 as “declare” which fundamentally means to read. In the verse at hand, *saphar* is used with *tsadaq*, “proved right” or justified (cf. vs. 9).

#### **43-Vs. 27: Your first father sinned, and your mediators transgressed against me.**

Most likely reference is to the first man created in the Book of Genesis.

*Luts* is a verb for “mediators” and fundamentally means to be scornful as in 30.12. The latter (perhaps prophets and others like them) have “transgressed” against the Lord, *pashah* (cf. 1.28) connoting rebellion and used with the preposition *b-*, literally, “transgressed in me.”

#### **43-Vs. 28: Therefore I profaned the princes of the sanctuary, I delivered Jacob to utter destruction and Israel to reviling.**

The small conjunctive *v-* or “therefore” brings this chapter to conclusion though not on a positive note.

*Chalal* is the verb for “profaned” and connotes defilement as in 23.9, here with respect to temple officials and priests designated as “princes” or *sar* (cf. 32.1). They ministered to the “sanctuary” or *qodesh*, an adjective found last in 35.8 meaning holy and most likely referring to the Jerusalem temple.

“Destruction and reviling” or *cherem* (cf. 34.5) and *giduphah*. The former conveys a sense of shutting up in the sense of saving or preserving as well as a type of destruction done for the Lord. The latter has two other biblical references, 51.7 and Zeph 2.8, the former being cited here: “and be not dismayed at their revilings.”

### **Chapter Forty-Four**

#### **44-Vs. 1: "But now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen!**

The conjunctive *v-* as “but” serves to both continue and to develop further what the Lord had communicated in the previous chapter. Immediately following this *v-* is the command for Jacob and Israel to “hear” or *shamah* (cf. 43.12), two names for the same people. The words “whom I have chosen” read literally, “whom I have chosen in (*b-*) him,” that is, the Lord himself signifying *bachar* (cf. 14.1) is a type of abiding.

#### **44-Vs. 2: Thus says the Lord who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you: fear not, O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen.**

*Hasah* and *yatsar* or “made and formed” are both found in 43.7, the latter with respect to the womb. Israel is being addressed as the second person singular, not the second person plural.

Jacob is bidden not to “fear” or *yare'* (cf. 41.23) and is also called Jeshurun which the RSV says is “a poetic name of endearment for Israel.” The Lord uses the verb *bachar* (‘chosen’) a second time for emphasis and to reassure Jacob.

**44-Vs. 3: For I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your descendants and my blessing on your offspring.**

The verb “pour” or *yatsaq* is used twice here: with respect to water and the Lord’s own “Spirit” or *Ruach* (cf. 42.5), the two being similar as far as issuing goes. The latter is with respect to the divine “blessing” or *berakah* (cf. 36.16). “(Jacob) poured oil on the top of it” [Gn 28.18].

*Zerah* (cf. 14.20) and *tse’etsa’ym* (cf. 42.5 but not noted there) or “descendants and offspring.” The former also means seed and the latter connotes that which comes forth.

**44-Vs. 4: They shall spring up like grass amid waters, like willows by flowing streams.**

As a result of the twofold pouring of vs. 3, the people will “spring up” or *tsamach* (cf. 43.19) first like grass and then like willows. Once God has created the earth, the first living thing that followed on day three was vegetation: “Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed” [Gn 1.11].

**44-Vs. 5: This one will say, 'I am the Lord's,' another will call himself by the name of Jacob, and another will write on his hand, 'The Lord's,' and surname himself by the name of Israel."**

This verse is reminiscent of Dt 6.8: “And you shall bind them (the Lord’s words) as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.”

“I am the Lord’s” reads literally as “I am to (*-l-*) the Lord.” The same applies with regard to “The Lord’s.” *Kanah* is the verb for “surname” meaning to address in a kind fashion. “I surname you though you do not know me” [45.4].

**44-Vs. 6: Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no God.**

The opening words are found last in vs. 2 but here as both king and “redeemer” of Israel, the latter (*ga'al*) being found last in a similar context in 43.14.

“First and last” or *ri’shon* and *’acharon* are found together in a similar context, 41.4. As noted there, these words are reminiscent of Rev 22.13: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

**44-Vs. 7: Who is like me? Let him proclaim it, let him declare and set it forth before me. Who has announced from of old the things to come? Let them tell us what is yet to be.**

Two questions are posed which, of course, cannot be answered but are more a challenge. The first is threefold: “proclaim, declare and set forth” or *qara’* which also means to call (cf. 43.22), *nagad* (cf. 43.12) and *harak* which implies arranging or putting in order (cf. 40.25). *Nagad* is used in the third sentence as “tell.”

As a footnote in the RSV has it, the second challenge reads as follows: “from my placing an eternal people and things to come.”

**44-Vs. 8: Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a god besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any."**

"Fear (not) and (nor) be afraid" or *pachad* (cf. 33.14) and *yare'* (cf. vs. 2). The former suggests trembling as well as being terrified while the latter is the common verb.

"Told and declared" or *shamah* (cf. vs. 1) and *nagad* (cf. vs. 7): the former reads literally "cause to hear" and applies to "of old" or again literally, "from then" (*me'az*) which could mean any point in Israel's history. So once the people were caused to hear, with respect to from-then, if you will, the Lord declares the contents of what happened in that time frame, the one of from-then.

When calling his people "witnesses" or *hed* (cf. 43.12), he is bidding them more or less against their will and assaults them with rapid fire statements.

The Lord responds to his own rhetorical question about another god, not allowing anyone to interject a word, by claiming he is the only "Rock" or *tsur* (cf. 31.9). He injects further irony by claiming that he doesn't "know" (*yadah*, cf. 43.19) of any other god.

**44-Vs. 9: All who make idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit; their witnesses neither see nor know, that they may be put to shame.**

This verse serves as a take-off point, if you will, for a satire against false gods and continues through vs. 20.

*Yatsar* is the verb for "make" (cf. vs. 2) and fits the notion of *pesel* (cf. 42.17) or "idol" in that such objects are formed. Not only that, they are "nothing" or *tohu* (cf. 41.29), a word used with regard to the chaos from which the Lord created. "The earth was without form and void" [vs. 2].

*Chamad* (cf. 1.29) and *yahal* (cf. 30.6) or "delight and profit."

The previous verse has the Lord speaking of "witnesses" (*hed*) who could be the same here with regard to being spiritually blind and ignorant which eventually shames them, *bosh* being the verb (cf. 41.11).

**44-Vs. 10: Who fashions a god or casts an image that is profitable for nothing?**

Obviously those listening to this question cannot answer because they are embarrassed at having been caught in the act of idol worship, god being equivalent to an "image" or *pesel* (cf. vs. 9) which is fashioned or *yatsar* (cf. vs. 9).

**44-Vs. 11: Behold, all his fellows shall be put to shame, and the craftsmen are but men; let them all assemble, let them stand forth, they shall be terrified, they shall be put to shame together.**

In the context of this satire against idols where the Lord puts forth questions that cannot be answered, "behold" or *hen* (cf. 41.29) has special force in that it is about to show the foolishness of those engaged in idol worship. "Craftsmen" (*chaver* found in 1.23 but not noted there) who fashioned them are singled out for special ridicule.

*Pachad* (cf. vs. 8) and *bosh* (cf. vs. 9) or "terrified and put to shame." By now these and similar words have become familiar.

Vss. 12 through 17 go into great detail as to how idol worshipers fashion their gods, that



is, through the talent of iron smiths and carpenters. Despite the specialized talent that goes into making idols, some of the material is put to practical use such as fuel. All this is summed up in the ironical exclamation of vs. 17, "Save me, for you are my God!" *Natsal* (cf. 43.13) is the verb here which implies to be plucked out suddenly.

**44-Vs. 18: They know not nor do they discern; for he has shut their eyes so that they cannot see and their minds so that they cannot understand.**

*Yadah* (cf. vs. 8) and *byn* (cf. 43.18) or "know (not)" and "(nor) discern" can apply to the dumb images fashioned for worship as described in vss. 12-17 and thus mirror those who worship them.

*Tuach* is the verb for "shut" which more properly means to daub or to plaster over. "Where is the daubing with which you daubed it" [Ezk 13.12]? *Lev* (cf. 42.25) is the noun for "minds" which applies to the heart and are daubed, if you will, so the people cannot "understand," *sakal* (cf. 41.20, a verb which implies beholding).

**44-Vs. 19: No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire, I also baked bread on its coals, I roasted flesh and have eaten; and shall I make the residue of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?"**

The Lord is lamenting the lack of consideration, knowledge and the ability to discern. The first is rendered literally as "he is (not) returning (*shuv*, cf. 43.13) to heart (*lev*, cf. vs. 18)." *Dahath* is the second (cf. 40.14) and *tevunah* (cf. 40.28) the third.

The person who has fashioned his idol questions whether or not he should have any of it left over as an "abomination" or *tohevah* (cf 41.24) and worship it by falling down or *sagad* which occurs last in vs. 17 but not noted there. Note the similarity of sound in *tevunah* and *tohevah*.

**44-Vs. 20: He feeds on ashes; a deluded mind has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"**

The ashes refer to half the idol burned in vs. 19, the result of a *lev* (cf. vs. 19) or "mind" which has become "deluded" or *hatal* and has caused this person—the nation of Israel—to be "led astray" or *natah* (cf. 42.5) which implies inclining. One reference to *hatal* is Job 13.9: "Or can you deceive him (God) as one who deceives a man?"

*Natsal* is the verb for "deliver" as in vs. 11, and *sheqer* means "lie" (cf. 32.7).

**44-Vs. 21: Remember these things, O Jacob and Israel, for you are my servant; I formed you, you are my servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.**

The Lord bids his people under both the names of Jacob and Israel to "remember" (*zakar*, cf. 43.26) all that has been said about the futility of idol worship, saying twice that the people are his servant and won't be "forgotten" by him, *nashah* implying desertion. "God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house" [Gn 41.51]. The verb is in a reflexive form here for emphasis, i.e., "by me."

**44-Vs. 22: I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.**

*Machah* is the verb for “swept away” which as noted in 43.25 means to blot out, that is, with regard to “transgressions” or *peshah* (also 43.25) as well as “sins” or *chata’th* found last in 40.2 but not noted there. The fleeting nature of a cloud and mist are used with regard to this *machah* or blotting out.

The people already have been “redeemed” (*ga’al*, cf. vs. 6) but have no memory of that experience yet are bidden to “return” (*shuv*, cf. vs. 19) to the Lord.

**44-Vs. 23: Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it; shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob and will be glorified in Israel.**

*Ranan* (cf. 43.14), *ruah* (cf. 42.13) and *patsach* (cf. 14.7) are all sudden or spontaneous gestures addressed not to Israel but inanimate creation. In other words, they are connected with Jacob because the Lord has “redeemed” (*ga’al*, cf. vs. 22) him and “will be glorified” in Israel, *pa’ar* (found last in 10.15 but not noted there).

**44-Vs. 24: Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: "I am the Lord who made all things, who stretched out the heavens alone, who spread out the earth – Who was with me? –**

This verse consists of one extended sentence, if you will, lasting through vs. 28 or the conclusion of Chapter Forty-Four.

The Lord calls himself “Redeemer” as in vs. 6 (*ga’al*, cf. previous verse) who has “formed” the collective Israel from the womb, *yatsar* (cf. vs. 10). Note the similarity of the two verbs, “stretched out and spread out:” *natah* and *raqah*. As noted in vs. 20, the former suggests a stretching out whereas the latter (cf. 42.5) more a casting forth in a sudden manner. To the Lord’s rhetorical question Wisdom can respond readily, “When he established the heavens, I was there” [Prov 8.27].

**44-Vs. 25: who frustrates the omens of liars and makes fools of diviners; who turns wise men back and makes their knowledge foolish;**

Here the Lord deals ruthlessly with three types of people, including the last which do not belong with the first two: “liars, makes fools and wise men.” *Bad* (cf. 16.6), *halal* (cf. 41.16 with the alternate meaning of ‘glory’) and *sakal* (not to be confused with *skalal* of vs. 18, ‘s’ being the letter ‘shin’). “You have done foolishly” [1Sam 13.13].

“Omens, diviners and knowledge” are grouped together: *’oth* (cf. 38.22), *qesem* (cf. 3.2, participle) and *dahath* (cf. vs. 19).

**44-Vs. 26: who confirms the word of his servant and performs the counsel of his messengers; who says of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be inhabited,’ and of the cities of Judah, ‘They shall be built, and I will raise up their ruins;’**

In vs. 21 the Lord calls Jacob and Israel his servant which carries over here as well with regard to his “word” or *davar* (cf. 42.16) which he “confirms,” *qum* (cf. 40.8) being the verb suggestive of rising and here, of continual rising. *Hetsah* (cf. 40.14) is the noun for “counsel” which applies to the servant’s response to the messenger of the Lord or the ones responsible for speaking to Jerusalem and the city of Judah about being restored. This servant will perform the counsel at hand, the verb being *shalam* (cf. 42.19) which connotes bringing to an end in the sense of completion.

**44-Vs. 27: who says to the deep, ‘Be dry, I will dry up your rivers;**

*Tsula* is the noun for “deep,” the only use of this word in the Bible and connotes sinking. Connected with this deep are rivers which flow into it which the messengers say will be dried up.

**44-Vs. 28: who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfil all my purpose;’ saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’”**

Chapter Forty-One has a footnote from the RSV saying that the victories spoken of there refer to King Cyrus who in the verse at hand is mentioned for the first time though alluded to on several occasions since Chapter Forty-One. The Lord calls Cyrus his “shepherd” or the participle *rahah* meaning to feed which is found last in vs. 20 but not noted there. The verb *shalam* as in vs. 26 here means “fulfil” or brought to completion, that is, Cyrus as an agent with respect to the Lord’s “purpose” or *chephets*, a noun suggestive of delight. “My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose” [46.10].

Concomitant with King Cyrus being favored by the Lord is the reestablishment not so much of Jerusalem, important as it is, but of its temple.

## Chapter Forty-Five

**45-Vs. 1: Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and ungird the loins of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:**

This chapter reveals what everyone had known for some time though not explicitly, that the Lord favors Cyrus, King of Persia, calling him “anointed” or *mashyach*, this being the only use of the word in Isaiah. As a footnote in the RSV says, *mashyach* is only reference to a non-Israelite. Also it brings up images of Jesus Christ as anointed. “And build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince” [Dan 9.25]. The Lord himself grasps Cyrus’ right hand in order to do the following three:

1) “Subdue” nations, *radad* fundamentally meaning to spread and has three other biblical references, one of which is Ps 144.2: “who subdues the peoples under him.”

2) “Ungirds” kings’ loins or *patach* which means to open as in 35.5 and can refer to loosening of swords around the waist.

3) To open doors and not allow gates be closed, the idea of *patach* of #2 similarly applicable here.

**45-Vs. 2: I will go before you and level the mountains, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut asunder the bars of iron,**

The Lord does what is described here, all the while holding Cyrus' right hand pretty much to teach him what to do and how to do it. *Hadar* is the verb for "level" which is found next in 63.1 as "glorious."

With respect to door of bronze and bars of iron, the Lord will "break in pieces and cut asunder," *shavar* (cf. 28.13) and *gadah* (cf. 14.12).

**45-Vs. 3: I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name.**

"Treasures and hoards" or *'otsar* (cf. 33.6) which can apply to storehouses for grain and *matmon* which has four other biblical references, one of which is Prov 2.4: "if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures." Both deal with hidden places, darkness and "secret places or *mistar* which is derived from *satar* as in 40.27. "My soul shall weep in secret places" [Jer 13.17].

These two places remain unidentified and will remain unknown to everyone except Cyrus. The same applies to what is placed in there. Regardless, one goal is to be kept in mind, namely, that Cyrus "know" (*yadah*, cf. 44.18) the Lord has not just chosen him but called by name which is a more intimate type of *yadah*, if you will.

**45-Vs. 4: For the sake of my servant Jacob and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I surname you though you do not know me.**

Although Cyrus is singled out to be the Lord's anointed, it is for one purpose only as stated here. A second time the Lord calls Cyrus by name as well as "surname" him or *kanah* used in 44.5 which means, as pointed out there, that he addresses him in a kindly fashion. Note that this verse says Cyrus doesn't know the Lord though the Lord knows him, so it will come as quite a surprise once he realizes this. This will be true not just for Cyrus but for the entire nation of Persia. Then again, the Persians probably consider Israel a minor nuisance, the quicker it's taken care of the better after which they will move on to more important conquests.

**45-Vs. 5: I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I gird you though you do not know me,**

Here the Lord speaks to Cyrus as he has done on other occasions to Israel (cf. 44.6). This type of statement, however, will have a different impact on someone who worshiped a multitude of gods. The Lord uses the intimate verb *'azar* as "gird" (cf. 8.9 but not noted there). It seems the Lord had been dressing Cyrus by way of preparing him though he was completely unaware of this.

"Other" or *had* occurs frequently in the rest of the chapter and suggests something like attaining a limit beyond which there is nothing else.

**45-Vs. 6: that men may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none**

**besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other.**

Once the Lord makes it clear to Cyrus that he hadn't known the Lord yet all the while had been attended to by him, vs. 6 continues the theme of knowing about the Lord's absolute lordship. With respect to this knowledge (*yadah*, cf. vs. 3) it may be said to lay in accord with two directions of the sun: its rising and setting as well as intimating all that lies in between.

**45-Vs. 7: I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe, I am the Lord, who do all these things.**

Note three similar verbs: "form, create (twice) and make (twice; also as 'do')" *yatsar*, *hasah* and *bara'*. The first two are found together in 44.2 and the last in 43.15. Intimated are that light and weal, darkness and woe, are two pairs. The first applies to framing, the second applies to bringing into existence and the third is a more general term for effecting something.

**45-Vs. 8: "Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness; let the earth open that salvation may sprout forth, and let it cause righteousness to spring up also; I the Lord have created it.**

*Rahaph* is the verb for "shower" and has three other biblical references, one of which is Ps 65.11: "the tracks of your chariot drip with fatness." *Nazal* is the verb for "rain down" and connotes flowing compared with the slower drip of *rahaph*. It is found last in 44.3 as "streams" but not noted there. The content of the former isn't given whereas that of the latter is "righteousness" or *tsedeq* (cf. 42.21).

As recipients of *rahaph* and *nazal* the earth is to open that "salvation" or *yeshah* (cf. 17.11) "sprout forth" or *parach* (cf. 35.2). Also the earth is to allow "righteousness" or *tsedaqah* (cf. 33.15) "spring up," *tsamach* (cf. 44.4). As for *tsedaqah*, compare it with *tsedeq*. The former is suggestive of justice and piety whereas the latter with rectitude and deliverance although the two are quite similar.

This verse ends with the statement that the Lord has "created" (*bara'*, cf. vs. 7) this situation or alteration between show/rain down and open/sprout forth.

**45-Vs. 9: "Woe to him who strives with his Maker, an earthen vessel with the potter! Does the clay say to him who fashions it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles'?"**

This is the first of two verses beginning with "woe" or *hoy* (cf. 33.2), the first instance pertaining to a person who "strives" or *ryv* (cf. 41.21) with his "Maker," the participle *yatsar* being used (cf. vs. 7) as well as in the present verse as "fashions."

*Hasah* (cf. vs. 7) is the verb "making;" *pahal* is the noun for "work" found last in 41.24 but not noted there. As already mentioned, *hasah* is a general term whereas *pahal* suggests fabrication as well as preparation.

**45-Vs. 10: Woe to him who says to a father, 'What are you begetting?' or to a woman, 'With what are you in travail?'"**

This verse contains the second of two woes, here with respect to a father and a mother, thus implying the Lord first with regard to his “begetting” or *yalad* (cf. 9.6) and second with regard to being in “travail,” *chul* (cf. 13.8). The posing of these two questions reveals that the people of Israel have doubt as to their very existence and the Lord who brought them into it.

**45-Vs. 11: Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: "Will you question me about my children or command me concerning the work of my hands?"**

“Thus says the Lord” begins this chapter and concerns King Cyrus of Persia. Obviously the people are having a hard time accepting the fact that the Lord had chosen what amounts to their worst enemy to become their savior.

**45-Vs. 12: I made the earth and created man upon it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host.**

The Lord certainly has in mind the sentiment expressed in the last verse and now takes on the air of a military commander, *tsavah* being the verb which connotes setting in order as in 38.1. Here the heavens are equivalent to “host” or *tsava’* (cf. 40.26). Note the similarity in sound between *tsavah* and *tsava’*. Such an array is above the earth on which the Lord had created man, the two being distinct yet related.

**45-Vs. 13: I have aroused him in righteousness, and I will make all his ways; he shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward," says the Lord of hosts.**

Vs. 8 speaks of “righteousness” or *tsedeq* as a type of rain, the same noun here most likely referring to Cyrus whom the Lord has “aroused,” *hur* (cf. 42.13) suggesting that Cyrus was completely unaware of his being called by the Lord let alone the identity of the Lord.

Allusion to making (*yashar*) echoes back to 40.3 and brings up the image of John the Baptist. Thus Cyrus will turn out to build “my” city or Jerusalem and return its exiles without any type of ransom demand. This verse concludes with the Lord as being over his “hosts” or *tsava’* which refers to the heavens in vs. 12.

**45-Vs. 14: Thus says the Lord: "The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Ethiopia and the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over to you and be yours, they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will make supplication to you saying: 'God is with you only, and there is no other, no God besides him.'"**

The three peoples mentioned here will come to the Israelites in chains, implying that King Cyrus of Persia will have subdued them under the Lord’s guidance. All three are men of “stature” or *midah* which fundamentally means measure. “And a measuring reed in his hand” [Ezk 40.3].

The Egyptians, Ethiopians and Sabeans will “make supplication” or *palal* (cf. 38.2) which fundamentally means to pray.

**45-Vs. 15: Truly, you are a God who hide yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior.**

Such is the spontaneous expression by Israel about the Lord in light of his favor of King Cyrus. While the people may doubt the divine action, they recognize that he is at work, albeit obscurely. *Satar* is the verb for “hide” (cf. 40.27) and connotes a veiling.

**45-Vs. 16: All of them are put to shame and confounded, the makers of idols go in confusion together.**

“Put to shame and confounded” or *bosh* and *kalam* are found together in 41.11, the latter also meaning to be treated shamefully or reproached. *Tsyrr* is the noun for “idols” which has one other biblical reference, Ps 49.14: “and their form shall waste away.”

**45-Vs. 17: But Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation; you shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity.**

“Saved and salvation” or *yashah* (cf. 43.12) being the verbal root for *teshuhah*, the latter being derived from this root and found next in 46.13: “and my salvation will not tarry.”

“Put to shame and confounded” or *bosh* and *kalam* found together in the previous verse. Both are with reference to “all eternity” which reads literally “unto ever unto.”

**45-Vs. 18: For thus says the Lord who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it a chaos, he formed it to be inhabited!): "I am the Lord, and there is no other.**

This verse contains four verbs, three of which are noted in vs. 7: “created, formed, made and established” or *bara’*, *yatsar* and *hasah*. The fourth is *kun* (cf. 40.13). Vs. 18 continues with the Lord speaking through the rest of Chapter Forty-Five.

Isaiah comes off with two exclamations about divine supremacy where the Lord intends the earth to be inhabited, not to be a “chaos” or *tohu*, a word which as noted in 44.9 refers to the chaos from which the Lord created. “The earth was without form and void” [vs. 2].

**45-Vs. 19: I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek me in chaos.' I the Lord speak the truth, I declare what is right.**

Here the Lord says (the verb *davar* [cf. 40.27] is used, to express oneself) plainly that he did not speak both in “secret” or *seter* (cf. 32.2) as well as in a land of “darkness,” *choshkek* (cf. 42.7). Note that the noun *maqom* (cf. 33.21) or “place” is in the Hebrew text reading literally, “in a place of earth of darkness.” Here the *tohu* of vs. 18 is identified with this *maqom*.

In the second sentence the verb *amar* (cf. 40.27, along with *davar*) translates as “speak,” a more general term than *davar* and with regard to “truth” or *tsedeq* which more specifically applies to righteousness (cf. vs. 13).

In the second half of this second sentence the Lord declares or *nagad* (cf. 44.8) which connotes a kind of showing or telling. In the verse at hand it is “what is right,” *mesharym* (cf. 33.15).

**45-Vs. 20: "Assemble yourselves and come, draw near together, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols and keep on praying to a god that**

cannot save.

*Qavats* (cf. 43.9) and *nagash* (41.22) are the verbs for “assemble and draw near,” keeping in mind the Lord who favors King Cyrus of Persia under whose guidance this is happening. The Lord speaks of the ignorance (*yadah*, cf. vs.3) of those who worship idols (*pesel*, cf. 44.10 as image) yet persist in “praying” (*palal*, cf. vs. 14) to a god who cannot “save,” *yashah* (cf. vs. 17). The Israelites had picked up this practice when they were exiled and retained it even when, as vs. 20 puts it, assembling, coming and drawing near with respect to the Lord.

**45-Vs. 21: Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no other God besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me.**

This verse has an air of a law case about it, and the Lord knows that the people haven't a chance to win. However, their choice is easy. All they have to do is acknowledge the Lord as a “Savior” or the participle *yashah* (cf. vs. 20).

The verbs used for “declare, present your case and take counsel” are *nagad* (cf. vs. 19), *nagash* (cf. vs. 20) and *yahats* (cf. 41.28). The Lord speaks in rhetorical fashion about previous times when he had communicated with his people, intimating that those he had chosen have no memory of it. While such communication took part throughout Israel's history, the giving of the law on Mount Sinai stands out.

**45-Vs. 22: "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.**

*Panah* is the verb for “turn” which as noted in 40.3 connotes preparation. Thus to be “saved” (*yashah*, cf. vs. 21) intimates some time in order to get ready. In the verse at hand this *panah* applies to the earth's ends or all peoples.

**45-Vs. 23: By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.'**

“By myself” reads literally “in me” with the verb *shavah* as in 30.26 from which the sacred number seven is derived. This swearing results in a “word” or *davar* (cf. 44.26) which goes out one way in “righteousness” (*tsedaqah*, cf. vs. 8). It results in acknowledgment by all persons to reflect this divine *shavah* and to conform to it.

**45-Vs. 24: "Only in the Lord it shall be said of me are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and be ashamed all who were incensed against him.**

Note use of two prepositions: *b-* and *l-*, literally “in the Lord” and “to me.”

“Righteousness and strength” or *tsedaqah* (cf. vs. 23) and *hoz* (cf. 26.1). The first half of this verse suggests knowledge of these two divine qualities whereas the second half is a statement concerning those who failed in this acknowledgment: *bosh* (cf. vs. 17) and *charah* (cf. 41.11) or ‘ashamed and incensed” with the preposition *b-*, “in him.”



#### **45-Vs. 25: In the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall triumph and glory."**

"Triumph and glory" or *tsadaq* (cf. 43.26) and *halal* (cf. 44.25 with an alternate meaning). The former basically means to be righteous which for Israel's future generations is a form of triumph. The latter involves making clear or brilliant.

### **Chapter Forty-Six**

#### **46-Vs. 1: Bel bows down, Nebo stoops, their idols are on beasts and cattle; these things you carry are loaded as burdens on weary beasts.**

Bel is the god of Babylon who "bows down" or *qaras* which has one other biblical reference in the next verse. *Karah* or "stoops" is noted last in 10.4. Mention of beasts and cattle is a degrading way to say how the idols of Babylon are associated with those who carry them, the two performing the same function.

#### **46-Vs. 2: They stoop, they bow down together, they cannot save the burden but themselves go into captivity.**

The two verbs in the previous verse are included here. Most likely the beasts and cattle carry off the "burden" or *masa'* (cf. 30.6) of these idols as the people go into captivity. This is rendered literally as "the soul (*nephesh*, cf. 43.4) of them goes into captivity." That is to say, the one identity of Israel suffers the same fate.

During this journey into exile, most likely to Babylon, the Israelites are unable to "save" their idols, *malat* as noted in 31.5. That is to say, the beasts are too weary and cause the idols to fall off.

#### **46-Vs. 3: "Hearken to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel who have been borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb;**

The Lord is addressing his people as "remnant" or *she'eryth* mentioned last in 44.17 but not noted there. This word suggests that a good portion of Israel had been lost in various battles and sieges. Apparently the Lord had singled out this people from their birth even though they didn't know it.

#### **46-Vs. 4: even to your old age I am He, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.**

The Lord speaks of the other end of the human life span, if you will, having mentioned that he has carried his people from their birth in the previous verse. Note the emphasis (as well as in the last three verses) upon carrying or bearing in their different forms. In the verse at hand is *nasa'* or "bear" which is the verbal root of *masa'* or "burden" in vs. 2.

Not only will the Lord "carry" (*saval* usually applies to a heavy burden), but he will "save" or *malat* (cf. vs. 2). As for the former, it occurs next in vs. 7.

**46-Vs. 5: "To whom will you liken me and make me equal and compare me that we may be alike?"**

These words may be taken in light of the burdensome idols Israel had fashioned. The verbs for “liken, make equal, compare and be alike” are *damah shavah*, *mashal* and again *damah*. The first two words are found last in 40.25. *Mashal* is the verbal root for proverb and connotes assimilation. “As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel” [Ezk 18.3].

**46-Vs. 6: Those who lavish gold from the purse and weigh out silver in the scales hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god; then they fall down and worship!**

*Zul* (connotes pouring out) is the verb for “lavish” which has one other biblical reference with the opposite meaning, Lam 1.8: “all who honor her (Jerusalem) despise her.” The Lord has in mind persons of some means who can afford paying a goldsmith to fashion a god. The verb *sagad* for “fall down” is noted in a similar context, 44.19.

**46-Vs. 7: They lift it upon their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there; it cannot move from its place. If one cries to it, it does not answer or save him from his trouble.**

*Maqom* is the noun for “place” (cf. 45.19), a specific spot for this idol which could be in the Jerusalem temple. Despite the honor given to this idol, it fails to “save” or *yashah* (cf. 45.22) from “trouble,” *tsarah* (cf. 37.3) which connotes distress.

**46-Vs. 8: "Remember this and consider, recall it to mind, you transgressors,**

“Remember, consider and recall to mind” or *zakar* (cf. 44.21), *’ashash* or *’ysh* (the only use of this term in the Bible) and *shuv* (cf. 44.22) which connotes returning and used with *lev* or “heart” (cf. 44.20). All are directed to pass “transgressions,” the participle *pashah* (cf. 43.27).

**46-Vs. 9: remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me,**

*Zakar* or “remember” is used in the previous verse with regard to transgressions and infers remembering that the Lord is God. This verse is reminiscent of 45.22: “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.”

**46-Vs. 10: declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'**

*Nagad* is the verb for “declaring” (cf. 45.21) with respect to both “end and beginning” or *’acharyth* (cf. 41.22) *re’shyth* (cf. 41.4). *Qedem* (cf. 9.12) as “ancient times” literally means “before.”

**46-Vs. 11: calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have**

**spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.**

“Bird of prey” or *hayt* (cf. 18.6) comes from the east who is also a man of the Lord’s “counsel” or *hetsah* (cf. 44.26), obviously King Cyrus of Persia.

Note two pairs which are similar: speaking (*davar*, cf. 44.19) as equivalent to bringing to pass, the common verb *bo’* (cf. 30.29) and “purposed” (*yatsar*: cf. 45.18 as ‘formed’) as equivalent to *hasah*, the common verb meaning to do (cf. 45.18).

**46-Vs. 12: "Hearken to me, you stubborn of heart, you who are far from deliverance:**

*‘Abyr* is the adjective for “stubborn” and found last in 34.7 as “bulls” but not mentioned there, the comparison being obvious, here with respect to the “heart” (*lev*, cf. vs. 8).

*Tsedaqah* (cf. 25.44) is the noun for “deliverance” and fundamentally pertains to righteousness.

**46-Vs. 13: I bring near my deliverance, it is not far off, and my salvation will not tarry; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory."**

*Qarav* or “bring near” (cf. 41.21) is the exact opposite of “far from” or *rachaq* (cf. 29.13) of the previous verse. The same noun is used for “deliverance and salvation,” *teshuhah* (cf. 45.17).

*Tiph’arah* or “glory” is found last in 44.13 but not noted there.

## Chapter Forty-Seven

This chapter consists of a number of curses related to Babylon and thus outlines the most important features of each verse. Refer to Chapter Thirty-Nine for the last time this approach is taken.

1. Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate. 2. Take the millstones and grind meal, put off your veil, strip off your robe, uncover your legs, pass through the rivers. 3. Your nakedness shall be uncovered, and your shame shall be seen. I will take vengeance, and I will spare no man. 4. Our Redeemer—the Lord of hosts is his name—is the Holy One of Israel. 5. Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no more be called the mistress of kingdoms. 6. I was angry with my people, I profaned my heritage; I gave them into your hand, you showed them no mercy; on the aged you made your yoke exceedingly heavy. 7. You said, "I shall be mistress for ever," so that you did not lay these things to heart or remember their end. 8. Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures, who sit securely, who say in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children:" 9. These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day; the loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure in spite of your many sorceries and the great power of your enchantments. 10. You felt secure in your wickedness, you said, "No one sees me;" your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me." 11. But evil shall come upon

you, for which you cannot atone; disaster shall fall upon you, which you will not be able to expiate; and ruin shall come on you suddenly, of which you know nothing. 12. Stand fast in your enchantments and your many sorceries with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you may be able to succeed, perhaps you may inspire terror. 13. You are wearied with your many counsels; let them stand forth and save you, those who divide the heavens, who gaze at the stars, who at the new moons predict what shall befall you. 14. Behold, they are like stubble, the fire consumes them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame. No coal for warming oneself is this, no fire to sit before! 15. Such to you are those with whom you have labored, who have trafficked with you from your youth; they wander about each in his own direction; there is no one to save you.

In vs. 1 the verb *yarad* or “come down” (cf. 42.10) is an act of humility but at the same time one of repentance for Babylon who is called “virgin daughter” as with Zion in 37.22, a term of endearment. However, Babylon won’t be called “tender and delicate” or *rak* and *hanag*. For the former, cf. Prov 4.3: “When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother.” For the latter, cf. Dt 28.54 (one other biblical reference being vs. 56): “The man who is the most tender and delicately bred among you will grudge food to his brother.”

Vs. 2 has Babylon become what seems to be an abject slave, most likely to Israel.

The nakedness of vs. 3 is equivalent to “shame” or *cherpah* (cf. 30.5) which also means reproach. *Naqam* (cf. 35.4) is the verb for “take vengeance” and *pagah* the verb for “spare” which also means to strike upon or to reach. “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” [53.6].

Vs. 4 has a familiar name pertaining to the Lord, “Redeemer” noted last in 44.24 (*ga’al*).

*Duman* is an adverb for “silence” in vs. 5 and thus can be rendered literally as “sit silently.” It has two other references, Lam 3.26 and Hab 2.19, the former being cited here: “It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.” *Choshek* or “darkness” is noted last in 45.19. Both terms represent a stripping of the Chaldeans’ former glory at the hands of Cyrus of Persia.

In vs. 6 the Lord turns attention away from Babylon to his people with whom he had been angry, *qatsaph*, where as noted in 8.21 can mean to break as well as to provoke. A result of this anger is a profaning (*chalal*, cf. 43.28) the Lord’s heritage at the hand of the Chaldeans. Thus both Israel and Babylon pay the same stiff penalty.

In vs. 7 the Lord addresses Babylon, alternating between it and Israel with equal force. Babylon failed to place on (*hal-*) her “heart” (*lev*, cf. 46.12) what the Lord has addressed to her or to remember her outcome or end.

As a result of this forgetfulness, a familiar theme throughout Isaiah, in vs. 8 the Lord prepares Babylon for the fate about to be metered out to her. He calls her a “lover of pleasures” or *hadyn*, the only use of this adjective in the Bible which is rendered literally as “given to pleasure.” In this condition Babylon sits “securely” or literally “to trust,” *betach* (cf. 32.17). Such a false sense of security makes Babylon mimic the Lord by the words “I am, and there is no one besides me.”

Of all the offenses, the one just noted in vs. 8 riles the Lord who says in vs. 9 that Babylon will suffer loss of children and widowhood both in a “moment” or *regah* (cf. 27.3) and in one day, the two being the same. Not only that, both will be in “full measure” or *tam* which also applies to integrity and uprightness. In many ways this moment and one day are a kind of *kairos* event as noted earlier in similar circumstances. “I will walk in my integrity” [Ps 26.11].

Included for good measure are Babylon's "sorceries and "enchantments," *kesaphym* and *chever*. The former has three other biblical references, one of which is Mic 5.12: "and I will cut off sorceries from you hand, and you shall have no more soothsayers." The latter suggests being brought into association and is found next in vs. 12.

"Felt secure" in vs. 10 is the verb *batach* which also means to trust as in 36.6, but it is in "wickedness" or *raha* (cf. 32.2). Babylon's reliance upon her "wisdom and knowledge" or *chakmah* (cf. 33.6) and *dahath* (cf. 44.25) caused her to be "led astray" or *shuv* (cf. 46.8) which means to return and reads literally as "she turned you back" which can mean turns her back to her inadequate wisdom and knowledge. As in vs. 8, Babylon's claim to absolute divinity riles the Lord.

As a result of the claim just noted, vs. 11 has three calamities resulting from the Lord: "evil, disaster and ruin" or *raha* (cf. vs. 10), *hovah* and *sho'ah* (cf. 10.3). The second word has one other biblical reference, Ezk 7.26: "disaster comes upon disaster, rumor follows rumor."

Because Babylon's claim to divinity has angered the Lord so deeply, vs. 12 is filled with sarcasm, telling her to stay with her enchantments and sorceries which have been noted in vs. 9. *Harats* is the verb for "inspire terror" noted last in 29.23 where it connotes standing in awe.

The Lord continues his sarcasm in vs. 13 by saying that Babylon's many "counsels" or *hetsah* (cf. 46.11) will "save" her, *yashah* (cf. 46.7). Such counsels pertain to the heaven bodies which is a form of astrology.

Vs. 14 says that heavenly bodies can't be spared from the flame which comes from the Lord. *Nephesh* is used for "themselves" as in 46.2 and refers to the soul.

This chapter concludes with vs. 15 where the Lord equates the just mentioned heavenly bodies almost as persons or gods with whom Babylon has "trafficked" since her youth, *sachar* mentioned last in 23.8 but not noted there. The heavenly bodies follow a regular pattern which is interrupted by their wandering, *tahah* being the verb and as noted in 35.8, connotes going astray. And so this chapter ends bluntly with the Lord saying that no one can "save" (*yashah*, cf. vs. 13) Babylon.

## Chapter Forty-Eight

**48-Vs. 1: Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel and who came forth from the loins of Judah; who swear by the name of the Lord and confess the God of Israel but not in truth or right.**

As soon as the people receive these opening words of "Hear this" through the mouth of Isaiah, they know they are put on the spot. The formal names of Jacob and Israel add to this impending sense of guilt coupled with some dread though in the long run they know the Lord will be merciful. Actually the verb *shamah* or "hear" occurs frequently in the following verses meaning that the Lord is desperate to get and hold his people's attention.

The people both "swear and confess" or *shavah* (cf. 46.5) by the Lord's name and *zakar* which as pointed out in 46.9 fundamentally means to remember. Although they do this, it is with duplicity, that is, not in "truth and right" or *'emeth* (cf. 43.9) and *tsedaqah* (cf. 46.12).

**48-Vs. 2: For they call themselves after the holy city and stay themselves on the God of Israel; the Lord of hosts is his name.**

Here the people are accused of calling themselves after the name of Jerusalem and by implication, the temple. *Samak* is the verb for “stay” (cf. 26.3) which connotes sustaining over an extended period of time. For good measure and to drive this home, the Lord comes off with “the Lord of hosts is his name,” that is, the Lord of angelic armies.

**48-Vs. 3: "The former things I declared of old, they went forth from my mouth and I made them known; then suddenly I did them and they came to pass.**

Note the contrast between “former things” or *ri’shon* (cf. 44.6) and “suddenly” or *pit’om* (cf. 30.13) which can be any point in Israel’s history from the beginning of creation. Concerning such *ri’shon* the Lord “declared” or *nagad* (cf. 46.10), that is, he associates it with “of old” or literally “from then.” The bridge between these two points of time is the Lord’s mouth having them come forth, that is, he is speaking them which intimates an ongoing process despite the passage of chronological time.

**48-Vs. 4: Because I know that you are obstinate and your neck is an iron sinew and your forehead brass,**

*Yadah* is the verb for “know” (cf. 45.20) and as pointed out earlier, suggests intimate knowledge which in this instance means that the Lord has had this *yadah* of Israel’s stubbornness throughout her history until the present. All too often it has been as it is now, that the people are “obstinate” or *qasheh* (cf. 27.8) which means hard. Such hardness is borne out by the two images, iron sinew and brass.

**48-Vs. 5: I declared them to you from of old, before they came to pass I announced them to you lest you should say, 'My idol did them, my graven image and my molten image commanded them.'**

Now it become clear to the people what the Lord had in mind when he spoke of the “former things” in vs. 3. Again the verb *nagad* is used for “declared” in conjunction with literally “from then.” Supposedly the people were to listen (*shamah*, cf. vs. 1) but did not. In other words, the Lord anticipates the response where the people attribute reliance upon their singular “idol” (*pesel*, cf. 45.20) and “graven image” (*neseq*, cf. 41.29 which means a libation or drink-offering).

**48-Vs. 6: "You have heard; now see all this; and will you not declare it? From this time forth I make you hear new things, hidden things which you have not known.**

The people have “heard” which means they got what the Lord had “announced” in the previous verse, the verb *shamah* being used in both instances. As a result of such hearing, they now see “all this” which isn’t specified but can include insight into what the Lord had declared “from of old.” He invites his people to similarly acknowledge, but they are unable because of their guilt.

The Lord, of course, realizes the impossibility to answer the question he just posed, so now makes the people *shamah* new things. They had been “hidden” or *natsar* or literally have

been kept (cf. 42.6) which had been unknown until the present.

**48-Vs. 7: They are created now, not long ago; before today you have never heard of them lest you should say, 'Behold, I knew them.'**

The hidden things just mentioned—those which had been kept or *natsar*—are “created” both in the present, *bara'* being the verb (cf. 45.18) as well as “not long ago” or literally, “not from then.” The reason for this is that Lord wishes his people not to attribute anything he creates to an idol or graven image (cf. vs. 5).

**48-Vs. 8: You have never heard, you have never known, from of old your ear has not been opened. For I knew that you would deal very treacherously, and that from birth you were called a rebel.**

After listening to the scathing last few verses the people thought they were now off the hook, if you will, and could expect blessings from the Lord. Instead, he continues with further scathing remarks as to their ignorance and treacherous actions, the adverb being the verb *bagad* (cf. 33.1).

*Pashah* is the participle for “rebel” found last in 46.8 and fundamentally means to break.

**48-Vs. 9: "For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you that I may not cut you off.**

The Lord speaks of his “anger” or *'aph* (cf. 13.13) which he has deferred (*'arak* connotes lengthening; cf. 54.2) already but brings it up again for the benefit of his people. The desire to worship idols is so strong that the Lord is compelled to take this action; because it lays at the heart of the matter, that's why he speaks of his own “praise” or *tehilah* (cf. 43.21).

*Karath* (cf. 29.21) is the verb for “cut off.”

**48-Vs. 10: Behold, I have refined you but not like silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction.**

Since the idol and graven image of vs. 5 are most likely fashioned in part within a furnace, the Lord has this in mind when using the same word as associated with “affliction” or *hony*. “Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins” [Ps 25.18].

**48-Vs. 11: For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.**

The twice mentioned statement is to emphasize the fact that the Lord will not tolerate idol worship and make his people suffer in the furnace of affliction, a furnace far hotter than any for the fashioning of graven images and the like. The furnace also is an image of a painful refining process in order to uproot idolatry from their midst.

“Profaned” or *chalal* (cf. 47.6) originally means to perforate, to lay open and is suited for the situation here, namely, that the people are attempting to transfer what belongs to the Lord to the form of an idol and graven image. Essentially they are trying to usurp the Lord's “glory”

or *kavod* (cf. 42.12).

**48-Vs. 12: "Hearken to me, O Jacob and Israel, whom I called! I am He, I am the first, and I am the last.**

*Shamah* (cf. vs. 6) or "hearken" as applied to the two formal names of Jacob and Israel whom the Lord has "called" (*qara'*, cf. 44.7). The Lord wants his people to know him as both "first and last" or *ri'shon* and *'acharon* as in 44.6 which as noted there is not unlike Rev 22.13: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

**48-Vs. 13: My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand forth together.**

This verse is reminiscent of Bar 3.34: "The stars shone in their watches and were glad; he called them, and they said 'Here we are!' They shone with gladness for him who made them."

The Lord speaks first of his (unidentified) hand and then of his right hand, most likely the two being the same. *Taphach* is the verb for "spread out" which has one other reference, Lam 2.22: "Those whom I dandled and reared my enemy destroyed." The calling (*qara'*) as applied to Jacob and Israel in vs. 12 similarly applies to the heavens above.

**48-Vs. 14: "Assemble, all of you, and hear! Who among them has declared these things? The Lord loves him; he shall perform his purpose on Babylon, and his arm shall be against the Chaldeans.**

First the Lord bids his people to "assemble" or *qavats* (cf. 45.20) and then to "hear" (*shamah*, cf. vs. 12), the two actually being one and the same but with different accents. Next he poses a rhetorical question followed by a statement about loving (*'ahav*, cf. 43.4) a certain person whom by this time everyone knows is King Cyrus of Persia.

*Cephets* is the noun for "purpose" as used in a similar context, 44.28. The preposition *b-* (in) is prefaced to Babylon but not so with regard to Chaldeans.

**48-Vs. 15: I, even I, have spoken and called him, I have brought him, and he will prosper in his way.**

Although by now the people know of the Lord's favor toward Cyrus, he has to emphasize it time and again which is why he says "I, even I" or literally as "I I."

Cyrus will "prosper" or *tsaleach* (cf. 53.1) which connotes a going over or through, here with respect to that king's "way" or *derek* (cf. 43.19) as just stated in vs. 48. "But it (my word) shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" [55.11].

**48-Vs. 16: Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there." And now the Lord God has sent me and his Spirit.**

*Qarav* (cf. 46.13) is the verb for "draw near" followed by the command to once again *shamah* and is similar to that of vs. 14, "assemble...and hear."



*Ro'sh* or "beginning" is more akin to a head in the physical sense and not unlike *ri'shon* of vs. 12. Most likely this *ro'sh* means the coming into existence of all things as depicted in Genesis but more specifically the beginning of Israel's coming into existence which may be traced back to the call of Abraham. Everything since then the Lord had done was out in the open and not in "secret" or *seter* (cf. 45.19).

The second sentence can refer to Isaiah claiming that he is communicating the Lord's word, not his own, which is done with his "Spirit" or *Ruach* (cf. 44.3).

**48-Vs. 17: Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go.**

"Redeemer" or the participle *ga'al* as in 47.4. The teaching or *lamad* (cf. 40.14) at hand pertains to "profit" or *yahal* (cf. 44.9), a verb which connotes ascending on high. The verb "leads" (*darak*, cf. 42.16) is the root for "way" or *derek* (cf. vs. 15).

**48-Vs. 18: O that you had hearkened to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea;**

*Qashav* (cf. 42.23) as "hearkened" is more a drawing near compared with the hearing of *shamah* and here apply to the Lord's "commandments," *mitsvah* (cf. 29.13). This verse seems to be almost a lament that the people had missed out on a golden opportunity. If they had *qatsav*...drawn near...they would have had "peace" or *shalom* (cf. 41.3) and "righteousness" or *tsedaqah* (cf. vs. 1), both being compared to the flow and abundance of water.

**48-Vs. 19: your offspring would have been like the sand and your descendants like its grains; their name would never be cut off or destroyed from before me."**

"Offspring and descendants" or *zerah* and *tse'etsa'ym*, both found in 44.3. These words are reminiscent of the promise to Abraham: "I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore" [Gn 22.17].

Two strong words related to destruction are found here, "cut off and destroyed" or *karath* (cf. vs. 9) and *shamad* (cf. 26.14), the latter an utter laying waste.

**48-Vs. 20: Go forth from Babylon, flee from Chaldea, declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it, send it forth to the end of the earth; say, "The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob!"**

Note spelling of "Chaldea."

This verse can be read in light of vss. 14 and 15, that is, with respect to King Cyrus of Persia. If he hadn't subdued Babylon, Israel would not have been able to depart. The people are to do three things: "declare, proclaim and send forth" or *nagad* (cf. vs. 6), *shamah* (cf. vs. 18) and *yatsa'* (cf. 42.13). All three center upon the Lord's redemption (*ga'al*, cf. vs. 17) through the agent of Cyrus.

**48-Vs. 21: They thirsted not when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he cleft the rock and the water gushed out.**

Although the previous verse speaks of Israel's liberation from Babylon, the people may have some fear about the journey back home. For that reason the Lord speaks of the Sinai experience, notably Marah where the Israelites couldn't drink the brackish water (cf. Ex 16.22+). This incident occurred only three days after their miraculous delivery from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea. If such murmuring and complaints happened so shortly after such an outstanding event, it can happen now when Israel is only a short way out from Babylon.

**48-Vs. 22: "There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked."**

With the warning of vs. 21 in mind, Chapter Forty-Eight concludes on a somewhat gloomy though realistic note. The "wicked" (*rashah*, cf. 26.10) are left undefined, but surely the people got the point, that if they acted as their ancestors, they wouldn't experience "peace" or *shalom* (cf. vs. 18).

### Chapter Forty-Nine

**49-Vs. 1: Listen to me, O coastlands, and hearken, you peoples from afar. The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.**

The opening words of this chapter echo those of 41.1, "Listen to me in silence, O coastlands" where King Cyrus of Persia is involved. However, in the verse at hand, we have no identity of the person speaking here...either Cyrus, Isaiah or someone else chosen by the Lord. By addressing the coastlands and well as people from afar (that can include all places to which the Israelites had been scattered), this man of mystery proclaims that the Lord had "called" him, *qara'* (cf. 48.13) from birth. St. Paul echoes this verse in Gal 1.15 as applied to himself: "But when he who had set me apart before I was born and had called me through is grace."

Not only did the Lord *qara'* this man, he "named" his name, *zakar* being the verb which means more precisely to remember, to recall (cf. 48.1). In a sense, it could read "remembered my name."

**49-Vs. 2: He made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away.**

The two weapons here (sword, arrow and quiver, hence a bow) are hidden, not taken out for use. Just the fact that the servant has them at his disposal or more accurately, is in some way like them, intimates that at some future specific time he will put them to use, that his words will be as sharp and penetrating.

**49-Vs. 3: And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified."**

Here the servant is identified as the nation of Israel as a whole. *Pa'ar* (cf. 44.23) is the verb for "glorified" which fundamentally means to adorn, to beautify.

**49-Vs. 4: But I said, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the Lord and my recompense with my God."**

*Yagah* is the verb for “labored” (cf. 43.24) is more suggestive of weariness than *havad* from which “servant” is derived.

“Vain, for nothing and vanity” or *ryq* (cf. 30.7), *tohu* (cf. 45.19) and *hevel* (cf. 30.7) are strong words but are not spelled out. Presumably the servant had withdrawn, if you will, his sword and arrow (cf. vs. 2) and exercised them but to no avail. Nevertheless, his “right” is with the Lord, *mishpat* (cf. 42.4) as well as his “recompense or *pehulah* (cf. 40.10). These words echo 40.10: “behold, his reward is with him and his recompense before him.”

**49-Vs. 5: And now the Lord says, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him, for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength –**

Before the Lord speaks in the next verse, the servant feels it necessary to state his purpose despite the setbacks mentioned somewhat vaguely in vs. 4. The divine purpose is to bring back Jacob and to gather Israel, *shuv* (cf. 47.0) and *yasaph* (cf. 43.9). The former is active whereas the latter is passive, that such gathering (the verb fundamentally means to increase) is done more on their own.

*Kavad* is the verb for “honored” (cf. 43.23) and *hoz* is “strength” (cf. 45.24). Thus the servant’s experience is rejection countered by awareness that the Lord is sustaining him.

**49-Vs. 6: he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."**

*Qalal* (cf. 30.16) is a verb for “light” which has the alternate meaning of to curse. Note that with regard to Israel the Lord mentioned restoring (*shuv* as in the previous verse) those of Israel who have been “preserved,” *natsyr*, the only use of this noun in the Bible, *natsar* (cf. 47.6) being the verbal root. Perhaps this intimates those who have remained faithful to worship of the Lord instead of going after idols.

*Yeshuhah* (cf. 33.6) is to reach the “Ends of the earth, *qatseh* where as noted in 43.6, is conceived as the base where the firmament comes down upon it, not unlike being covered by a bowl.

The verse at hand is quoted in part in Acts 23.47: “I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.”

**49-Vs. 7: Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations, the servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."**

This is the first of four such “thus says the Lord” utterances in Chapter Forty-Nine, the second one following immediately in vs. 8. Here the Lord identifies himself not only as “Redeemer” (*ga’al*, cf. 48.18) but along with his “Holy One” or one who is *qadosh* (cf. 29.23), thereby putting this still unknown servant on a divine plane but not the Lord himself.

This servant has become “despised and abhorred” or *bazah* (cf. 37.22) and *tahav* (cf.

14.19), the former having *nephesh* (soul but not translated, cf. 47.14). That is to say, rulers have brought this upon him most likely for his teaching. Nevertheless, the Lord remains “faithful” or *‘aman* (cf. 43.10).

**49-Vs. 8: Thus says the Lord: "In a time of favor I have answered you, in a day of salvation I have helped you; I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages;**

“Time (*heth*, cf. 33.6) and “day (*yom*, cf. 38.19) are more or less synonymous but have taken place in the past which the Lord wishes to remind the people. The former is one of “favor” or *ratson* which also means pleasure and is found next in 56.7: “their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar.” The latter is one of “salvation” or *yeshuhah* (cf. vs. 6). The former has the verb “answered” (*hanah*, cf. 41.17) and the latter the verb “helped” (*hazar*, cf. 41.14).

The keeping or *natsar* (cf. vs. 6) of the servant and his giving are one and the same, the latter being associated with a “covenant” or *beryth* (cf. 42.6) to the people. Lofty words like these are suggestive of a divine or semi-divine status for the servant.

*Qum* (cf. 44.26) and *nachal* (cf. 14.2) or “establish and apportion,” the latter associated with inheriting and applied to “desolate heritages.” The noun is derived from this verb; *shamam* is the participle for the adjective noted last in 33.8 where the alternate meaning of astonished is mentioned.

**49-Vs. 9: saying to the prisoners, ‘Come forth,’ to those who are in darkness, ‘Appear.’ They shall feed along the ways, on all bare heights shall be their pasture;**

Both prisoners and those in darkness can refer to Israelites captive by various nations, especially Babylon. When the people hear these words, chance are they might associate them with King Cyrus though that connection seems to remain not made.

“Ways and bare height” or *derek* (cf. 48.17) and *shephy* (cf. 41.18) or open places for pasture which don’t require protection against raiders, etc.

**49-Vs. 10: they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall smite them, for he who has pity on them will lead them and by springs of water will guide them.**

On the exposed ways and bare heights of the previous chapter the prisoners and those in darkness will not fear because the Lord who has “pity” or *racham* which as noted in 27.11 derives the noun “bowels” which connotes the deepest and most passionate form of love.

“Lead and guide” or *nahag* which as noted in 11.6 is used often with driving a flock and thus implying a certain force and *nahal* (cf. 40.11) which connotes flowing and thus fits in well with mention of springs of water.

**49-Vs. 11: And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be raised up.**

“Way and highways” or *derek* (cf. vs. 9) and *mislah* (cf. 40.3), the latter associated with an embanked road which will be “raised up” (*rum*, cf. 40.9) suggesting it will be raised up even further.

**49-Vs. 12: Lo, these shall come from afar, and lo, these from the north and from the west and these from the land of Syene."**

"These" refer to the prisoners and those in darkness of vs. 9. Syene is found in Ezk 29.10: "Behold, I am against you and against your streams, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation from Migdol to Syene as far as the border of Ethiopia." A footnote in the RSV says that Migdol and Syene (Aswan, at the First Cataract of the Nile) are the northern and southern limits of Egypt.

**49-Vs. 13: Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.**

*Ranan* (cf. 44.23), *gyl* (cf. 41.16) and *patsach* (cf. 44.23) or "sing for joy, exult and break forth." The threefold reason for this expression of joy is that the Lord has "comforted" his people, *nacham*, which as noted in 40.2 consists in dealing tenderly. It is akin to *racham* found in vs. 10.

**49-Vs. 14: But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me."**

*Hazav* (cf. 42.16) and *shakach* (cf. 17.10) or "forsaken and forgotten" is the people's response despite the preceding verses and said out of guilt. Note that the first has "Lord" whereas the second has the personal pronoun, "my Lord."

**49-Vs. 15: "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.**

In response to the near despair of the previous verse the Lord speaks of forgetting and a lack of "compassion" on a child when it is most vulnerable, that is, just after birth. The verb *shakach* is used again along with *racham* (cf. vs. 13). In other words, vs. 14 is sandwiched in between two instances of *racham*.

**49-Vs. 16: Behold, I have graven you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.**

*Hen* or "behold" (cf. 44.11) introduces this verse to show how near and dear Israel is to the Lord, that is, "graven" on his hands, *chaqaq* being noted last in 33.22 as a noun, "lawgiver." The idea seems to be that graving is a type of decree, perhaps here in the form of a tattoo.

The walls most likely refer to Jerusalem where the Lord is standing guard "continually" or *tamyd* (cf. 21.8).

**49-Vs. 17: Your builders outstrip your destroyers, and those who laid you waste go forth from you.**

This verse gives the picture of continuous destroying followed immediately by continuous building, the two acting in tandem, if you will. In a sense the image is not entirely

inaccurate for the day though obviously spread out over a period of time. The verb for “outstrip” is *mahar* (cf. 35.4) and means to make haste.

**49-Vs. 18: Lift up your eyes round about and see; they all gather, they come to you. As I live, says the Lord, you shall put them all on as an ornament, you shall bind them on as a bride does.**

This verse can be taken in light of vs. 49, “your walls are continually before me.” Perhaps those gathering (*qavats*, cf. 48.14) outside the walls got wind of this phenomenon and wished to see it first hand.

The verb for “put on” is *lavash* fundamentally means to clothe as in case of garments and found last in 4.1. In the verse at hand, *lavash* is used with *hady* or “ornament” which usually is a decoration for one part of the body. “Their beautiful ornament they used for vainglory” [Ezk 7.21]. Also the people who are gathering will be like a bridal decoration implying that the bride (Jerusalem) is about to be betrothed to her divine spouse.

**49-Vs. 19: "Surely your waste and your desolate places and your devastated land—surely now you will be too narrow for your inhabitants, and those who swallowed you up will be far away.**

“Waste, desolate places and devastated” (land) or *charbah* (cf. 5.17), *shemamah* (cf. 17.9) and *harysuth*, the last being the only use of this noun in the Bible. All three can refer to Israel’s past experience of invasion and what had been left afterwards.

*Tsarar* is the verb for “narrow” noted last in 11.13 and has the connotation of being in distress.

*Balah* is the verb for “swallowed up” and noted last in 28.7 as “confused.”

**49-Vs. 20: The children born in the time of your bereavement will yet say in your ears: 'The place is too narrow for me; make room for me to dwell in.'**

Such “bereavement” or *shikulym* is the only use of this noun in the Bible whose verbal root is found in the next verse, *sakal*. *Hod* is the word for “time” but more fundamentally means further or yet again. Such children will not only speak but do so in the ears of the people, that is, directly and forcefully.

The “place” or *maqom* (cf. 46.7) can refer to either the land of Israel or Jerusalem, more likely the former. The children call it “too narrow” or *tsar* which is a noun found last in 30.20.

*Nagash* is the verb for “make room” found last in 25.31 and fundamentally means to approach.

**49-Vs. 21: Then you will say in your heart: 'Who has borne me these? I was bereaved and barren, exiled and put away, but who has brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; whence then have these come?'"**

Despite people flocking to Israel, the people have a hard time believing what the Lord has been trying to communicate, chiefly due to their guilt at having worshiped idols and what flowed from it.

Israel comes off with two rapid questions. In the first she claims to have been “bereaved, barren, exiled and put away” or *shakol*, *galmud*, *galah* (cf. 40.5 with its alternate meaning) and

*sur* (cf. 31.2). One reference for the first is Gn 43.14: "If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." A reference for the second is Job 3.7: "Yea, let that night be barren; let no joyful cry be heard in it."

In the second question Israel seems to be whining somewhat, for despite the favor showed her, still she cannot accept it.

**49-Vs. 22: Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations and raise my signal to the peoples; and they shall bring your sons in their bosom and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders."**

Here the magisterial "Thus says the Lord" has both a comforting and corrective tone about it after the whining just mentioned and is followed immediately by *hineh* (cf. 43.19) or "behold" to make sure he has Israel's attention. He will summon the "nations and peoples" to Israel, more specifically to Jerusalem, this verse being reminiscent of 43.9. A "signal" will be used or *nes* noted last in 31.9, not unlike some kind of military standard. The fact that these foreigners will bring their children shows a greater trust in the Lord and what Israel represents.

**49-Vs. 23: Kings shall be your foster fathers and their queens your nursing mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who wait for me shall not be put to shame."**

Foster fathers and nursing mothers intimate that the nations will show the same type of compassion to Israel as the Lord, something difficult for her to believe. This is no subterfuge, for the people will show Israel their obeisance by bowing down. Such action will make Israel "know" or *yadah* (cf. 48.4) with its sense of intimate knowledge that the Lord is doing this.

Note the two opposites, *qavah* (cf. 40.31) and *bosh* (cf. 45.24) or "wait and put to shame." In the situation at hand, the former is more applicable to the nations and the latter to Israel.

**49-Vs. 24: Can the prey be taken from the mighty or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?**

The Lord poses this rhetorical question to Israel in light of her relationship with the nations and people just delineated. The Hebrew word for "tyrant" is *tsadyq* (cf. 41.26), literally as someone who is righteous. Obviously Israel cannot give an appropriate answer and knows it full well. By now she is used to this and expects a response in the next verse or two. In the meanwhile, she is forced to listen while being embarrassed thoroughly.

**49-Vs. 25: Surely thus says the Lord: "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued, for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children."**

As expected, towards the end of this chapter the Lord answers his own question with "thus says the Lord" for added emphasis. The word for "tyrant" is the adjective *haryts* noted last in 29.20 as "ruthless." The Lord will "contend and save," *ryv* (cf. 45.9) and *yashah* (cf. 47.15).

**49-Vs. 26: "I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine. Then all flesh shall know that I am the Lord your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."**

Although the oppressors are unidentified—perhaps Egypt and Babylon, each nation on one side of Israel—they will turn on themselves and be destroyed, a situation not unlike that concerning the Assyrian army besieging Jerusalem (cf. 37.36-38).

The Lord uses the term "flesh" to drive home the point that both Israelites, those who came to join her as well as her enemies are all mortal. Here all will "known" (*yadah*, cf. vs. 23) that the Lord is both "Savior and Redeemer" or *yashah* (cf. vs. 25) and *ga'al* (cf. vs. 7), two participles.

## Chapter Fifty

**50-Vs. 1: Thus says the Lord: "Where is your mother's bill of divorce with which I put her away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was put away."**

The Lord seems to be speaking with Israel as exiled, mentioning her mother and having "put (her) away," *shalach* being the common verb for to send (cf. 27.10). Nothing is said about the identity of this mother; usually lineage is traced according to the father, but the mother intimates a close relationship with Israel's very beginnings. Also it could refer to Sarah in 51.2, wife of Abraham, father of Israel.

More precisely in this verse, the Lord is asking yet another rhetorical question to which Israel cannot respond but one designed to put her on the spot. The verb "sold" is equivalent to *shalach* which is used a second time with regard to Israel's "transgressions" or *peshah* (cf. 44.22).

**50-Vs. 2: Why, when I came, was there no man? When I called, was there no one to answer? Is my hand shortened that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, by my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a desert; their fish stink for lack of water and die of thirst.**

The Lord continues with four additional rhetorical questions to Israel which she cannot answer. Here he is questioning Israel about her trust in the Lord's capacity to "redeem and deliver," *peduth* and *natsal* (cf. 44.20). The former is a noun with three other biblical references, one of which is Ps 111.9: "He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever."

After these questions the Lord speaks of drying up both the sea and rivers, that is, the earth's entire supply of water which he will do by his "rebuke" or *geharah* (cf. 30.17).

**50-Vs. 3: I clothe the heavens with blackness and make sackcloth their covering."**

*Qadruth* or "blackness" is the only use of this word in the Bible and derives from a verbal root meaning to mourn. *Kesuth* is the noun for "covering" and can apply to clothing as



in Ex 21.10: “If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing or her marital rights.”

**50-Vs. 4: The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary. Morning by morning he wakens, he wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.**

Attention now shifts from the Lord to his servant who has taken to heart the content of the previous verses and decides to step in and do something about it. The impossible questions just listed are for this purpose, namely, to rouse the servant whose identity continues to be shrouded not so much in mystery—for he is both acting and speaking publically—but is lacking a name. To have a name is extremely important for one’s identity which isn’t the case at hand.

Reference to being “taught” or *lamad* (cf. 48.17) is a kind of training as well as chastising and here can imply being done by those versed in the Torah. Such *lamad* spills over to the ability to “sustain” or *huth*, the only use of this verb in the Bible and connotes a certain hastening.. Such sustaining/hastening is down by a “word” or *davar* (cf. 45.23).

Mention of morning suggests continuous action on the Lord’s part, of sustaining his servant or waking him, *hur* as arousing in 45.13. Such rousing is done with respect to the servant hearing or *shamah* (cf. 48.20) but in that special way characterized by *lamad*.

**50-Vs. 5: The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not backward.**

The Lord opening the servant’s ear concerns what is expressed in the previous verse. *Lamad* has the affect of not making one “rebellious” or *marah* (cf. 3.8) nor of turning backward, *sug* (cf. 42.17).

**50-Vs. 6: I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.**

Such words are the result of the servant having paid attention to the Lord as in the last two verses. In other words, he has perfected the art of *lamad*, if you will, which leads to misunderstanding and abuse by the majority of people to whom he is sent.

**50-Vs. 7: For the Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been confounded; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame;**

*Hazar* (cf. 49.8) is the direct result of *lamad* which serves not to confound the servant, *kalam* (cf. 45.17). Compare *kalam* with *bosh* (cf. 49.23) in this verse, “put to shame.”

**50-Vs. 8: he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me.**

*Tsadaq* is the verb for “vindicates” (cf. 45.25) and pertains to being made righteous. This, of course, is the Lord who is “near” or *qarov* (cf. 33.13). Compare with *nagash* or “come near” (cf. 49.20) which is a challenge for anyone to approach this divine *qarov*, if you will.

The servant imitates the Lord, if you will, by asking two rhetorical questions impossible

for anyone to answer except the Lord. *Ryv* or “contend” (cf. 49.25) is his challenge which takes place after having suffered as depicted in vs. 6 though that verse says nothing about him being put to death.

*Bahal mishpat* or “adversary” means literally here “master (of) judgment.”

**50-Vs. 9: Behold, the Lord God helps me; who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.**

*Hen* or “behold” (cf. 49.16) is intended more for those whom the servant is addressing as in the last verse. With divine help (*hazar* being the verb, vs. 7), no person can declare the servant guilty, *rashah* (cf. 48.22).

The second sentence is reminiscent of Ps 39.11: “When you chasten man with rebukes for sin, you consume like a moth what is dear to him; surely every man is a mere breath.”

**50-Vs. 10: Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant, who walks in darkness and has no light yet trusts in the name of the Lord and relies upon his God?**

The question posed here is neither rhetorical nor from the Lord but from the servant who expects an answer. However, one is not forthcoming. Fearlessly the servant speaks of obeying his own “voice” or *qol* (cf. 40.9) which is prefaced with the preposition *b-* (in) reading literally, obeys in the voice.” The verb here is *shamah* (cf. vs. 4) or the common one to hear.

The noun “darkness” lacks the preposition *b-* and reads literally “walks darkness” which equates the very act of going about with such darkness. *Nogah* (cf. 4.5) is the noun for “light” and connotes splendor.

Trust is “in (*b-*) the name of the Lord” and reliance also is “in (*b-*) his God,” the verb *shahan* (cf. 30.12) which suggests leaning upon.

**50-Vs. 11: Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who set brands alight! Walk by the light of your fire, and by the brands which you have kindled! This shall you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.**

This chapter concludes with the fifth “behold” or *hen* (cf. vs. 9) or the servant’s admonishment to walk by the light of one’s own fire or literally, “in (*b-*) the light of your fire.” Despite this, the people don’t respond to his message, hence they will recline in “torment” or *mahatsevah*, the only use of this word in the Bible which connotes sorrow and grief.

*Mahatsevah* is prefaced with the preposition *l-*, literally as “to torment,” a more direct way of expressing the evil the people had brought upon themselves.

## Chapter Fifty-One

**51-Vs. 1: "Hearken to me, you who pursue deliverance, you who seek the Lord; look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn.**

*Shamah* (cf. 50.10) or “hearken” begins this verse rather abruptly as the Lord gets right down to the matter at hand, namely, those already engaged in pursuing “deliverance” or *tsedeq*

(cf. 45.19) which more properly is righteousness. The verb at hand is *radaph* (cf. 41.3) which is synonymous with seeking the Lord, *baqash* (cf. 41.12).

The Lord wishes to direct this *radaph/baqash* to the right place, namely, to the “rock and quarry” or *tsur* (cf. 44.8) and *maqeveth*. The only other biblical reference to the latter is Judg 4.21 as “hammer.” But Jael, the wife of Heber, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple.” These two images are intended to strengthen Israel’s resolve.

**51-Vs. 2: Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him and made him many.**

After the injunction to hearken comes another to “look” or *navat* (cf. 42.20) which connotes beholding. A footnote in the RSV says that this is the only reference to Sarah in the Old Testament apart from Genesis. And so this *navat* embraces Israel’s very beginnings, the call of Abraham. “I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore” [Gn 22.17].

**51-Vs. 3: For the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.**

*Nacham* (cf. 49.13) is the verb for “comfort” and is used twice, the first with respect to Zion and the second her “waste places” or *charbah* (cf. 49.19). As for the “wilderness” or *midbar* (cf. 43.20), it will become like the garden of Eden in which the first man and woman were placed to “till and keep” [Gn 2.15]. Finally we have the “desert” or *haravah* which also means a plain (cf. 41.19) to be made like the Lord’s garden, another reference to Eden.

“Joy and gladness” or *sason* and *simchah* are both found in 35.10. *Todah* or “thanksgiving” as in Ps 26.7 along with “voice” or *qol*: “singing aloud a song of thanksgiving and telling all your wondrous deeds” or literally, “to hear in the voice of thanksgiving.”

**51-Vs. 4: Listen to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation; for a law will go forth from me and my justice for a light to the peoples.**

This chapter begins with “hearken” or *shamah*, leads to “look” or *navat* and now comes to “listen” or *qashav* 48.18 which connotes attending. The Lord uses the terms “people and nation” or *ham* (cf. 43.9) and *le’om*, the latter perhaps a variant of the former found last in 49.1 but not noted there.

The “law” here seems to pertain to *torah* (cf. 42.24) which will “go forth” from the Lord, *yatsa’* (cf. 48.20). While the Torah is important, focus should be more on this going forth, the precise means not being specified but most likely the Lord’s mouth. Also, “justice” or *mishpat* (cf. 40.27) will take the place of the Torah, if you will, for those who are not Israelites and will be a light to them.

**51-Vs. 5: My deliverance draws near speedily, my salvation has gone forth, and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope.**

Compare the *yatsa'* or going forth of the law in vs. 4 with the drawing near and going forth in this verse, *qarav* (cf. 48.16) and a second use of *yatsa'*. The former lacks the adverb "speedily" and pertains to "deliverance," *tsedeq* (cf. vs. 1) which more specifically means righteousness. The latter or "salvation is *yeshah* (cf. 45.8).

*Qavah* or "wait" (cf. 49.23) applies to the coastlands or the extreme western boundaries which can include Israel as well as other peoples in that area around the Mediterranean Sea. Note the plural "arms" which will "rule" or *shaphat* (cf. 43.26) which fundamentally means to judge and the singular "arm" related to *qavah*, (neither left nor right arm being specified).

**51-Vs. 6: Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be for ever, and my deliverance will never be ended.**

Two verbs pertaining to sight, *nasa'* (cf. 46.4) and *navat* (cf. vs. 4), the first meaning to raise and the second to behold. The object of both—heavens and earth—will dissolve, words reminiscent of Ps 102.26: "They (heavens) will perish, but you endure; they will all wear out like a garment. You change them like raiment, and they pass away."

The Lord's "salvation" or *yeshuhah* (cf. 49.8) will last forever as well as his "deliverance" or *tsedaqah* (cf. 48.18), more usually as righteousness, will not "be ended" or *chatat*. This verb is noted last in 30.31 with the alternate meaning of "terror-stricken," the idea being that of dismay, to be broken into pieces.

**51-Vs. 7: "Hearken to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of men and be not dismayed at their revilings.**

"Hearken" or another instance of *shamah* as in vs. 4 with respect to those who "know" (*yadah*, cf. 49.26) or have intimate acquaintance with "righteousness" (*tsedeq*, cf. vs. 5). The reason: the people have in their hearts (*lev*, cf. 47.7) the divine "law" or *torah*.

Such knowledge in the collective heart of these select people leads to not fearing "reproach and revilings" *cherpah* (cf. 47.2) and *giduphah* (cf. 43.28). The two verbs used here are *yare'* ('fear,' cf. 44.7) and *chatat* (cf. vs. 6).

**51-Vs. 8: For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but my deliverance will be for ever and my salvation to all generations."**

This verse is reminiscent of 50.9: "Behold, the Lord God helps me; who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up."

"Deliverance and salvation" or *tsedaqah* and *yeshuhah*, both found in vs. 6. The former will be "forever" and the latter for "all generations."

**51-Vs. 9: Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon?**

Vss. 9-11 are an appeal for divine intervention after the Lord has spoken and put in terms of *hur* (cf. 50.4) or "awake" which suggests being roused either from slumber or inattentiveness. *Lavash* (cf. 49.18) or "put on" means to clothe followed by another desperate appeal for the

Lord to awake. The object of this clothing is *hoz* or “strength” (cf. 49.5).

Days of “old” or *qedem* is found last in 46.10, “ancient times.” Mention of generations can suggest the collective memory of past events in which past divine interventions had been stored and kept alive until the present.

For reference to Rahab, cf. 30.7: “For Egypt’s help is worthless and empty, therefore I have called her ‘Rahab who sits still.’”

**51-Vs. 10: Was it not you who dried dry up the sea, the waters of the great deep; who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over?**

Earlier the Lord had addressed his people through several rhetorical questions which could not be answered nor was a response expected. The people learned from this technique and turn the tables on the Lord, if you will, by reminding him of his past deliverance.

This verse has clear reference to the Exodus from Egypt. “Deep and depths” or *tehom* and *mahamaqym*. The former is found next in 63.13: “who led them through the depths” and associated with *tohu* (cf. 49.4) in Gn 1.2: “The earth was without form and void.” The latter (the verbal root *hamaq* means to be deep) has four other biblical references, one of which is Ps 69.2: “I sink in deep mire where there is no foothold.”

Although *tehom* and *mahamaqym* are associated with primeval chaos, both become a “way” or *derek* (cf. 49.11) for those who have been “redeemed” (*ga’al*, cf. 49.26).

**51-Vs. 11: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**

After the rhetorical question of vs. 10, the people proceed with a rather bold statement of fact, if you will. They are confident in the Lord that he will return his “ransomed” or *padah* (cf. 35.10) with “singing” or *ranan* (cf. 49.13). Due to the elevation of Zion, perhaps such singing consists in the Songs of Ascent (Pss 120-134) sung by pilgrims coming to Jerusalem.

Note the position of everlasting “joy” or *simchah* (cf. vs. 3), that is, on the heads of the people which is suggestive of a crown.

*Sason* and *simchah* or “joy and gladness” are found together in 35.10, here with the verb *nasag* or “obtain” in that same verse, connoting an overtaking. Both will replace “sorrow and sighing” or *yagon* and *anachah*, both also found in 35.10.

**51-Vs. 12: “I, I am he that comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass,**

Now the Lord responds to the people who spoke in vss. 9-11 and comes off with a double “I” for emphasis, that he is ready to comfort or *nacham* (cf. vs. 3). He addresses their fear of death where man is likened to grass, echoing 40.6: “A voice says, “Cry!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.”

**51-Vs. 13: and have forgotten the Lord, your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and fear continually all the day because of the fury of the oppressor when he sets himself to destroy? And where is the fury of the oppressor?**

The fear of death mentioned in vs. 12 results from forgetting (*shakach*) the Lord as “Maker,” the verb *hasah* (cf. 46.11) for this noun. This resembles 49.15: “Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.”

The Lord as Maker is echoed in his having laid the earth’s foundations (*yasad*, cf. 28.16) to which the “fury” or *chemah* (cf. 42.25) of the “oppressor” (*tsoq*, cf. 29.7) is nothing. After having stated this, the Lord asks another rhetorical question about this oppressor’s fury, that it is no longer present.

**51-Vs. 14: He who is bowed down shall speedily be released; he shall not die and go down to the Pit, neither shall his bread fail.**

*Hatsah* or “bowed down” means to incline and has four other biblical references, one of which is 63.1: “marching in the greatness of his strength.” Such a person in the verse at hand will be “released” or *patach* (cf. 45.1) right away and not descent into the “Pit” or *Shachat*—another name for Sheol—which derives from the verbal root of the same spelling meaning to destroy (cf. 11.9).

**51-Vs. 15: For I am the Lord your God who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the Lord of hosts is his name.**

Such words as “I am the Lord your God” are found last in 49.6 and here pertains to him who rouses storms on the sea, an image of chaos.

“The Lord of hosts is his name” occurs last in 48.2.

**51-Vs. 16: And I have put my words in your mouth and hid you in the shadow of my hand, stretching out the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth and saying to Zion, ‘You are my people.’”**

This verse is reminiscent of vs. 13 regarding the stretching out of heavens and laying the earth’s foundations.

*Davar* (cf. 50.4) is the noun for “words” which as noted several times means expression. Thus the people are able to express or reflect the same *davar* as the Lord when he speaks (*davar*).

“In the shadow of my hand” may be found in 49.2. While in that divine hand, the people participate, if you will, in the Lord’s creative activity, being present with him much like Wisdom in Prov 8.27: “when he established the heavens, I was there.”

**51-Vs. 17: Rouse yourself, rouse yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl of staggering.**

*Hur* (cf. vs. 9) or “rouse yourself” is uttered twice due to the extreme state of drunkenness into which the people have fallen. Here “wrath and staggering” are more or less equivalent, *chemah* (cf. vs. 13) and *tarhelah*, the latter having two other biblical references, one of which is in vs. 22 but not noted there..

**51-Vs. 18: There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne; there is none to take her by the hand among all the sons she has brought up.**

The Lord observes that his people is abandoned by her sons with none of them to “guide” her (*nahal*, cf. 49.10) as well as to “take” her by the hand, *chazaq* (cf. 42.6) having a certain force to it.

**51-Vs. 19: These two things have befallen you—who will condole with you?—devastation and destruction, famine and sword; who will comfort you?**

The two things at hand are two pairs, “devastation and destruction” or *shod* (cf. 13.6) and *shever* (cf. 30.26), “famine and sword.”

Note two similar words, “condole with and comfort” or *nod* and *nacham* (cf. vs. 12), the former being found in 24.20 as to stagger.

**51-Vs. 20: Your sons have fainted, they lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of the Lord, the rebuke of your God.**

*Halaph* or “fainted” also means to be covered and has four other biblical references, one of which is Sg 5.14: “His body is ivory work encrusted with sapphires.”

*Chemah* (cf. vs. 17) and *geharah* (cf. 50.2) or “wrath and rebuke,” the former being “of the Lord” and the latter of “your God.”

**51-Vs. 21: Therefore hear this, you who are afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine:**

*Hanah* and *shakar* (cf. 29.9) or “afflicted and drunk” which are more or less equivalent. The former has multiple meanings such as to answer, 49.8 being the last reference with this meaning.

**51-Vs. 22: Thus says your Lord, the Lord, your God who pleads the cause of his people: "Behold, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering; the bowl of my wrath you shall drink no more;**

Here the Lord’s saying is equivalent to his pleading, *ryv* (cf. 50.8) being the verb.

*Hineh* (cf. 49.22) or “behold” brings attention to the people that already the Lord has accomplished something. Compare the words here with those of vs. 17.

**51-Vs. 23: and I will put it into the hand of your tormentors who have said to you, 'Bow down that we may pass over;' and you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to pass over."**

Reference is to the cup of staggering and bowl of divine wrath. “You” here is the noun *nepesh* (cf. 49.7) which means “soul.”

## Chapter Fifty-Two

**52-Vs. 1: Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean.**

This double *hur* ('awake') is found last in 51.9 and similarly pertains to putting on strength, *lavash* and *hoz*, but includes garments. These are "beautiful" or *tiph'arah* (cf. 46.13) which reads literally "garments of beauty" where the connotation is also upon.

The Lord calls Jerusalem a city which is "holy" or *qodesh* (cf. 43.28), an adjective fundamentally meaning that which is set apart, and that which is set apart are those who are not circumcised as well as those who are "unclean," *harel* and *tame'* (cf. 35.8). The first biblical reference to the former is Gn 17,14: "Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

**52-Vs. 2: Shake yourself from the dust, arise, O captive Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.**

First the Lord bids Jerusalem to "shake" herself from the dust, *nahar* being the verb (cf. 33.15) followed by loosening her bonds, *patach* (cf. 51.14) which connotes release.

Both Jerusalem and Zion are described as "captive." The RSV has a footnote with regard to the first, that it reads literally "sit" or *shevy* (cf. 49.25 but not noted there). Those who have been oppressing Jerusalem are mentioned in vs. 4 as the Assyrians.

**52-Vs. 3: For thus says the Lord: "You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money.**

Although the Lord is speaking in the first two verses, he adds here as well as in vs. 4 "Thus says the Lord." The reason is to drive home the fact that the people's redemption (*ga'al*, cf. 51.10) is not to be with money though the means for it is not specified.

*Chinam* is the adverb for "nothing" and found next in vs. 5.

**52-Vs. 4: For thus says the Lord God: My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing.**

This "Thus says the Lord" is to jog the collective memories of the people as to their liberation from four hundred years of living in Egypt, *gur* (cf. 16.4) being the verb followed by oppression by the Assyrians, *hashaq* being found in 23.12 but not noted there. '*Ephes* or "nothing" occurs last in 41.29.

**52-Vs. 5: Now therefore what have I here, says the Lord, seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? Their rulers wail, says the Lord, and continually all the day my name is despised.**

This verse has an element of surprise concerning the Lord ('What have I here') which is intended to capture the attention of the people. Compare '*ephes* of the previous verse, suggestive of an extremity beyond which you can go no further, and *chinam* of vs. 3 which



connotes something without cause or in vain.

*Yalal* (cf. 23.1) or “wail” pertains to the rulers who apparently are more sensitive to the situation at hand yet are powerless while at the same time the people despise the Lord’s name, *na’ats* (cf. 5.24).

**52-Vs. 6: Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here am I.”**

The Lord speaks of the people knowing (*yadah*, cf. 51.7) first his name and then more specifically “in that day” or *yom* (cf. 49.8) which goes unspecified but certainly intimated by the people due to the distress in which they find themselves.

Speaking and being are the same for the Lord, for when he speaks or *davar* (cf. 46.11), he is present.

**52-Vs. 7: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”**

It seems that neither the Lord nor the unidentified servant mentioned in vs. 13 is speaking here but Isaiah. His feet are “beautiful” or *na’ah* which derives from a verbal root meaning to sit or to dwell and connotes suitability. *Na’ah* has two other biblical references, Ps 93.5 and Sg 1.10, the latter being cited here: “Your cheeks are comely with ornaments.” It is also reminiscent of Sg 2.8 with regard to the bridegroom’s voice, more or less equivalent with the feet: “The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills.” *Na’ah* seems related to visible beauty whereas here it is upon the sound produced by feet.

The beauty of this person’s feet has a five-fold mission which is of supreme importance:

- 1) “Brings good tidings” or *basar* (cf. 41.27).
- 2) “Publishes peace” or the verb *shamah* (to hear, cf. 51.7) and *shalom* (cf. 48.22).
- 3) “Brings good tidings of good” or the verb *shamah* with the adjective *tov* or “good.”
- 4) “Publishes salvation” or the verb *shamah* with *yeshuhah* (cf. 51.8).
- 5) Speaks to Zion about the Lord reigning, *malak* (cf. 24.23).

Part of this verse is quoted in Rom 10.15: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!”

**52-Vs. 8: Hark, your watchmen lift up their voice, together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion.**

The Hebrew text lacks “hark.” *Tsaphah* is the participle for “watchmen” (cf. 21.6) who are the first to identify the beauty of the feet of that unidentified herald in vs. 7. In other words, emphasis is upon hearing these feet more than seeing the man, and they can tell by their sound that he brings good news. Not only that, the watchmen let out a collective song of joy, *ranan* (cf. 51.11).

The hearing just mentioned is followed shortly by seeing the Lord return to Zion which differs from the beauty of the herald’s feet. It seems that as soon as the watchmen hear this *na’ah*, they see directly the Lord, “eye to eye” reading literally “eye in (*b-*) eye.”

**52-Vs. 9: Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.**

The two verbs *patsach* and *ranan* ('break forth and singing') are found in 49.13 and in the verse at hand pertain to *charbah* (cf. 51.3) or "waste places" proper to Jerusalem. Perhaps the people implied in vs. 5 are involved: "all the day my name is despised."

*Nacham* (cf. 51.19) is the verb for "comforted" and *ga'al* (cf. vs. 3) the verb for "redeemed."

**52-Vs. 10: The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.**

In light of the above few verses, reference to the Lord's arm which he had bared may be said to be done in Jerusalem or more specifically, from the temple. As soon as he does this (for up to now the divine arm had been concealed), the "ends" (*'ephes*, cf. vs. 5) of the earth will "see" (the common verb *ra'ah*, cf. 42.20) God's "salvation" (*yeshuhah*, cf. vs. 7). *Ephes* can apply to those who are situated at the point where the firmament reaches down to the earth covering it like a bowl. In other words, these ends are the circumference of that circular image of the earth located under the firmament.

**52-Vs. 11: Depart, depart, go out thence, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the Lord.**

*Sur* (cf. 49.21) is the verb for "depart" used twice for emphasis and connotes a turning aside. Perhaps Egypt and Assyria are inferred (cf. vs. 4). Since both are places of exile or in the act of leaving, they see everything which had surrounded them suddenly as "unclean" or *tame'* (cf. vs. 1). Obviously the exiles need to "purify" themselves, *barar* found last in 49.2 but not mentioned there. More specifically, reference seems to be the Levites who bear the Lord's vessels for use in the Jerusalem temple some of which they managed to take shortly before going into exile and put away in safe hiding.

**52-Vs. 12: For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight, for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.**

"Haste and flight" or *chipazon* and *menusah*. The former has two other references, Ex 12.11 and Dt 16.3, the former being cited here: "and you shall eat it (Passover lamb) in haste." The latter has one other biblical reference, Lev 26.36: "flee as fleeing from a sword."

The Exodus verse stands in contrast to the hasty flight which the Lord commands in this verse. In the situation at hand, the Lord will go before the people as well as being their "rear guard" or the participle *'asaph* (cf. 33.4) which here reads literally, "gather you up."

**52-Vs. 13: Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up and shall be very high.**

The last time the servant is mentioned is 50.10, and he comes immediately after the

departure of the exiles. He prospers both en route home as well as now, the verb being *sakal* (cf. 41.20) which also means to deal prudently or wisely. Three verbs are used to show the nature of this *sakal*, all indicative of exultation: *rum* (cf. 49.11), *nasa'* (cf. 51.6) and *gavah* (cf. 5.16).

**52-Vs. 14: As many were astonished at him—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men—**

The previous verse speaks of the unidentified servant as prospering, etc., all taking place in the future. However, here we have the opposite, people who are “astonished” at him, *shamam* being found last in 49.8 with the alternate meaning of “desolate.” That is to say, those who beheld the servant were so astounded that they became desolate, participating in his desolation by their gaze.

*Mishchath* is a noun for “marred,” the only use of this word in the Bible and is derived from the verbal root *shachath* (cf. 38.17) which connotes being corrupt or brought to ruin.

Compare “appearance and semblance” or *mar'eh* and *to'ar* (used twice in this verse), the former being found last in 11.3 but not noted there and derives from the verb *ra'ah* (to see, cf. vs. 10). The latter more specifically refers to a form, that which is more or less clearly delineated. “He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him” [53.2]. This *to'ar* is unrecognizable, the reason for being not specified but intimated due to the people’s inability to relate with the Lord both here and elsewhere within the Book of Isaiah.

**52-Vs. 15: so shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand.**

The unrecognizable *mar'eh* and *to'ar* of the servant just discussed will “startle” many nations, the verb being *nazah* while all other biblical references mean to sprinkle, especially pertaining to sacrifices. “And he sprinkled some of it (anointing oil) on the altar seven times” [Lev 8.11].

Apparently the servant had gained some type of international recognition because kings are mentioned. Now they will “see (*ra'ah*, cf. vs. 14) and understand” (*byn*, cf. 44.18) this servant in his almost unrecognizable state. Both will happen rather suddenly, if you will, and not fit into any previously held ideas about him.

This verse is cited in Rom 15.21: “They shall see who have never been told of him, and they shall understand who have never heard of him.”